

1998 SPRING PASTORAL CONFERENCE
Messiah Ev.Lutheran Church
Lacey, Washington

April 20 – April 21, 1998

ACTING ON HOPE:
Repentance, Forgiveness, and Hope in Pastoral Counseling

Repentance, Forgiveness, and Hope

Hopeful Solutions

Questions and the Scripture

The Basic Listening Sequence

Assessment

Record Keeping

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Revised: April 2, 1998

1998 Spring Pastoral Conference
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ISSUES OF PASTORAL COUNSELING: REPENTANCE, FORGIVENESS, AND
HOPE

Session One

Introduction

Repentance and the Repentance Model

Session Two

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Session One: Introduction and the Repentance Model

**ACTING ON HOPE: HOPEFUL SOLUTIONS FOR PASTORAL
COUNSELORS**

**The Structure of a First Session Using Law/Gospel Pastoral Counseling
And Hopeful Solutions**

Joining and explanation of procedures. "How can I help you with God's Word today?"

1. Assessment of the problem, sin, or need to which God's Word will be addressed.
2. Confidence is given that God does forgive sins because of Christ – Objective Justification (Depending upon the circumstances, this may or may not be included)
3. Specific Law is spoken and heard.
4. Sin is acknowledged. The sin is against God. True contrition.
5. Specific Gospel is spoken and heard.
6. Faith in God's forgiveness in Christ is confessed.
7. Absolution is stated.
8. Sanctified Christian living is discussed. The Fruits of Repentance.
 - a. A warning is included not to produce fruits driven by Law, but by Gospel.
 - b. Description of the problem is given in behavioral terms. This description notes priority, frequency, severity (scaling), precipitants, behavior sequences, past attempts to resolve the problem and results of those attempts.
 - c. Exceptions to the problem are sought (when doesn't the problem happen)
 - new
 - recurring
 - past
 - future (goals)
 - thanksgiving to God is noted for these exceptions
 - d. Goals are explored. With God's help, we plan to....
Essential goal data includes:
 - goal statements
 - indicators of achievement or progress (small signs of reaching the goals)
 - discussion of how life will be different after the goal is reached
 Optional goal data includes:
 - motivation to reach the goal (scale of 1-10). Exploration of Gospel motivation, renewal of Gospel motivation
 - confidence in reaching the goal (scale of 1-10). Exploration of level of hope in Christ. Use of the Gospel to increase hope in Christ.
 - e. Consultation or planning break (5 minutes)
 - f. Feedback to counselees
 - thanksgiving to God – compliments
 - directives (tasks, homework)
 - interpretation, explanation, reframing, educative comments.
 - g. Next steps, i.e., arranging for next session, referral, or other.
9. Prayer for God's help.
10. The joy of Christian living is experienced.

REPENTANCE LEADS TO HOPE

Psalm 32

1. Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.
2. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.

3. When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.
4. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the day of summer.

5. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to Lord"

- and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

6. Therefore, let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found; Surely, when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him.
7. You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.

8. I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.

9. Do not be like the horse of the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you.
10. Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him.

11. Rejoice in the Lord and be glad, you righteous; sing all you who are upright In heart!

The Repentance Model

- A. vs. 1-2 Confidence is given that God does forgive sins because of Christ. Objective Justification.

- B. vs. 3-4 Specific Law is spoken and heard

- C. vs. 5a Sin is acknowledged. The is against God. True Contrition.

- D. vs. 5c Specific Gospel is spoken and heard.

- E. vs. 6-7 Faith in God's forgive-ness in Christ is confessed. Absolution is proclaimed.

- F. vs. 8-10 Sanctified Christian living is discussed. The fruits of repentance.

(vs. 9-10 are a warning to produce fruits that are driven not by Law, but by Gospel.)

- G. vs. 11 The joy of Christian living is experienced.

REPENTANCE, FORGIVENESS, AND HOPE

The three words, *Repentance*, *Forgiveness*, and *Hope*, in some ways form the basic summary of method and goal for all pastoral counseling. Repentance and forgiveness are rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, living, crucified, and arisen for all human beings. Both repentance and forgiveness lead to hope and give hope.

The first Song of Isaiah, set in its context, is a description of the hope towards which the Counseling Shepherd leads his flock.

Isaiah 12:1-6

1 In that day you will say:

“I will praise you, O LORD.

Although you were angry with me,

your anger has turned away

and you have comforted me.

2 Surely God is my salvation;

I will trust and not be afraid.

The LORD, the LORD, is my strength and my song;

he has become my salvation.”

3 With joy you will draw water

from the wells of salvation.

4 In that day you will say:

“Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name;

make known among the nations what he has done,

and proclaim that his name is exalted.

5 Sing to the LORD, for he has done glorious things;

let this be known to all the world.

6 Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion,

for great is the Holy One of Israel among you.”

God’s anger has been turned away because of the shoot from the stump of Jesse upon whom the Spirit of the Lord rests. He shall “**delight in the fear of the Lord**” Is. 11:1-3.

Isaiah 11:10

10 In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious.

Christian hope always has Jesus Christ, crucified, risen, and ascended as its object, base, and foundation. Secular hope is based upon human reason and a personal decision to be optimistic in life. Christian hope is based upon the person of Jesus Christ who is true Man and True God. He is the Substitute for the sins of all people upon the cross. By His resurrection and ascension Jesus has given to all people eternal hope – the hope of the forgiveness of sins and eternal life in Christ.

St. Paul wrestled with the two kinds of hope in the world – that which is secular and that which is eternal. He writes:

Ephesians 2:12-13

12 remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

Acting on Hope: Hopeful Solutions in Pastoral Counseling points to the result, or fruit of repentance, or change that is produced by hope in connection with Christian Law/Gospel pastoral counseling.

Repentance

Meaning: Contrition (when used with faith)	Use of Greek Words for Repentance Meaning Contrition and Faith (when used alone)	Fruits of Repentance
Metanoia		
Acts 13:24 “and Baptism”	Mt. 3:11 “Baptism of”	Mt. 3:8
Acts 19:4 “and Baptism”	Mk. 1:4 “Baptism of”	Lk. 3:8
Acts 20:21 with faith	Lk. 3:3 “Baptism of”	Acts 26:20
Acts 26:20 and turn to God	Lk. 5:32	(prove Repentance by deeds)
II Tim. 2:25	Lk. 15:7	
Hebrews 6:1	Lk. 24:47	
	Acts 5:31	
	Acts 11:18	
	Rom. 2:4	
	II Cor. 7:9-10	
	Hebrews 6:6	
	Hebrews 12:17	
	II Pet. 3:9	
Metanoeo		
Mark 1:15 “and believe”	Mt. 3:2	
Acts 2:38 “and be baptized”	Mt. 4:17	
Acts 3:19 “and turn to God”	Mt. 11:20-21	
Acts 8:22 “and pray to the Lord”	Lk. 10:13	
Acts 26:20 “and turn to God”	Mt. 12:41	
Rev. 16:9 “and glorify him”	Lk. 11:32	
	Mk. 6:12	
	Lk. 13:3,5	
	Lk. 15:7	
	Lk. 16:30	
	Lk. 17:3,4	
	Acts 17:30	
	II Cor. 12:21	
	Rev. 2:5, 21	
	Rev. 3:3	
	Rev. 9:20-21	
Metamelomai		
Mt. 21:32 “and believe”	Mt. 27:29, 30 (in Crit. App.)	
II Cor. 7:8		
Hebrews 7:21 (used Re.: God)		

It is important to note that almost every piece of literature that is written about repentance in the counseling field in the English language is colored by a Roman Catholic and Reformed use of the term, that can be traced back to Tertullian choosing to use *poenitentia* – punishment – in Latin for the Greek, *metanoia*. It is important to note that the definition in Webster, Louw and Nida, and Kittel all favor a Roman Catholic and Reformed influenced definition of repentance that includes a change of action as the integral part of repentance, often almost bypassing faith in Christ. We would agree that this change of action needs to be included in the discussion of repentance as a fruit of faith or a fruit of repentance. It is not rightly a part of the Scriptural definition and use of *metanoia*, *metanoeo*, and *metamelomai*.

John the Baptist came on the scene prior to the ministry of Jesus preaching *Luke 3:8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance*. He emphasized that the fruits of repentance matched the sins for which the individual is repentant. No one was left out from his call to repentance. Those with much were to give to those with little. John also preached and did a *Mark 1:4 baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins*. Baptism is a sacramental act, through which God effects both remission of sins and conversion. God works the complete change in one's nature in Baptism. God grants the complete change of *metanoeo* in Baptism and man is called upon to show that change in his/her heart and life by fruits of repentance.

Jesus immediately followed John and tied his ministry to John's with the words: *Mark 1:14-15 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"* Jesus, God's Son, is the ruler of the Kingdom of God present on the earth. Jesus' miracles were a demonstration of his power and a call to faith in him. Repentance, which includes faith in Jesus, is not merely a description of a way to God, it is the only way. It is complete faith and trust in God and in Jesus, his Son, the Savior he sent. Jesus says: *John 14:6 "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.* John, the Gospel writer, concludes his Gospel with the words, *John 20:31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.* Jesus expresses the total commitment that is faith and trust in God in the parable of the tax-collector and the pharisee. The tax-collector in humble repentance says *Luke 18:13 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner,'* confessing both his contrition and his faith in God's mercy and not in his own acts of penance or sacrifice for sin. His is a complete turning to God. "For all its pitiless severity the message of Jesus concerning *metanoia* does not drive us to the torture of penitential works or to despair. It awakens joyous obedience for a life according to God's will" (Kittel, v. 4, p. 1003). God is merciful to repentant sinners. We trust in the Gospel – the good news of Jesus Christ, God's Son, crucified and arisen and ascended as our Substitute. "...joyous obedience for a life according to God's will" is a fruit of our faith. As the WLS Dogmatics Notes state: "Faith" is "the principal element" of repentance.

Sin demands justice. *Romans 6:23* **For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.** Our sin earns our eternal death, which we deserve. This is God's damning Law. God gives us eternal life through Jesus Christ who paid the punishment for our guilt of sin upon the cross. Faith in Jesus is God's gift to us by the power of his Holy Spirit through the Word of God. *Romans 10:17* **Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.** *John 3:16* **For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.** This is God's Gospel – the good news of the salvation he has worked for the human race.

Paul regards *metanoia* as the change in heart and mind worked by God *2 Corinthians 7:10* **Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.** God works Godly sorrow in us that is not only contrition, but also trust in the cross of Christ. Worldly sorrow is only the pain and hopeless shame of Judas. It includes no saving faith in Jesus Christ which is the substance of the Gospel and of repentance. *2 Corinthians 7:11-12* **See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter. 12 So even though I wrote to you, it was not on account of the one who did the wrong or of the injured party, but rather that before God you could see for yourselves how devoted to us you are.** Godly sorrow, which finds its resolution in the gospel of Christ, produces fruits of repentance which are the same thing as fruits of faith.

As faith in Jesus is the key message of repentance in Paul's writings, so it is also in John's epistles and in his Gospel. We have already quoted from the Gospel of John, (3:16 and 20:31). In his first epistle John writes: *1 John 1:8-10* **If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.** Honest confession is a part of repentance. So is trust in Jesus for forgiveness. *1 John 1:7* **But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.** John encourages his readers not to sin. But he is a realist and he comforts the penitent with the assurance of forgiveness in Jesus. *1 John 2:1-2* **My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.** Faith in Jesus gives us the blessings of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus worked for us. The fruit of our faith is our love for God and His Will and love for our fellow humans on this earth. *1 John 3:23-24* **And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. 24 Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.** Our guilt is resolved by Jesus Christ. Faith in Jesus appropriates that resolution to us. We live a changed, repentant life as a fruit of our faith.

Thus, we are not hopeless in spiritual death and despair which is the result of worldly sorrow. We have life and hope in Jesus Christ. Our hope is shown in our joy in living in Christ and in the fruits of repentance that joy produces in us.

Repentance is about change. That change is worked in us by God's gift through faith in Christ.



Session Two: The Forgiveness Process and Hope

Dictionaries and Forgiveness

The concept of forgiveness has not received the same corruption in English as has “repentance.” Webster (1961, p. 891) defines forgiveness as “an act of forgiving or state of being forgiven.” It is the past participle of forgive. He gives the following definition of the verb, to forgive: “to cease to feel resentment against on account of wrong committed; give up claim to requital from or retribution upon (an offender);... remit the penalty of...” (Webster, 1961, p. 861).

In classical Greek ἀφίεναι means “to send off,” “to hurl,” “to release,” “to let go,” or “to let be” (Kittel, 1964, vs. 1, p. 509). A weapon might be hurled at an enemy. The verb used to describe the action is ἀφίημι. The weapon is released from the hand. The word was also used in classical Greek to describe releasing someone from an office, marriage, obligation or debt, though never in a religious sense. It also took on the meaning of “to pardon” and “to remit.” It was a legal term in this sense.

In the Septuagint Greek translation of the Old Testament the word was used to translate Hebrew words that meant to release, surrender, leave, or remit. “The object of remission is sin or guilt... (Kittel, 1964, v. 1, p. 510). Sin, lawlessness, ungodliness, and accusations are described as being remitted. Contrary to classical Greek usage, the one who forgives is God. “The relationship of man to God is thus conceived of in legal terms, and this is quite alien to Greek thought” (Kittel, 1964, v. 1, p. 511).

New Testament Greek builds upon the understanding that had been given the word by the Septuagint translators of the Old Testament. Forgiveness is “almost always that of God... To this extent the concept is the same as the OT and Jewish idea of forgiveness. Yet there is a new and specifically Christian feature. For the community realizes that it has to receive from God the forgiveness which is offered to men through the saving act which has taken place in Jesus Christ” (Kittel, 1964, v. 1, p. 511).

“All this makes it plain a. that the OT conception of God as the Judge to whom man is responsible is maintained; b. that God’s forgiveness is not deduced from an idea of God or His grace, but is experienced as His act in the event of salvation, so that preaching does not consist in illuminating instruction regarding the idea of God but in the proclamation of the act of God; c. that forgiveness as an eschatological event renews the whole man, in whom sin was not just something isolated and occasional but the power which determined his whole being; d. that forgiveness can be received only when man affirms God’s judgment on himself, the old man, in the confession of sins (I Jn. 1:9; Jm. 5:16; Ac. 19:18;...) and penitence (Lk. 24:47; Ac. 2:38, 5:31, 8:22; Hb. 6:1,6; cf. Mk. 1:4...) which corresponds to πίστις in Paul and John. There is thus avoided the legal understanding of the thought of forgiveness as a remission of punishment related only to past events; the future is included in eschatological forgiveness” (Kittel, 1964, v.1, p. 512).

Louw and Nida offer some interesting observations about language usage and understanding within cultures. “It is extremely important to note that the focus in the meanings of ἀφίνμι, ἀφεσις, and ἀπολύω is upon the guilt of the wrongdoer and not upon the wrongdoing itself. The event of wrongdoing is not undone, but the guilt resulting from such an event is pardoned. To forgive, therefore, means essentially to remove the guilt resulting from wrongdoing....Some languages make a clear distinction between guilt and sin, and terms of forgiveness are therefore related to guilt and not to wrongdoing. Therefore, ‘to forgive sins’ is literally ‘to forgive guilt.’ Though terms for ‘forgiveness’ are often literally ‘to wipe out,’ ‘to blot out,’ or ‘to do away with,’ it is obviously not possible to blot out or to wipe out an event, but it is possible to remove or obliterate the guilt” (Louw and Nida, 1989, v.1, p. 503).

This understanding is of great importance for the pastoral counselor to address to the person who says that he/she cannot forgive another because that would make the event of the wrongdoing something that did not ever happen. It is important that the individual realizes that forgiveness does not take away the event or even certain impacts of the event upon our lives. For example, Jack may have unlawfully taken a diamond ring from Jill. Jill may forgive Jack for his theft, but still take him to court to seek restitution for the loss of the diamond ring. Jill’s forgiveness of Jack means that she has let go of the hatred and anger and bitterness she felt towards him and she no longer desires God’s punishment upon him. She does not want her anger and lack of forgiveness to rule her life or to separate her from her God. But she may still press charges in civil court to see Jack prosecuted for his crime. Jack may know and believe that God forgives him for his stealing. Yet, Jack has been found guilty in a court of law and has been sentenced to jail. His jail term does not pay his debt to God. Jesus has done that already. His jail term pays his debt to society and Jack needs to be counseled to accept his civil punishment and to serve his time without bitterness or anger at God or at the system.

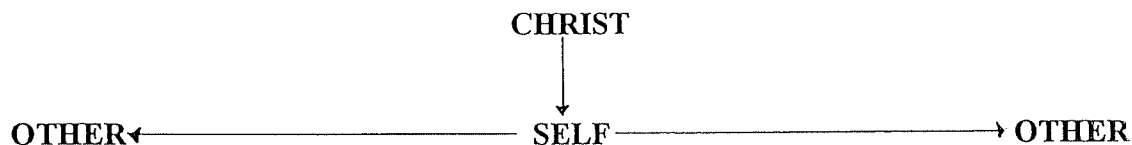
Relationship Between Repentance, Forgiveness, and Hope

There is a progressive relationship between repentance and forgiveness and hope about which we need a reminder here. Forgiveness comes from God as the absolution part of repentance. Forgiveness of our brother or sister who has wronged us is a fruit of repentance. Hope is also a fruit of repentance. Forgiveness produces hope. Forgiveness because of Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection is the central aspect of the three terms – repentance, forgiveness, and hope. Forgiveness is also a part of the end product – hope. Forgiveness makes us hopeful – forgiveness by God in Christ and forgiveness of the other, forgiveness of self, and forgiveness by the other of us.

Of the three terms -- repentance, forgiveness, and hope – forgiveness is most discussed in secular and Christian psychological literature. Not many people are doing any research on these terms, yet, of the research that is being done, most of it is being done on forgiveness. Repentance is not being researched in much detail at this time. Hope is just beginning to be researched at the present time.

Selected Psychological Concepts Regarding Forgiveness

The literature of the Christian psychological periodicals reviewed over the past few years defines forgiveness in the same way that it was defined previously in this section. The same vertical and horizontal relationships are emphasized in the modern use of the term forgiveness as the ancient Greek and Jewish Christians did in their day.



There are some destructive alternatives to forgiveness. We quote the Chinese proverb, “the one who pursues revenge should dig two graves” (Benson, 1992, p. 76). Refusing to forgive is like voluntarily staying in the role of slave to the one we refuse to forgive. If slave is too strong a word, perhaps we could use the phrase, “willingly letting another continue to control us.” “One of the most serious consequences of lacking forgiveness is that we become bonded to those we need to forgive, and indebted to those who need to forgive us, which in effect gives others control over our lives” (Benson, 1992, p. 77). “Setting others free means setting oneself free, because resentment is really a form of attachment...’As the avenger we are controlled, rather than in control” (Benson, 1992, p. 77, quoted from T. Hersey, 1984. *Beginning again: Life after a relationship ends*. Laguna Hills, CA: Merit Books). Clinging to the hate and anger that is a part of refusing to forgive enables us to avoid grieving and may also provide us with someone to blame for our problems. This “...illustrates the close relationship between facing responsibility and forgiving” (Benson, 1992, p. 77).

The most serious consequence of our refusal to forgive is how our grudging hate destroys our relationship to God. *Matthew 6:15* “If you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”

So many people like to believe they are trapped in an unforgiving attitude because it is necessary for the offender to apologize or to repent prior to their forgiving them. “Part of our role may be to help the client (member) give up the notion that forgiveness needs to be based on someone else’s behavior. To believe that means that we remain victims” (Benson, 1992, p. 80)

Thus, there is a circularity to the process of forgiveness. Those who cannot forgive are doomed to live out what they cannot forgive in their offender. Those who by grace through faith in Christ have received forgiveness from God are led to forgive the hardest of all persons to forgive – themselves. They are able to love themselves as God loves them. They are thus able to love their fellow human beings. Forgiveness is not found in the harsh reality of God’s Law or of human law. **An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth** expresses no hope for forgiveness nor for an end to the circular fallout of vengeance and revenge and refusal to forgive.

Forgiveness is found in the grace of God in Christ Jesus. This grace is God's unconditional love for us and for all in Christ. *Romans 5:8* **God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.** We are not in a position of should and ought. We are free. Christ has made us free. Our reaction to this freedom is to set others free by forgiving them. By so doing, in a psychological sense, we free ourselves from that which is opposite to God's love and grace – our own lack of or refusal to forgive. We who have been forgiven, forgive. It is natural and loving and open and honest. It is living in liberty and in freedom. Forgiveness is the joy of Christian living.

Forgiveness as a Process

It takes some explanation to speak about forgiveness as a process theologically. In our vertical relationship with God, forgiveness does not exist as a process because forgiveness comes from God and flows to us by grace through faith in Christ. Forgiveness from God is complete and perfect. *II Corinthians 5:18-20* **All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.** It is done by God. He has forgiven all people in Christ. **Not counting men's sins against them** means that the sins of all are forgiven. This was accomplished by Christ crucified. *I John 1:7* **...the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.** Forgiveness is total because God's Son is the perfect payment for sin who became true man to the perfect substitute for all humans. *I John 2:1-2* **My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense – Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.**

God is the reconciler. He has done it all for all the world. All who believe in Jesus have their sins forgiven. *Ephesians 1:7* **In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.** *Acts 10:43* **Everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.** Since the work is done by God it is complete and perfect. Forgiveness is an instantaneous, accomplished fact. **It is finished!** Jesus said from the cross. Thus, it would be contrary to Scriptural record to say that forgiveness is a process in our vertical relationship with God as we see the arrow pointing from God to us.

Colossians 3:12-14 **Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.** But we are imperfect people who live in an imperfect world. Yet, as believers in Jesus Christ, Christians strive for perfection. They know that they will never attain perfection here on this earth because of the sinful part of them that will never completely leave them. Therefore, they look to Jesus for forgiveness. He is God's Son, who became incarnate, lived a perfect life for all people,

died as the substitute for all, and arose to assure all who believe in him of heaven. Jesus is the hope of those who believe in him.

The process of forgiveness occurs in our horizontal relationships with others here on earth. It is a part of our sanctified Christian living. By God's grace we need to overcome, through God's power, the sinful part of us that desires to continue with our lack of forgiveness for the one who has offended against us. It is a struggle. We sin daily. God's forgiveness is ours. A part of our sin is our refusal to forgive as the Lord has forgiven us. Because of our sinfulness, our forgiveness is a process.

Forgiveness is also a process because we are emotional people who feel the pain and hurt of betrayal and lovelessness on the part of others directed towards us. Thus, the Christian/psychological writers present different processes for forgiveness. I have greatly adapted Veenstra's process from his article, *Psychological concepts of forgiveness* (1992, pp. 160-169) on the following page by setting it into columns and adding a column for Luke 17:3-4 which I have added. This Bible passage describes the process of forgiveness in outline form from the viewpoint of the offended. The second column is my adaptation of the stages of forgiveness which Veenstra promotes. The third column lists some dangers that need to be noted by the offended and the counselor at each stage lest the offended shortcut the process to the degree that forgiveness is not present and deep-seated resentment continues to fester. Much of the second and the third column have been altered from the original concepts of Veenstra.

It is hoped that this model or process, summarized in this way, will be helpful to the counseling shepherd in encouraging his member along the road to forgiveness.

We need to note point F, which reads, "Rebuilding right relationships through a trust-building process – forgiveness as trusting." "Forgiveness in this final stage means a discerning trusting that knows where to build in the relationship to create experiences that will bond the couple's connection" (Veenstra, 1992, p. 166). This sounds quite similar to the "find something that works" rule of Michele Weiner-Davis (1993, pp. 117f) and the "exception" concepts of solution-focused therapy and hopeful solutions counseling.

It is important to note that not everyone will go through these stages consecutively, or that all will begin at the first stage in column two. Some will be at point F in five minutes. Others will take several months to get there. The pastor is advised to adapt this chart to each individual counselee.

DEFINITIONS OF FORGIVENESS IN TERMS OF RELATIONSHIP PROCESS

(From the viewpoint of the offended one)

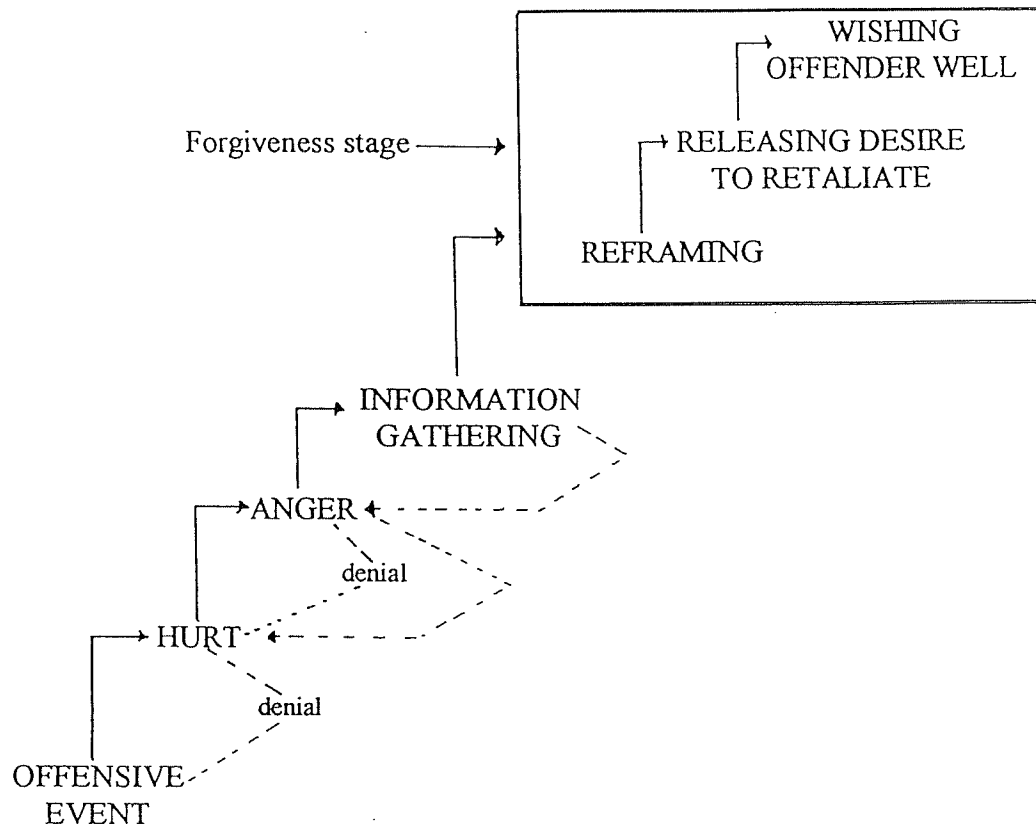
<u>Luke 17:3-4</u>	<u>Stages of forgiveness in process</u>	<u>Dangers to avoid at each stage</u>
<i>"If your brother sins,</i>	A. Presented with the wrong,	A. Overlooking the wrong, ignoring
<i>rebuke him,</i>	B. Determining the wrong, convict	B. Excusing the wrong
<i>and if he repents,</i>	C. Hearing the wrong admitted D. Recognizing contrition and faith spoken by the offender	C. Condoning the wrong D. Pardoning the wrong. Ignoring the need on the part of the offender for contrition and faith.
<i>forgive him.</i>	E. Release the wrong. Forgiveness as releasing.	E.1. Confusing forgiveness with restoring. E.2. Confusing recovering first love (the way the relationship was before the offense) with creating reborn love (realistic, non- idealistic, and not-so-naïve, mature love).
<i>If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent,' forgive him."</i>	F. Rebuilding right relationships through a trust-building process. Forgiveness as trusting.	F.1. Confusing cautiousness with doubting. F.2. Thinking that the fruits of repentance that are seen automatically mean the extinction of the old sinful behaviors. F.3. Not giving trust time to be rebuilt.

On the next pages are two charts suggested by Charlotte Rosenak and G. Mack Harndon (1992, pp. 192-193). I have made many changes in them to make them more Scriptural and Lutheran. Note on the *Stages of Forgiveness* chart how denial occurs between each stage until anger is reached. As new information is gathered, the offended will slip back into anger and hurt with each new revelation. The forgiveness stage includes reframing, releasing the desire to retaliate, and wishing the offended well. Reframing is the step in which the offended begins to understand the offender and the factors that contribute to the offense. He/she reframes it in his/her own mind. In the final step of the forgiveness stage the offended is able to wish the offender well.

The *Forgiveness Process* chart is somewhat more complicated. It shares the same stage or step structure as the *Forgiveness Stages* chart. The over-riding and all-

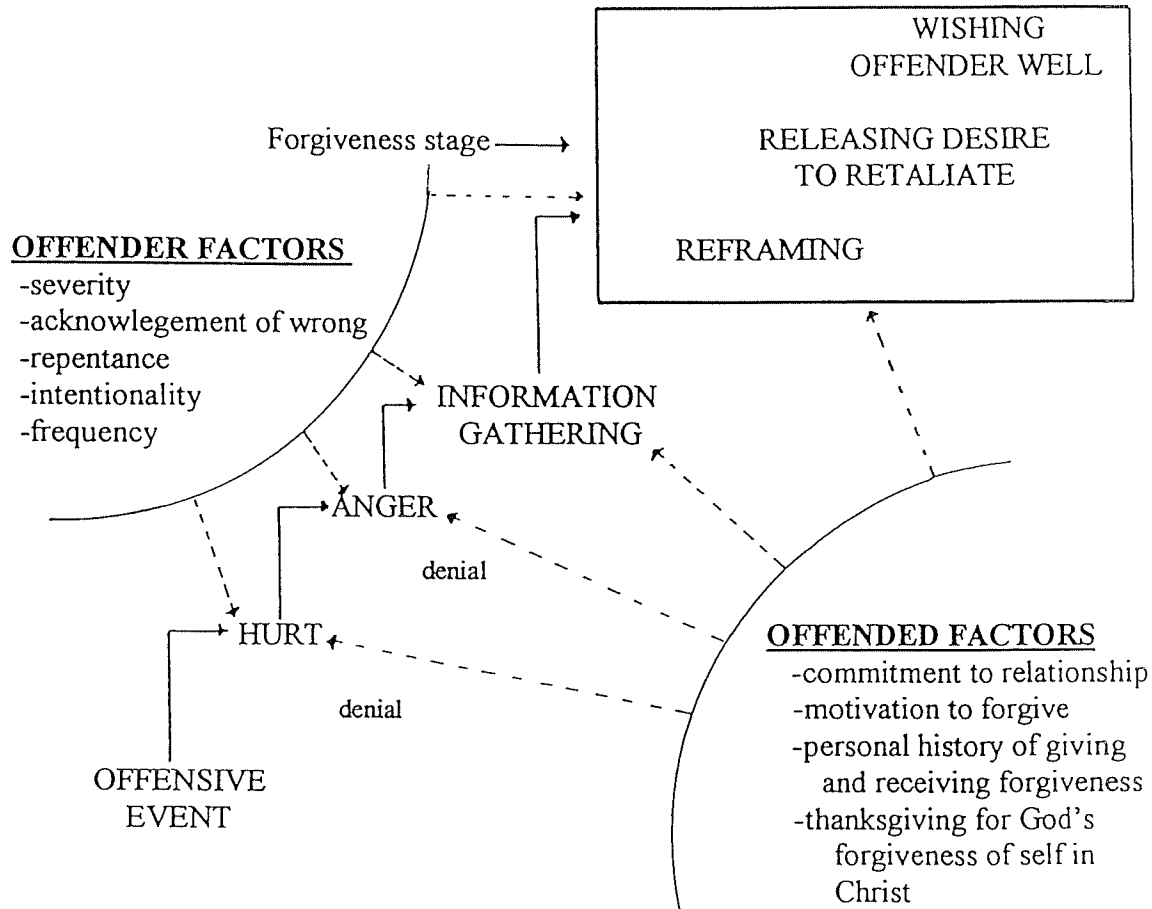
permeating basis is God's intervention through His Law which convicts and His Gospel which forgives through Word and sacrament. The offender factors and the offended factors are factors which seem to facilitate or impede one's ability to forgive.

STAGES OF FORGIVENESS



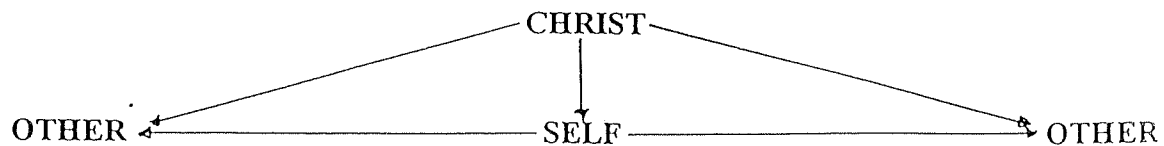
FORGIVENESS PROCESS

**God's Intervention:
The Work of the Holy Spirit
Through Law and Gospel**



Forgiveness and Hope

A Gospel-oriented way of viewing forgiveness as a part of hopeful solutions would be to think of forgiveness in this way:



We want our members to think about God forgiving them and they forgiving another in this way:

Christ has forgiven me. He is crucified and arisen for me. I am the greatest sinner that I know. He has forgiven me as a part of the world that he has forgiven. That world includes all other people for whom he died and arose – all humans. He has forgiven me personally and individually. Jesus has removed the problem of sin and guilt that separated me, the greatest sinner I know, from my God. I, and the world of sinners am reconciled to God. *II Corinthians 5:19-20* **God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them.** In the same way Jesus Christ died and arose for those who have sinned against me. God forgave and forgives me in Christ. God forgave and forgives them in Christ. God has removed from them their sin and guilt which separated them from himself. My forgiveness of the others in my life who have sinned against me is a fruit of my faith and trust that I and they have been forgiven by our gracious God in Christ. Repentance, forgiveness, and hope are integrally tied together with Objective Justification and Subjective Justification.

Through repentance and forgiveness we aim to restore the sinner to full dignity within the church. Each Christian acknowledges his or her own sins. The sinner is recognized as not being alone as a sinner or one who has offended another by his/her own sin. We all share the same status of guilty before God. We also all share the same status of forgiven before God. This mutuality of status produces hope. As I am forgiven, so is my brother or sister who has sinned against me. My self-righteousness is put down. I share the same hope of forgiveness with my offending brother or sister. Hope is fostered in the mutual congregation of humble, repentant sinners – each forgives the other.

We believe as St. Paul states: *Ephesians 2:12* to be **separate from Christ** is to be **without hope and without God in the world.** This is a frighteningly sad state. With Christ we have hope. *Romans 8:39* **Nothing in all of creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.** This is the hope-filled joy of Christian living. This is our hopeful solution.

“The New Testament underscores human sinfulness not to depress us but to help us grasp the real issues in the sin problem and the necessity of recognizing a real solution. The human situation is serious and... all the issues must be dealt with. The New Testament answer is simple and realistic: grace has been manifested in Christ –hopelessness has been conquered. True, **the wages of sin is death**, but there is more: **the free gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord** (Romans 6:23, RSV). To ease pain is worthy and legitimate, but to conquer death is ultimate, eternal and necessary. So Christian theology starts with a universally recognized human predicament and moves to examination of a revealed solution that can meet all the ultimate issues in that predicament. The situation shuffles in despair while the solution dances with hope” (Zackrisson, 1992, pp. 150-151).



Session Three: HOPE AND HOPEFUL SOLUTIONS

Of all the striking differences between secular counseling and Bible-based, Law/Gospel counseling, none is more evident than when we begin talking about hope.

In *Philebus* Plato has Socrates say: Ἡμεῖς δ' αὖ διὰ παντός τοῦ βίου αἰεὶ γέμομεν ἐλπίδων -- "Thus, we therefore through all of life have always been filled with hopes" (my translation). Jowlett & Harwood in Vol. 7 of the *Great Books of the Western World, Plato*, translates it in this way: "...and that mankind are filled with hopes in every stage of existence." The Greeks did not carry the concept of hope as solely an expectation of good. Hope could also have the meaning of an expectation of bad for the future. All hope was considered to be dangerous because there was no certainty to the future. Only a god could be certain of the future. To the Stoics, hope is simply man's projection of the future. (Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, v. 2, 1964, p. 521). Modern secular psychologists and counselors have also considered hope to be dangerous because, since hope based upon Christ is rejected, they see no certainty for the future based on mere hope. Therefore, most theories of secular counseling will not mention hope. Bible-based pastoral counseling is all about hope. This is Christian hope that is rooted in God and in His work of redemption for all sinners and that is offered to the individual through the Church. The tension between secular counseling and Bible-based pastoral counseling is severe on the issue of hope. The only studies being done at this time on hope in the realm of secular counseling flow out of the work done by nurses with cancer patients and other terminally ill patients.

It is especially in the area of anxiety and depression that hope is important in our counseling ministry as undershepherds of Christ. We have a tool which is scoffed at by many secular counselors, but which they cannot reproduce in their counseling. Secular counseling can teach coping. They can help people learn how to cope. They cannot offer them hope that is lasting. You may not have all the secular skills to teach coping, but you do give hope in Christ crucified and arisen. That hope is described in several passages:

Romans 15:4

4 ὅσα γὰρ προεγράφη, εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν διδασκαλίαν ἐγράφη, ἵνα διὰ τῆς ὑπομονῆς καὶ διὰ τῆς παρακλήσεως τῶν γραφῶν τὴν ἐλπίδα ἔχωμεν.

Romans 15:4

4 For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

While ὑπομονῆς means patient endurance and not coping, it has some of the thoughts associated with what we call coping in it. Patient endurance and the παρακλήσεως τῶν γραφῶν give us hope.

Colossians 1:5

5 the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel

Once again, the Gospel is the key to giving hope.

Romans 8:24

24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has?

Hebrews 11:1

1 Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

These two passages are quoted together to emphasize the relationship of hope to faith.

Lessons:

- The Scriptures and the Sacraments are the tools that you will use to produce hope. All of the skills that we are going to study and all of the methodology that is helpful in pastoral counseling are not the real effective tools of your ministry as a counseling shepherd. Skills and methodology, at best, are teaching aids. The Gospel in Word and Sacrament is the effective tool.
- No other counselor in all the world has more effective tools than you do.
- Use the tools that God has given you to His glory and the good of His people.

Christian hope is always fixed upon Christ Jesus. It embraces three elements:

- Expectation of the future
- Trust
- Patience of waiting

All three of these elements are often welded together into one Biblical passage.

2 Corinthians 1:9-10

9 Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. 10 He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us. Here there is an expectation of a future deliverance and a trust that God will do it. Patient waiting is implied.

2 Corinthians 3:12

12 Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. Assurance and certainty are emphasized because of the Gospel ministry and message which gives us hope. The hope is the expectation of the glory of heaven. The trust in God and in his Gospel hope gives us boldness.

Facing possible death in his imprisonment, Paul writes:

Philippians 1:20

20 I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

Speaking about Jesus as the ground and foundation of hope, Peter writes to a group of people expecting great trouble from persecution because of their faith in Christ. *1 Peter 1:13 & 21*

13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. 21 Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God. Here again we see expectation for the future, trust in God, and advice and planning for the future.

Romans 12:12 **Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer,** Paul writes. He can write this to us because his trust on which his hope is based is in God for his future. He is not only patient in his waiting, he is even joyful. Another passage that expresses a similar thought is Paul's prayer in *Romans 15:13* **May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.**

Faith and hope describe the joy of Christian living. The hope is certain because it is based upon the all-powerful creator who has already sent his Son to be the perfect and complete Savior of all people. A hope that is based upon God and not upon flimsy human experience and weak power and control of the past, present, or future, is beyond measure a joy in this troublesome world. This sure and certain hope offers comfort and peace. It is the foundation of Christian Law/Gospel pastoral counseling. This hope is certain of forgiveness of sins past. This hope is based upon repentance that is both contrition for our sins and faith in God's absolution in Christ crucified and arisen. This is a hope that motivates and encourages us to change our lives of sin to lives that are lived according to God's will. This hope enables and empowers change. This hope is the basis for the joy of our Christian living.

HOPEFUL SOLUTIONS

We want to repeat the outline presented previously to orient ourselves.

The Structure of a First Session Using Law/Gospel Pastoral Counseling And Hopeful Solutions

Joining and explanation of procedures. "How can I help you with God's Word today?"

1. Assessment of the problem, sin, or need to which God's Word will be addressed.
2. Confidence is given that God does forgive sins because of Christ – Objective Justification (Depending upon the circumstances, this may or may not be included)
3. Specific Law is spoken and heard.
4. Sin is acknowledged. The sin is against God. True contrition.
5. Specific Gospel is spoken and heard.
6. Faith in God's forgiveness in Christ is confessed.
7. Absolution is stated.
8. Sanctified Christian living is discussed. The Fruits of Repentance.
 - a. A warning is included not to produce fruits driven by Law, but by Gospel.
 - b. Description of the problem is given in behavioral terms. This description notes priority, frequency, severity (scaling), precipitants, behavior sequences, past attempts to resolve the problem and results of those attempts.
 - a. Exceptions to the problem are sought (when doesn't the problem happen)
 - new
 - recurring
 - past
 - future (goals)
 - thanksgiving to God is noted for these exceptions
 - b. Goals are explored. With God's help, we plan to....

Essential goal data includes:

 - goal statements
 - indicators of achievement or progress (small signs of reaching the goals)
 - discussion of how life will be different after the goal is reached

Optional goal data includes:

 - motivation to reach the goal (scale of 1-10). Exploration of Gospel motivation, renewal of Gospel motivation
 - confidence in reaching the goal (scale of 1-10). Exploration of level of hope in Christ. Use of the Gospel to increase hope in Christ.
 - c. Consultation or planning break (5 minutes)
 - d. Feedback to counselees
 - thanksgiving to God – compliments
 - directives (tasks, homework)
 - interpretation, explanation, reframing, educative comments.
 - e. Next steps, i.e., arranging for next session, referral, or other.
9. Prayer for God's help.
10. The joy of Christian living is experienced.

HOPEFUL SOLUTIONS COUNSELING

ASSESSMENT AS INTERVENTION DURING THE FIRST SESSION

Note that what you are assessing here and what you are intervening in here is in the patterns and habits of the fruits of repentance section of the repentance model. While these skills can be helpful – the opening questions, for example – in earlier places in your counseling session, they are best used in the later parts of your session, after you have finished applying Law and Gospel and after you have heard contrition and spoken absolution. Here you are in the realm of fruits of repentance.

TRACK ONE – Exploring present and past exceptions and solutions (very usual track)

1. Using solution language

- a. Referring to the problem in the past tense; using “were” and “have been” vs. “are”

Examples:

Parishoner: We are having so much trouble with our teenage son. We never know where he is. He is disrespectful and he goes with the wrong crowd. We don’t know what to do. At times he is so depressed he just sits in his room.

Pastor’s Response:

- a. **common** So, you are here because you are having trouble with your son.
- b. **Hopeful language** So, you are saying that there have been difficult times with your son and you wish they were different. Can you recall times when things do go differently?

- b. Demonstrating the expectation of change; using “yet,” or “when” vs. “if;” and using “will” vs. “would”

Examples:

Parishoner: Not lately, pastor. (Pause.) I do remember once when we were together, he offered to help with the yard work.

Pastor’s Response:

- a. **common** It has been a long time since your son was not a problem and it took you a long time to remember.
- b. **Hopeful language** When you think of the time he did help you, what was different about that? (Exception frame.)

- c. Depathologizing through relabeling; e.g. depressed → “down in the dumps”
panic attack → “feeling anxious, uncomfortable”

Examples:

- a. **common** You said he is so depressed that he just sits in his room.

- b. **Depathologizing** You stated that at times he feels so hopeless that he thinks his only choice is to sit in his room. Are there times when he doesn't feel so hopeless? (seeking an exception)

2. **Normalizing**

- a. Continual feedback, "Of course," "Naturally," "Me too"
 b. "Me too" stories – be careful with these

3. **Asking questions that presuppose change, emphasize exceptions, solutions, strengths, and hopes**

OPENING QUESTIONS:

- How can I help you with God's Word today?
 How can God's Word be a help to you today?
 How can you be helped by the Word of God today?
 What are you hoping to change?
 What are you hoping to be helped with God's Word today?
 What is your goal in coming here?
 What are you hoping to get from our time together today?

EXPLORING HOPEFUL SOLUTION PATTERNS (PRESENT→PAST)

- A. What is different about the times when..... (you are getting along, he shows you respect, you do have fun together, and so on)?
 B. What are you doing more of then? Explore the sequence patterns (who does what and when)
 C. How do you get that to happen? What do each of you do differently?
 D. What difference does it make when.... (things go well)? What does that enable you to do?
 E. When a parishoner reports something which appears to be new or different, even if they place little emphasis upon it, ask "How is that different from the way you might have handled it....(one week, or one month, etc.) ago"
 F. Rediscovering forgotten solutions: Have you ever had this difficulty in the past? How did you resolve it then? What would you need to do to get that to happen again?

4. **Goal Setting**

- a. Break goals into small steps: Ask – "What will be the very first sign that things are starting (continuing) to be on the right track?"
 b. Have parishoners describe what they want rather than what they don't want.
 c. Have parishoners describe goals in behavioral and concrete terms.
 d. Make certain that the goals are realistic.

5. Break

When taking a break in the session, read over and answer the following questions. Your answers will provide positive reinforcement for your parishoners and may lead to messages that you want to use. Ask yourself:

- a. How can I remind my member about God's love and presence and power and forgiveness in his/her life?
- b. What can I say positively about my member which can provide a hopeful atmosphere?
- c. What things are already being done by my member that are working, that are hopeful, that are positive, or exceptional that I can highlight and encourage?
- d. What fears does my member have that I might want to support or remove?
- e. Does my member have fears about changing the sinful habitual patterns of his or her life that I need to normalize?
- f. How can I help my member give glory to God for the changing that is occurring in his or her life?
- g. If more than one person is present, how can I offer support from the Word for each individual?

6. Compliments

- a. Noting anything hopeful and worthwhile that the member is doing or thinking about doing in or out of the complaint or problem context (attending church, prayer, using God's Word, etc.).
- b. Normalizing
- c. Validating important issues

7. Give a task (homework) and terminate the session.

- a. Give a Scripture homework assignment
- b. Give a hopeful solutions first session task: "Between now and the next time we meet, notice what's happening in your life that you want to continue to happen." Or, "Note when things are going better and what you are doing differently at those times."
- c. The next time that you meet, begin by following up on their homework assignments. Explore what they learned from the Scripture they studied. Remind them of the task of looking for the things that are going better and what they are doing different at those times.

TRACK TWO – When there are no exceptions, ask difference and future-oriented questions.

1. If no exceptions, ask difference questions

- a. What is different about the times when the problem is less intense/frequent/or shorter in duration?
- b. What is different about the times when something good comes out of the problem? (you two actually do sit down and talk about the problem because you are both so frustrated by it)
- c. When your members talk about the complaint or problem and don't want to move from their talk about the problem to talk about hopeful solutions, then ask: "How did you get the argument to stop?"

2. If no exceptions, ask future-oriented questions

These are the "big change" or "miracle" questions.

- If you went to sleep tonight and a big change happened so that when you woke up tomorrow your problem disappeared, what would be different?
- Are there pieces of this change already happening? What are they?
- What could be one or two small things you could do next week to bring you a bit closer to your big change (goal)?
- What would others notice about you that would be different the day after the big change happened and you no longer had the problem?
- What would your spouse or children say that you will be doing differently after the big change happens?

TRACK THREE – If there are no exceptions, no differences, and no vision about the future without the complaint or problem, then trace the complaint sequence.

1. Seem confused and note the outcome

- a. I just am really confused. You are repentant. You say you forgive each other. Yet, the problem still persists. What do you think needs to happen?
Should we review the Scripture?
- b. Note that this is a turning point in the session
- c. Redefine the goals

2. Ask about the complaint patterns and explore perceptions and behavior for a baseline. This serves as data to design a pattern interruption homework task.

- a. Assess your members perceptions or frames
How do you see the problem?
What is your best guess as to the reason this is happening?
- b. Assess behavioral aspects of the complaint sequence: Ask them to give you a description as if they had video-taped the problem going on.
Ask for a recent example of **what** happens when the problem occurs. (Do **not** ask about **why**.
Identify the **sequence** of events surrounding the problem.
Then what happens? Keep on asking this until you can say:
How can you break the pattern – not do – or do differently?

Session Four: THE BASIC LISTENING SEQUENCE
THE USE OF QUESTIONS AND THE PRESENTATION OF SCRIPTURE

The Basic Listening Sequence

ATTENDING BEHAVIOR: BASIC COMMUNICATION

Attending Behavior is:

- Appropriate eye contact
- Attentive body language
- Vocal qualities
- Verbal tracking
- All of the above adapted so that it is individual and culturally sensitive

How can attending behavior help your members?

Major function: Attending behavior encourages member talk. You want to use attending behavior to help your member talk more freely and openly, and to reduce interviewer talk.

Secondary functions: Knowledge and skill in attending result in the following:

- Communicating to your member that you are interested in what is being said
- Increasing your awareness of the member's pattern of attending
- Modifying your patterns of attending to establish rapport with each individual
- Having some recourse when you are lost or confused in the interview. Even the most advanced professional doesn't always know what is happening. When you don't know what to do, attend!

QUESTIONS: OPENING COMMUNICATION

There are two basic types of questions: Closed and Open.

Closed: "Is...." "Are...." "Do...." – can be answered with a "yes" or a "no."
 Can shut off member talk, or get them into the pattern of only giving one word answers.

Open: Encourages longer answers. You get more of your members feelings and attitudes.

WHAT	tends to lead discussion to	FACTS
HOW		FEELINGS, PROCESS
WHY		REASONS
	(be careful with "why" – it can make people defensive)	
COULD		MAXIMALLY OPEN
		(but it permits member to say, "No")

Major functions: If you use open questions effectively, you can expect your member to talk more freely and openly. Closed questions will elicit shorter responses and may provide you with information and specifics.

Like attending behavior, questions can encourage or discourage member talk. With questions, however, the stimulus comes mainly from the interviewer. The member is often talking within your frame of reference. You can abuse this power and get in the way of good listening.

Dangers:

- Bombardment/grilling
- Multiple questions
- Questions as statements
- Cultural differences
- “Why” questions
- Control dimensions

Secondary functions: Knowledge and skill in questioning result in the following:

- Bringing out additional specifics of the member’s world
- Coming to an accurate understanding of a member’s concern or issue
- Guiding the manner in which your member talks about the concern or issue
- Gives you the ability to open or close member talk according to the individual needs of the interview

ENCOURAGING, PARAPHRASING, AND SUMMARIZING: HEARING YOUR MEMBER ACCURATELY

ENCOURAGEMENT is a very potent skill.

Nonverbal

- Head nods
- Gestures
- Facial expression
- Silence

Verbal

- “uh..huh”
- “tell me more”
- “and then”

Restatement

- Key word(s)
- Exact phrases

PARAPHRASE

1. Sentence stem
 - “I hear you saying...” auditory mode - stay in your member’s mode
 - “Looks like...” visual mode
 - “Feels as if...” kinesthetic mode
2. Key facts/constructs
 - Use your members own words for touchy main things
3. Distill/clarify/shorten with minimal distortion
4. Check-out for accuracy
 - “Mary, looks like you are deciding between a boring job which is safe, or taking a new direction. Is that correct?”

SUMMARIZATION

Putting your member’s facts and feelings together accurately. This covers longer sections of the interview and several key facts and feelings, while a paraphrase is generally used more often and is generally only one fact or feeling.

Useful in

- Beginning an interview – summarize the first interview at the beginning of the second interview or summarize the phone conversation in which you set up the counseling session with your members.
- Organizing facts and feelings: “So far I have heard you say....and you feel....”
- Bring a session to a close in an organized way.

Procedure:

1. Use listening skills to draw out member’s story
2. Note patterns and the general flow of the member’s comments
3. Summarize and distill using the member’s key words for the touchy, important things.

How can these three skills help you and your members?

Major function:

Members need to know that their pastor has heard what they have been saying, seen their point of view, and felt their world as they experience it. Encouragers and restatements, paraphrases, and summarizations are basic to helping a member feel understood. Once member’s positions have been truly heard, it becomes possible to prioritize the issues and work on the important ones.

Secondary functions: knowledge and skill in these three areas result in the following:

- Clarifying for your member what he or she has said
- Clarifying for the pastor what the member has said
- Helping members to talk in more detail about issues that concern them

- Helping an overly talkative member stop repeating the same facts or story, speeding up and clarifying the interview.

NOTING AND REFLECTING FEELINGS: A FOUNDATION OF MEMBER EXPERIENCE

The skill:

1. Name or personal pronoun
2. Feeling(s) labeled
3. Paraphrase context or reason (“because”)
4. Present tense is best
5. Check-out for accuracy.

“John, it sounds like you feel torn-apart because of your decision. Is that right?”

Labeling feelings:

- Sad
- Mad
- Glad
- Scared
- Mixed, ambivalent
- Metaphorical (like, as if)

How can reflection of feelings help you and your members?

Major function: Underlying member’s words and behaviors are feelings and emotions. The purpose of reflection of feeling is to make these implicit, sometimes hidden, emotions and feelings explicit and clear to your member.

Secondary functions: Knowledge and skill in reflection of feeling result in the following:

- Discuss emotions underlying life experiences
- Encourage member discussion of feelings
- Noting that most members have mixed or ambivalent feeling toward significant events and others, you can use this skill to help members sort out these complex feelings and thoughts.
- Grounding the member and the pastor from time to time in basic experience. There is a tendency in much interviewing to intellectualize and move away from deeper goals and feelings. Can be a help in avoiding intellectualizing

Reflection of feelings can be used to increase, maintain, or decrease emotional expression.

Increase

- Observe the non-verbals
Laughing, tearing, breathing, facial flushing, movement
- Repetition to increase affect
What are you seeing, hearing, feeling? Imagery?

Maintain

- Rely on your own comfort level
- Encourage member to continue to express feelings the way they currently are
- Hold to deeper feelings a relatively short time. You can always come back to them

Decrease

- Encourage slowed rhythmic breathing
- Discuss coping strengths – the power of God’s love, Gospel
- Use concrete, closed questions to gradually move out of emotional discussion to a discussion of facts and concrete events
- Tell your member how important it was for him or her to tell their story and their feelings

FOUR BASIC CONCEPTS

Concept and definition

1. **BASIC LISTENING SEQUENCE:** The skills of attending, questioning, encouraging, paraphrasing, reflection of feeling, and summarizing make up the BLS.

2. **POSITIVE ASSET SEARCH:** The positive asset search uses the BLS to draw out specific positive assets which the member may bring to bear on a problem. This is more useful in the area of the “Fruits of Repentance” than in any other area of the Repentance Model.

3. **EMPATHY:** Viewing the world from your member’s frame of reference requires the skilled use of attending.

4. **STRUCTURING THE INTERVIEW:** An interview has five stages:

- Establishing rapport and structuring
- Gathering information
- Defining outcomes
- Confronting member incongruity and generating alternatives
- Generalizing and transferring learning

Function

To assist in defining a member’s problem and/or the desired outcome of the problem. The BLS helps ensure that the pastor understands the problem as the member experiences it.

To identify the Word of God and God’s love as the source of your member’s strength. To look for exceptions from the problem that lead to solutions. To give your member hope for solutions. To help your member identify fruits of repentance.

This improves your ability to be helpful. Your member views you as a caring helper

To ensure purpose and direction in the interview, and to help define and achieve specific outcomes.

Source: Ivey, Allen E., *Intentional Interviewing and Counseling*, Brooks/Cole Publishing, Pacific Grove, CA: 1994.

USING QUESTIONS TO APPLY SCRIPTURE IN PASTORAL COUNSELING

Read: The Shepherd Nurtures God's Lambs and Sheep, Part Two, Chapter Two, pp. 16-24, by Professor David Kuske.

Pastoral counseling is that pastoral care (Seelsorge) of individuals as they face their problems, troubles, griefs, burdens, fears and illnesses, which involves not simply giving advice, but assisting them to find help and healing from the Word of God. CS, p xii.

The examples on the next few pages attempt to show in an impersonal way, even though the situations listed are all very personal, how to apply Scripture to various situations and in various ways. The way is impersonal because the examples lack interaction with the people with whom you are counseling.

It is important to note that no interpersonal counseling situation will ever go exactly as you have planned it.

- The devil is very active
- Sin can always get uglier and uglier
- Every person has a unique and different personality
- No two situations are ever alike
- Every human being is loved by God – Jesus died for all
- God's Word is very powerful – more powerful than Satan or sin in this world

Therefore, it is important to look at all the variables – the tension points – that may impact upon the situation. You will never identify them all. You will be constantly surprised. Remember that God is with you. He will help you plan. Approach the counseling session with prayer, with Scripture, and with trust in God's promises:

Matthew 28:20 "Surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age."

Romans 8:28 "In all things God works for the good of those who love him."

Also: **BE FLEXIBLE!**

Your members have come to see you for help and hope and comfort from God's Word. But they need more from you than to have you quote just Scripture to them. They need to understand it and apply it to themselves. Here is where you serve as God's mouthpiece – God's New Testament Nathan, Paul, Peter, and John. Be flexible in applying God's Word in all the varied situations that call for pastoral counseling.

Be flexible to people who have come to you because they are stuck – in sin, in problems in relationships, in mental health difficulties, in pain, in sorrow, and hopelessness. Offer the hope of the Gospel in every flexible and creative way that is applicable to your counselee's situation and trouble.

OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLE OF A PROCESS -- GENESIS 50:15-21
PURPOSE: TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO FORGIVE EACH OTHER.

FLEXIBILITY

Who are you counseling?

Both the one who has sinned and the one who has been sinned against?

Only the one who has sinned -- Offender?

Only the one who has been sinned against -- Offendee?

Offender variables? Offender is or is not repentant

Severity of offense

Intentionality of offense

Frequency of offense

Offendee variables? Commitment to relationship

Level of understanding of self as a forgiven child of God

Motivation to forgive

Personal history of giving and receiving forgiveness

SITUATION

Jane and Bob are married. They are both WELS members and have been active in church and Bible Class attendance. Bob has had a brief affair which he has broken off. The affair lasted for three months. He reports ten instances of sexual relationships with the other woman. He ended the affair a year ago. Guilt has led him to confess to Jane. Bob says that he is repentant. He does not want the marriage to end. He has had tests and says that he has contracted no sexually transmitted diseases. Jane and Bob are both present in your office. Jane says that she does not want a divorce. But she wonders how she will ever be able to forgive Bob.

You will ask them to tell you the story of Joseph and his brothers. You may have to help them. Have them read Genesis 50:15-21, or you read it out loud as they follow along. (Variables demanding your flexibility: Literacy level of each, Scriptural cognition of each, Christian commitment of each.)

QUESTIONS -- Comparing and Analyzing Questions are generally more open questions than questions asking people just to tell you the facts of the story or passage.

Bob, compare what Joseph's brothers did to Joseph to what you have done to Jane.

Jane, compare what Joseph's brothers did to Joseph to what Bob has done to you.

Jane, compare how Joseph's life changed after his brother's wronged him to how your life has changed since you found out what Bob did?

How is what Joseph's brothers did to him worse than what Bob has done to you?

In view of this story, evaluate this statement: "What happened will not (has not) changed anything between us?"

Read Romans 8:28. How does this passage compare to Genesis 50:21?
 From this story, what does trust in God have to do with you forgiving your husband?

As a part of repenting and forgiving, what are some things the two of you will need to work on with God's help? (You would now continue in this area.)

When you note problems or seeming difficulties in understanding, intelligence, literacy abilities, Scripture cognition, or Christian commitment, you may need to become much more simple in your questioning approach. An example follows:

**AN OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLE OF A PROCESS BASED ON
 GENESIS 50:15-21 THAT IS MORE SIMPLE IN ITS APPROACH AND USE OF
 QUESTIONS.**

- a. Rephrasing questions to highlight the facts of the background of the story:
 1. How had Joseph's brothers wronged him?
 2. How had Joseph acted towards his brothers?
 3. How had life changed for Joseph after they had wronged him?
 4. How had things changed for the brothers because they had wronged him?
- b. Comparison questions concerning the facts of the background of the story.
 1. How has Bob wronged you?
 2. Jane, how has life changed for you since you found out about the wrong?
 3. Bob, how has life changed for you since you stopped the affair?
 4. _____ since you told Jane about the affair?
- c. Rephrasing questions to highlight precipitating events and relationship issues in the story:
- d. Comparison questions concerning precipitating events and relationship issues – story compared to couple:
- e. Rephrasing questions to highlight attitudes and motivations in the story:
- f. Comparison questions concerning attitudes and motivations – story compared to couple:
- g. Rephrasing questions to highlight repentance and forgiveness in the story:
- h. Comparison questions concerning repentance and forgiveness – story compared to couple:
- i. Questions regarding the meaning of the story and the above questions and responses to the couple:
- j. Questions to drive home the application of the story and the above questions and responses to the couple:

**Example of a Process of Questioning Whereby a Biblical Concept Based on a Section of
the Bible is Taught
Genesis 1:1-Genesis 3:15**

Purpose: Lead counselee to see himself/herself as a beloved child of God – Unique and Special to God.

Situation: Jean feels unloved. She has had a string of failed relationships with men. She has lost her job. Her self-confidence is way down and her speech is filled with negative remarks about herself. She has gained 20 pounds in the past three months since she lost her job. Jean has attended Sunday School and came to church regularly until about three months ago.

You will be using Genesis 1:1 through Genesis 3:15. You will have it open in front of Jean, but will not ask her to read it. The section is too large. You will rely on her memory and will have her look up the areas where she might be weak in her memory.

You say:

The Bible says that (Psalm 139:14) “We are fearfully and wonderfully made.” Genesis 1:1 through Genesis 3:15 describes how God did this. He created everything according to His plan. God says after each day of Creation: “And God saw that it was good.” Who is the judge about whether creation is good or bad?

What does it mean when He makes this judgment about the things He made?

God made man (humans) “in His Image.” What does this mean for you and me?

When God created the beautiful garden and woman for man and man for woman in the first marriage, what does that tell you about God’s feelings for us humans?

Who bears the responsibility for sin and for the loss of the Image of God to human beings?
What does this mean for all of us now?

Read Genesis 3:15. How do we know that God loves all human beings, even though we are sinful?

Read Romans 5:8-11. Compare what we have reviewed in Genesis 1:1 to 3:15 to this passage.

The words “justified” and “reconciled” jump out at us. How is it that we are again “good” in God’s sight?

I just said “we,” referring to all human beings. Who does that “we” also include?

God loves you as a baptized Child of God. What does he want you to think about yourself?

Who really is the judge about what is good and bad? Since he loved you to send His Son for you, you know that he has judged you special and loved in His sight.

How, then, should you judge yourself?

Now apply the lesson learned to Jean’s feelings about self and her life.

**EXAMPLE OF A PROCESS WHEREBY A BIBLICAL TRUTH IS TAUGHT BY
USING A QUESTIONING METHODOLOGY IN CONNECTION WITH A
PSALM**

PSALM 32

Purpose of Use: To lead counselee to see from Scripture that God forgives the sins of all people in Christ Jesus.

Situation: Jane comes to you with extreme guilt. She confesses to you what she has never confessed to anyone before. She had an abortion three years before. She asks you questions like: How could God ever forgive me for the terrible thing I did to my baby?

You have her open Psalm 32 and read it out loud.

Questions:

Are you feeling more like verses 1 and 2 or more like verse 3 right now?

Why is it that God does not count sin against us?

King David wrote this psalm after he had been forgiven by God for several great sins. He had sinned sexually with Bathsheba, a married woman. Then David had arranged for someone to kill her husband, Uriah (II Samuel 12:9). Compare your feelings about your sin of abortion with David's feelings in vs. 3-4.

David's sin was forgiven by God (vs. 5). What does that mean for you?

What picture does vs. 7 bring to your mind?

Read II Corinthians 5:17-19. How do these verses compare to the message of comfort for you in Psalm 32?

Psalm 32 contains a roller coaster of feelings and emotions. Can you identify them and explain how that roller coaster of feelings and emotions expressed by the believing writer is like yours?

Verses 8 and 9 express the concept of fruits of repentance. What might be the fruits of your repentance in view of God's forgiveness for your sin of abortion?

What do verses 10 and 11 have to do with your faith in God's forgiveness of your sin because of Christ crucified for you and your sin?

**Session Five: THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON – THE
REPENTANCE MODEL AND THE FORGIVENESS
PROCESS.**

**REFERRAL
ASSESSMENT AREAS
RECORD KEEPING
SUMMARY VIDEO**

**THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON — THE REPENTANCE MODEL —
THE FORGIVENESS PROCESS.**

Six things need to be emphasized when counseling people in time of crisis:

1. **View the crisis as an opportunity to present law and gospel**
2. **Exercise patience**
3. **Strive for repentance and forgiveness**
4. **Trust in the power of the Word.**
5. **Practice what you preach**
6. **The issue is always personal and emotional**

In the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15) we see neither son acting out of mature faith. One tests the father's love by squandering wealth and by licentious living. For a long time there is impenitence for his sinful living. The other son tests the father's love with his unforgiving attitude.

The contrition part of repentance is always the recognition that our greatest fear is true. We have not been able to do it on our own. We have not been able to live without our Heavenly Father. We have tried and we have failed – repeatedly --- damnably. We are no longer worthy to be called the sons of God. We have no pride left. We are miserable sinners. Contrition brings us face-to-face with the reality of our own sinful mortality.

Romans 6:23 *The wages of sin is death.*

This is what the specific proclamation of the Law does. *Thou art the man!* This is something that is personal and emotional. It is something that is best done personally. It certainly often best received when it is done personally.

Luke 15:18-19 *Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.*

The prodigal son rejected the morality of his father. He squandered his father's inheritance. He had the live-forever syndrome of the young. He had the know-it-all attitude of the protected child. He would be used, abused, and tossed aside in a sinful world, but he did not know that when he left home so confident and proud of himself. He

would learn it. Sometimes that has to happen. When it does happen, we pastors and teachers need to be there in the time of crisis. The crisis becomes our opportunity.

It is my experience that there is a remembrance of grace on the part of many of our people in their times of crisis. They remember the lessons of their youth in Sunday School and in Lutheran Elementary School. We need to brain-wash them while we have them, before the time of crisis. The well needs to be as full as possible with the Word so that when the crisis comes the water of life may be dipped from it so that the person in crisis is strengthened to cope. When the crisis comes, the Word is there – Law and Gospel – to correct and admonish and guide and comfort. Some of it is remembered. Use this remembrance. Build on it. Nourish it and make it grow in your crisis counseling. It is a remembrance of precious grace we need to strengthen. It is a remembrance of the grace won for us by the holy, precious blood of the Son of God shed for us and for all.

What made the prodigal son come to his senses? The harsh law of God was preached to him by the terrible mess that he had made of his life. The situation of his life that he had put himself into was the crisis. The harsh Law of God was preached to him by the terrible mess that he had made of his life. But in his despair, he trusted his father enough to rely on his father's mercy and compassion. He knew the record of his father in dealing with his hired men. Objective justification needs to be at the heart and soul of all of our preaching and teaching. The cross of Christ for all sinners is God's theme for our ministries.

Be close enough to the family so that they will call you in the time of crisis. In your crisis counseling:

listen in love
proclaim objective justification
apply specific Law upon contrition
apply specific Gospel
Talk about the fruits of repentance

It is true what they said about Jesus:

Luke 15:2 *This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.*

It is true also of the undershepherds of the Good Shepherd.

We need to train ourselves and our church council members and our people to be joyful about the return of the lost. We need to show the joy of the father, sometimes more quietly, but still communicated carefully to the returnee. As we welcome them back into the fold, we need to live objective justification as individuals and as a congregation.

This brings us to the reaction of the stay-at-home brother in the parable. The brother *refused to go in* to the feast the father was holding for the returned brother. He

seemed to be jealous. He seemed to hold the father's mercy and compassion and forgiveness against him. He could not forget the anger that had grown inside of him when he saw how his brother had hurt his father. He did not understand grace. Perhaps he did not understand his own imperfection – sin. “How can my brother be treated this way by my father when my brother has hurt him so? How can my brother get what I don't get – what I deserve because of my faithfulness to my father?” Work-righteousness and self-righteousness are obvious here. Anger is in opposition to love and concern for souls. Works are in opposition to grace.

The father has it right. There is joy and love for both sons. Gently the father chides his unforgiving son:

Luke 15:31-32 My son...you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But I had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.

We are a church that lives *God so loved the world!* We are a church that lives *God was reconciling the world unto himself in Christ!* The world includes the fallen away, the lost, the rebellious, the gross and open sinner. These are not our shame. These are our **opportunities**.

We need to communicate to each other that we have a responsibility of love to express the Law in love and the Gospel in love to all people, even those living in crisis because of their own stupid sins.

We need to be much less concerned about numbers and more concerned about individual souls. We need to devise ways and methods to be more personal and better communicators of the love of the Good Shepherd which is expressed in both his Law and His Gospel. In our eagerness to work with those in crisis we need to view them not as our problem, but as the opportunity to serve our Savior as his undershepherd. We need to patiently return again and again, repeating Law and Gospel over and over again. We need to seize the opportunity which the time of crisis presents to show our Heavenly Father's love and concern for souls in our actions and our words.

REFERRAL

Comments Regarding an Over-riding Tension

In general, the Counseling Shepherd views the mental health of the human being as having spiritual, emotional, and physical dimensions. The emphasis in Christian Law/Gospel pastoral counseling is certainly upon the spiritual dimension. It is only somewhat of an over-generalization to say that for the first half of this century and more Christianity and secular counseling were at odds the one with the other. As psychotherapy and secular counseling grew in popularity and in prestige in America many pastoral counselors and many of the clergy began to feel more and more threatened by the humanistic and anthropocentric approach of secular counseling. God was left out of the picture and man put himself there.

A "therapeutic revolution" (Stafford, 1993, *Christianity Today*, 36, (6), pp. 25-32) has occurred in the Christian community within the last 30 years. Most revolutions and most revolutionaries proudly honor the blood of those who were martyred for the cause. The blood of the therapeutic revolution has been the ink and paper of the printer. A computer printout of just the titles of books published from 1989 through 1992 in the subject areas of psychology and Christianity is 2.5 inches thick on the author's bookshelf. If anything, publishing since 1992 has increased rather than decreased in this area. The argument is still proceeding in the periodicals. How do Christianity and the science of psychology fit? Do they fit at all? Can they even be thought to be compatible?

There are basically three camps in the fray. **Position One** is almost a Christian Science approach to mental health healing. It is claimed in this position that the Bible and only the Bible is the acceptable tool of pastoral and Christian counselors. Needless to say, those who adhere to **Position One** are the most opposed to secular counseling methods and secular counselors. They are very vocal in advocating their position.

Position Two is the middle position that can best be described as the position of lines of demarcation and firm boundaries. Christian counselors and pastors who counsel are capable in spiritual areas. Secular counselors are capable in emotional areas. Medical doctors are capable in physical areas. It is always important to know when and to whom to refer and it is important to stay in your own area of expertise, cooperating as a team with those who are professionals in the other two areas. **Position Two** describes the largest number of pastors who counsel. The tension within this position is where one sets the lines of demarcation between the spiritual, emotional, and physical areas. Agreement is rare. Its adherents are the least vocal.

Position Three is the fastest growing position. It is the position of integration. Its adherents promote the integration of Christian counseling and pastoral counseling with secular counseling. Twenty-five years ago it was an unknown field and an unknown position. In November of 1992 two thousand three hundred Christian mental health professionals gathered in Atlanta. Stafford writes: "Without any central institution or single leader, and almost without anyone paying attention, Christian psychology has

moved to the center of evangelicalism” (1993, p. 25). **Position One** has been growing in activity because of the fear of many that counseling techniques rooted in secular therapy promoted by the advocates of **Position Three** will replace the Bible as the tool of the pastoral counselor.

Almost all of the discussion in the plethora of books that decry, promote, or describe the integration of Christianity with secular counseling methodology and theory flows along the continuum line described by **Position One** through **Position Three** above.

Hesselgrave talks about Buddhism and brief therapy as both being pragmatic. But he notes that both are anthropocentric. “Christianity is theocentric and therefore neither its viability nor its truth is dependent upon human response and experience. . . . Utility has its place in Christian ministry, but like others who minister in the name of Christ, the Christian counselor runs a great risk when he or she measures the validity of an approach solely on the basis of whether or not it ‘works’” (Hesselgrave, 1988, *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 16, (3), p. 251).

“The primary difference between theology and psychology is that theology begins with God’s self-revelation in Scripture, nature, and history, whereas psychology usually begins with human behavior as observed by other people” (Clinton, 1990, *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 18, (2), p. 17). It is this belief in the absolute authority of Scripture which leads Hesselgrave to declare: “Does not true Christianity consist of much more than a behavioral change?” (1988, p. 251). Hesselgrave shows here that he is feeling the tension of the psychology/theology argument described above. Yet, Hesselgrave is not a *Position One*/anti-psychology writer. He recognizes and gives credit to the insights into human behavior that are found in Brief Therapy. But the warning he makes always needs to be present in our minds as we read the **Position Three** integrationists.

I believe that the Counseling Shepherd will find himself somewhere in the **Position Two** camp. Perhaps a comparison needs to be made to more clearly describe my statement. A believer in Jesus Christ notices a lump on her breast. She takes the matter to the Lord in prayer. Yet, she does not neglect her physical health by rejecting or ignoring professional medical help. She goes to her medical doctor for a check-up and for the procedures of diagnosis and the treatment of modern medicine for what turns out to be cancer. At the advice of her medical professional she attends a group of women who meet to discuss and counsel each other regarding the disease which they all share. The woman also talks to her pastor who ministers to her with the Word of God. Her faith and her prayer life are strengthened. She nurtures her spiritual life with Word and Sacrament. So also the person who is suffering from some mental disorder neither neglects the spiritual, the emotional, or the physical aspects of the disease, but seeks proper treatment from the appropriate professional. She talks to her pastor. She consults with her physician and with a mental health professional.

The over-riding tension is always present in all the Christian counseling materials that you read. If the author neglects to speak about the tension, you must have it in your own mind and judgment. Good Christian counseling writers will address this tension. They will note the good in one form of secular counseling or one theory of treatment and then they will add a caveat. Hesselgrave gives us an example: “The achievement of significant behavior change as a result of one or two counseling sessions is indeed an attractive prospect. Brief Therapy techniques make this possible. But from a biblical point of view it would be a mistake to allow this possibility to blind us to another possibility – that of falling into the trap of pure pragmatism” (Hesselgrave, 1988, p. 251). “I conclude that, when its pitfalls are avoided, the approach and techniques of Brief Therapy possess great potential for Christian counselors” (Hesselgrave, 1988, p. 252).

When a Counseling Shepherd refers a person to a mental health professional, a medical doctor, a lawyer, a real estate agent, or a financial advisor, he does not wash his hands in termination. His involvement continues in counseling. He is and remains his member’s called under-shepherd of Christ. He continues to minister to the spiritual needs of his people.



MODELS OF THERAPY

Models of therapy should be used as a road map. They can serve as a guide through the territory of the relationship.

The map is not the territory.

If you follow only the map, you will miss the landmarks and the scenery. (helpful information and data)

The overlays of the maps can be inter-changed.

There is a communication pattern map

a psychological map

an inter-relationship map

a developmental stage map

a willingness to learn and to change map

a map of the goals of the individuals of the family

a map of the structure of the family

a map of the family of origin -- three generations

a map of sinful actions

a map of God's grace and forgiveness

ASSESSMENT

Use different lenses to focus on different dimensions of the territory for your map.

I. CONTENT LENS -- basic facts lens.

A. Presenting Problem and Goal Setting

1. Get as much specific information as possible.

2. a balanced inquiry -- ask all parties -- be fair, balanced.

3. Accept their definition of the problem and goals?

4. If multiple problems - prioritize them -- better, get them to prioritize them. If they have different priorities, meet with the couple separately. Balanced.

B. Assessing the presenting problem.

1. a definition of the problem from both parties.

2. the meaning the problem has for both parties

- is there shared responsibility for the problem?

- is there blaming?

- is there hopelessness?

3. History of the problem?

- when?

- ups and downs?

- gradual deterioration or sudden manifestation?

- what else was going on in their lives when the problem began?

4. Consequences -- How has the problem changed their relationship?

5. Symptoms of the problem -- what are they?

Do the symptoms serve a function?

C. Goal setting

1. Is there common ground?

2. are their goals different?
If so, these can sometimes be bridged together on a different level.
3. are their goals opposite?
If so, can the couple compromise and find a middle ground?

D. General Information Questions

1. Age differences
2. How long together?
3. How long married?
4. Did they live together before married and how long?
5. If unmarried right now, are they living together and for how long?
6. Any previous serious relationships, engagements, marriages? How long ago? Why discontinued?
7. If divorced, reasons for divorce. Were they (are they) under church discipline? What church?
8. Deaths of any previous spouses, circumstances?
9. Separations? For how long? When?
10. Children?
11. Employment?
12. Physical health problems?

II. PROCESS LENS. Look at different dimensions of the interactional pattern.

- A. Autonomy and togetherness --- find the balance
distance/closeness
"I" vs. "We" - pronouns
pursuer/distancer pattern
oscillations between approach and avoidance
note that: sometimes the presenting problem and its symptoms regulate the distance
- B. Power and control -- a critical assessment. What is the distribution and the use of power in the relationship?
(subtle or overt, financial, coercion, fear, violence)
dominance vs. submission
distribution of the work load
(over-functioning vs. under-functioning)
symptoms can regulate the power imbalance
symptoms can create the power imbalance (alcoholism)
Key: check on the non-verbals of the listening person and how the speaker reacts to the non-verbals
- C. Fairness and trust
Fairness is the balance of give and take as perceived by both
Fairness is the ability to give the other person the benefit of the doubt. -- openness.
Trust is the mutual respect, reliability, willingness to make up, ability and willingness to forgive.
Trust goes hand-in-hand with fairness. Trust helps build fairness and fairness helps build trust.

Trust and fairness build an atmosphere of safety and caring.

Trustworthiness is what one does to earn the trust of the other.

"If you were in your partner's shoes, would you trust you?"

Fairness and trust get at the heart of things.

D. Level of commitment of both.

Each asked (respectfully) "Do you want to be closer?"

"Do you want to stay the same?"

"Do you want to be more distant?"

"Do you understand God's Will for you
and your marriage?"

Talk about the costs of changing.

E. Communication process

Do they do "mind-reading"? If so, the mis-understandings will
just pile up on each other.

How good are they at listening?

How good are they at accuracy?

How good are they at empathy?

Can they resolve conflicts? (have they?) If they have resolved
conflicts in the past, what was different at the time
when they resolved the conflict from now when they are
having this current conflict?

Can they communicate about goals? Do they implement them?

Can they get anything done?

F. Boundaries -- Do they set boundaries around their relationship?
flexibility -- can others get in?

Interactions with families on both sides? Otherwise each spouse
has to satisfy all the needs of the other.

Are there too many in the relationship? triangulate friends,
parents, kids, affairs into the relationship.

G. Energy in the relationship -- vitality, pizzazz, chemistry

Look to rekindle energy over time

But forewarn about expectations

H. Pleasure -- Bonding

Physical relationship

warmth

sexual relationship

the ability to be vulnerable and intimate with each other --

this is tied to trust and fairness

sometimes the way the sexual relationship is acted out is the way
the relationship is as a whole.

III. CONTEXT LENS - What is going on around them of which they are a
part. Over-arching dimensions which impact the relationship

A. Family of Origin -- generally unconscious forces

- look for repetitive patterns across generations in the family

- relationships with significant others while growing up
parents, siblings, friends, lovers

- affects the ability of partners to attach and be intimate

- inconsistencies lead to an anxious, fearful adult who has

difficulty being intimate.

- rejection in childhood leads to an adult with a lot of withdrawal and with an inability to be intimate.
- symptoms are a lot of conflict in current relationships.
- each bring fantasies to the relationship from family of origin which have an impact on the relationship.
- look for repetitive patterns across generations and relationships.

B. Culture -- take this in a broad sense
differences and similarities
the need to compromise must be explored
demonstrations of how compromise works

C. Gender

- certain pre-existent expectations about gender for self and for spouse
- are they defining gender and gender roles in different ways?
- the greater the difference, the greater the conflict

D. Societal influences

From society people get conflicting messages about how to behave as a couple and as a family. What is right? What is acceptable? Cf. Scripture

- religion
- community
- academics
- media
- politics

E. Developmental and Lifecycle task completion

The theory is that certain tasks must be mastered at each stage in a relationship to move on to the next stage in the relationship.

- leaving home
- joining families through marriage
- having young children
- having adolescents
- launching children and moving on
- families in maturity (old age)

The theory talks about certain crisis times when there is a convergence of horizontal stressors and vertical stressors. The horizontal stressors are those associated with couple development over time. These are predictable and unpredictable.

The vertical stressors are those which have to do with family of origin issues. Rules and boundaries.

- a partner who was cut-off from his/her family of origin now tries to launch a child.
- a partner who lost a parent at age 8 now has a child who is age 8
- a partner who received open communication about sex is married to a partner who learned that sex is shameful. Now they want to have a healthy and happy sexual relationship.

IV. SPIRITUAL LENS

A. Content -- Assessment of the sin

1. Content -- basic facts
 - a. the what, who, how, where, and with whom of the sin
 - b. a definition of the sin from both parties
 - c. balanced inquiry -- ask all parties
2. Assess for Scriptural understanding
 - a. of God's Law
 - b. for application of God's Law
 - to self
 - to others
3. Relational
 - a. the meaning of the sin for both parties
 - b. consequences -- to self, to both, to others
 - c. symptoms
 - physical health of each
 - spiritual health of each
 - relationship - to spouse, to God

B. Process -- Assessment of Guilt

1. Fear
 - a. God's wrath
 - b. of the anger of others
2. Hurt
 - a. God
 - b. self
 - c. others
 - d. relationship
3. Shame
 - a. God
 - impact on prayer life, worship life
 - b. church - attendance, attitude
 - c. others
 - d. shown by what actions
 - e. reason for, shame
 - God's Law
 - got caught
 - others know
 - others hurt
4. Anger
 - a. at perceived lack of understanding
 - b. at felt injustice
 - c. at actions of others who know
 - d. at God
 - e. at self
 - f. shown in what actions
5. Impact of guilt on relationship
 - a. companionship -- communication
 - b. children
 - c. sexual

- 6. Mental
 - a. depression
 - b. anxiety
 - c. suicidal ideations
 - 7. Sorrow
 - a. reason
 - b. in respect to God
 - c. expressed in what words
 - d. shown in what actions
 - e. desire for forgiveness
 - from God
 - from others
- C. Context of the sin
- 1. Frequency of the sin
 - 2. Intentionality of the sin
 - 3. Severity (in respect to human judgment)
 - 4. Patterns
 - a. triggers, excuses
 - b. used as justification
 - c. generational -- family patterns
 - d. peer patterns
 - e. societal or cultural patterns
 - 5. Temptation factors
 - a. who
 - b. what
 - c. where
 - d. how
 - e. intentionality to put self in the path of temptation
 - 6. Justification of sin
 - a. who
 - b. what
 - c. how
 - d. how strong
- D. Assessment of Gospel
- 1. Knowledge of Objective Justification -- facts of salvation
 - a. Christ's substitutionary life for all
 - b. Christ's substitutionary death for all
 - c. Christ's resurrection and its meaning for all
 - d. "It is finished!"
 - 2. Application of objective facts of salvation to self
 - a. perception of God's love, grace, mercy
 - b. application to self
 - c. faith
 - d. trust
 - e. hope
 - f. shown in words, emotions, actions
 - 3. Observable response to the Gospel
 - a. confusion
 - b. tears

-
- c. continued anguish
 - d. breathing patterns
 - e. speech patterns
 - f. eye contact, movements
 - g. peace
 - h. expressed words
4. Active response to the Gospel
- a. desire to show thankfulness
 - b. desire to show fruits of repentance
 - c. discussion of fruits
 - d. actually producing fruits

INITIAL INTERVIEW NOTES

NAME _____ SPOUSE _____ DATE _____

ADDRESS _____ MEMBER STATUS _____
_____ PHONE _____

PRESENT _____

I. Spiritual Problem

A. Current manifestation of spiritual problem

B. Past pastoral care given and member's response

C. Onset and course of spiritual problem (Historical)

II. Background information pertinent to the spiritual problem

If an adult: May include: family, social, recreational, age
developmental history, educational history
economic factors, environmental factors,
employment, marital factors, medical, AODA

If a child: May include: age, developmental history, educational
history, family, social, recreational
economic factors, environmental factors,
medical, AODA

III. Observation and Description

Appearance

Speech pattern

Memory (recent and past)

Thought pattern

Member seemed sad. happy. giddy. tearing, etc.

Insight/judgment

IV. Initial Assessment of Spiritual Condition

(In your own words, what do you think? sin, grace, Law, Gospel?)

V. Referrals for problems beyond the scope of pastoral counseling.

To medical, mental health, or legal professionals

To police

Others

VI. Counseling Goals

What do you and member hope to see as the result of counseling. Work this out with member. These may change over the course of your meetings.

VII. Counseling Plan

meeting for x number of weeks

length of each meeting

Who will be present? family, parent/child, individual, co-pastor
(work this out with parishoner) These may change over the course of your meetings.

Pastor's Signature _____

Date _____

INITIAL INTERVIEW NOTES

NAME _____ DATE _____
SPOUSE _____
ADDRESS _____ MEMBER STATUS _____
PHONE _____
PRESENT _____

I. Spiritual Problem

A. Current manifestation of spiritual problem

B. Past pastoral care given and member's response

C. Onset and course (Historical)

II. Background information pertinent to the spiritual problem

III. Observation and Description

IV. Initial Assessment of Spiritual Condition

V. Referrals for problems beyond the scope of pastoral counseling
To medical, mental health, or legal professional
To police
Others

VI. Counseling Goals

VIII. Counseling Plan

Pastor's Signature _____ Date _____

NAMES OF PEOPLE PRESENT _____
DATE _____

I. Member presented

II. Pastor presented - Scripture used

III. Member's Response

IV. Homework

IV. Next Session _____
_____ End Sessions

Pastor's Signature _____ Date _____

DATE _____

MEMBER _____ Follow-up _____

I. Specific reason for closing

II. Dates of Interviews and who was present

III. Summary of activity

IV. Continuing Problems

Recommendations

Referrals

V. General Observations and Thoughts About Future Action

Pastor's Signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX

Pages A-1 through A-2 of this material is from a course that is taught at WLS to Seniors.

Pages A-3 through A-8 of this appendix material is from a course that is being developed to further train therapists at Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Services in the use of Scripture in counseling.

THE USE OF QUESTIONS AND THE PRESENTATION OF SCRIPTURE

Alan H. Siggelkow, 4-2-98

OLD TESTAMENT MODEL – FORGIVENESS – GENESIS 50:15-21
PURPOSE: TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO FORGIVE EACH OTHER.

FLEXIBILITY

Who are you counseling?

Both the offender and the offende

Only offender?

Only offende

Offender variables? Offender is or is not repentant

Severity of offense

Intentionality of offense

Frequency of offense

Offende

Level of understanding of self as a forgiven child of God

Motivation to forgive

Personal history of giving and receiving forgiveness

SITUATION

Jane and Bob are married. They are both WELS members and have been active in church and Bible Class attendance. Bob has had a brief affair which he has broken off. The affair lasted for three months. He reports ten instances of sexual relationships with the other woman. He ended the affair a year ago. Guilt has led him to confess to Jane. He has had tests and has contracted no sexually transmitted diseases. Jane and Bob are both present in your office. Jane says that she does not want a divorce. But she wonders how she will ever be able to forgive Bob.

You will ask them to tell you the story of Joseph and his brothers. You may have to help them. Have them read Genesis 50:15-21, or you read it out loud as they follow along. (Variables demanding your flexibility: Literacy level of each, Scriptural cognition of each, Christian commitment of each.)

QUESTIONS – comparing and Analyzing Questions are generally more open questions.

Bob, compare what Joseph's brothers did to Joseph to what you have done to Jane -- to what Bob has done to you, Jane.

Compare how Joseph's life changed after his brother's wronged him to how your life has changed since you found out what Bob did?

How is what Joseph's brothers did to him worse than what Bob has done to you?

In view of this story, evaluate this statement: "What happened will not (has not) changed anything between us?"

Read Romans 8:28. How does this passage compare to Genesis 50:21?

From this story, what does trust in God have to do with you forgiving your husband?

As a part of repenting and forgiving, what are some things the two of you will need to work on with God's help?

When you note problems or seeming difficulties in understanding, intelligence, literacy abilities, Scripture cognition, or Christian commitment, you may need to become much more simple in your questioning approach. An example follows:

AN OLD TESTAMENT MODEL BASED ON GENESIS 50:15-21 THAT IS MORE SIMPLE IN ITS APPROACH AND USE OF QUESTIONS.

- a. Rephrasing questions to highlight the facts of the background of the story:
 1. How had Joseph's brothers wronged him?
 2. How had Joseph acted towards his brothers?
 3. How had life changed for Joseph after they had wronged him?
 4. How had things changed for the brothers because they had wronged him?

- b. Comparison questions concerning the facts of the background of the story.
 1. How has Bob wronged you?
 2. How has life changed for you since you found out about the wrong?
 3. Bob, how has life changed for you since you stopped the affair?
 4. since you told Jane about the affair?

- c. Rephrasing questions to highlight precipitating events and relationship issues in the story:
- d. Comparison questions concerning precipitating events and relationship issues -- couple:
- e. Rephrasing questions to highlight attitudes and motivations in the story:
- f. Comparison questions concerning attitudes and motivations -- couple:
- g. Rephrasing questions to highlight repentance and forgiveness in the story:
- h. Comparison questions concerning repentance and forgiveness -- couple:
- i. Questions regarding the meaning of the story and the above questions and responses to the couple:
- j. Questions to drive home the application of the story and the above questions and responses to the couple:

GUIDE ME WITH YOUR COUNSEL
INSTRUCTIONS FOR CASE APPLICATIONS
PSALMS

OBJECTIVES OF THE CASE APPLICATIONS FOR PSALMS

The student is to:

1. demonstrate a knowledge of and an ability to use the rich spiritual help God gives to troubled souls in the Psalms;
2. demonstrate an ability to recognize unique tensions which psychological or physical problems may place upon the manner and method of applying Scripture to the spiritual needs of clients;
3. demonstrate an ability to use both the Law and the Gospel in the process of encouraging fruits of repentance in connection with the Repentance Model;
4. demonstrate the ability to use the Psalms in connection with closing a series of successful sessions;
5. receive encouragement to grow from this study of Psalms in his or her own personal devotional life;
6. receive encouragement to continue to study the Psalms and the Old Testament Wisdom Literature as a fruitful well of counseling help.

PROCEDURE

Attached you will find three Case Applications. Please do all three.

It also might be helpful to read all three before you begin with Case Application One.

Refer to General Procedures for Case Applications.

GUIDE ME WITH YOUR COUNSEL

CASE APPLICATIONS PSALMS

All three case applications must be done by everyone.

Case Application One

Psalm 55:22

**22 Cast your cares on the LORD
and he will sustain you;
he will never let the righteous fall.**

Psalm 55:22 is a commonly quoted passage of encouragement to those who are troubled. Proverbs 3:5-6 is somewhat of a complementary passage.

Proverbs 3:5-6

**5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
6 in all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make your paths straight.**

Note that in previous case applications you were not directly asked to consider any psychological problems or physical problems your client might be experiencing as you addressed Scripture to him/her or his/her situation. You are now asked to consider the psychological and physical needs of your client(s). Please take into full account the psychological or physical needs which the client(s) in this situation may have according to your perception of the case as you address his/her/their spiritual needs.

Apply Psalm 55 as you consider how you might use Scripture to help the person in the following situation. Please use the following steps in doing so:

1. Identify the spiritual, psychological, and physical needs of Robert and Julia.
2. Briefly (in one or two paragraphs) indicate how these needs will be addressed in the helping process.
3. Using an appropriate questioning methodology, apply Psalm 55 to Robert and Julia's situation. Specifically target Robert's anger (either his anger towards Julia or his anger/planned vengeance towards his co-workers or both). You are in session with both Robert and Julia when you address Robert on the anger issue(s). Be sure to apply application of Law and Gospel in your questioning. (one and one half to two pages)
4. II Samuel Chapters 15 through 18 will be helpful background information on Psalm 55. It might be helpful to review Psalm 41, Psalm 11, and Psalms 52-60.

Case Situation

Robert and Julia come to you as a troubled married couple. Robert appears quite overweight. His clothing is very tight on him. He says that he has gained 30 pounds in the last four months. He has had problems sleeping at night for the past four months. Robert is 45 years old. This is the first marriage for both Robert and Julia. They have a son who is in college and a daughter in an Area Lutheran High School. They bought a new house last year. Robert displays a negativity in his attitude as he talks with you.

Julia is quite outgoing. She tries hard to express a positive attitude. She is dressed neatly in stylish clothing. She is an attractive 43 year-old woman. She expresses a lot of concern for Robert.

They both say that they are having marital problems and that is why they have come to see you. Robert and Julia are arguing a lot lately. As is normal, Julia thinks that Robert usually starts it, although there are times when he goes for days without really speaking to her. Robert blames Julia for starting the arguments. He says that he tries to keep from arguing and holds it in for so long until he can't anymore and he just explodes. Julia describes the same process but doesn't admit to causing the arguments. She says that she knows that Robert is very worried and troubled, but all her attempts to help are met with silence until Robert suddenly blows up in anger and walks out of the house or breaks something in anger in the house.

The sexual part of their marriage is almost non-existent. It ended about four months ago when Robert was impotent in two successive attempts at sexual union. Robert has shown no sexual interest in Julia since then, not even hugging or kissing her.

Julia says that all of their troubles are caused by the pressures that Robert is facing at work. He is in upper middle management. His company has been downsizing. Robert has been told that his department will be the next to downsize. He and the six other middle managers in his department have been good friends in the past, helping each other and covering for each other when things go wrong. Robert says that the pressure of this anticipated downsizing has changed all of that. Robert says that it is now a dog-eat-dog situation. Everybody seems to be trying to position himself to be one of the three people in that level of management who will be retained. Robert feels that he has no chance of keeping his job. He feels betrayed by people whom he had considered to be his friends. Robert tears when he talks about this issue. He also erupts in anger at one point, expressing threats of vengeful retaliation against several of his co-workers. Robert says that he'll go for a week or two driven by anger and will work like a banshee on the job. But usually, he is so disgusted with the whole thing and he can hardly do anything at work. He just knows that he will not be able to keep his job. He is very worried about the kid's education and the house payments. He feels sorry for Julia who has to live with a failure like him.

Julia says that her goal is that she wants to find effective ways to help Robert. Robert states his goal as wanting peace at home because he has no peace at work. They both say that they want a peaceful and complete marital relationship again.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE: Remember that the Law is used to produce contrition. Remember that the Gospel is used to proclaim absolution and to produce faith in God's forgiveness. Remember that the Law is used as a guide and the Gospel is used as motivation to produce fruits of repentance (Psalm 32). The psychological and physical needs of this couple may color, impact upon, or change the way that you present the Scripture to them using the Law-Gospel-Law and Gospel approach of the repentance model. In a paragraph or two describe how the psychological and physical needs of this couple colored, impacted upon, or changed the way you described your presentation of Scripture to them..

This worksheet might be a helpful tool.

Robert

spiritual needs

spiritual helps

psychological needs

psychological helps

physical needs

physical helps

Julia

spiritual needs

spiritual helps

psychological needs

psychological helps

physical needs

physical helps

PSALMS CASE APPLICATION TWO

You have finished your sessions with your client. They have been very successful. In the closing ten minutes of your last session you decide to use a Psalm as a closing of song of praise or prayer or devotion.

In one paragraph state some of the blessings you and your client have received during the course of therapy. This can be a real or fictitious case about which you write. In other words, describe how she or he has been helped.

Then demonstrate in a paragraph or two how you would use the Psalm or portion of a Psalm you have chosen as such a closing song of praise and thanksgiving, prayer, or devotion with your client.

Note that this use of a Psalm might serve as a teaching tool to drive home a main point of the session. (In this use as a teaching tool to re-enforce the main point of the sessions, you would not use the Psalm as a prayer as your method since a prayer is talking to God and not to another human being.) It might serve as an expression of thanks and praise to God. (In this case a prayer would be a very appropriate use of the Psalm.) You might make your use of a Psalm as a combination prayer and devotion and teaching tool. You might design the Psalm to serve as a memory hitch for future use by your clients.

Procedure:

1. State specifics of the case.
2. Choose Psalm.
3. State purpose(s) of use of this Psalm.
4. Demonstrate in writing how you would use the Psalm with your client(s).
(Using the questioning methodology, show the interaction with your client(s) as you use this Psalm or Psalm portion for the purpose you have stated.)

PSALMS CASE APPLICATION THREE

One of the most difficult areas of the Repentance Model to apply interactively is the Fruits of Repentance section. It seems to be so easy and such a time saving thing to just prescribe fruits of repentance. "You ought to do..." If that is done, it almost always makes the fruits of repentance sound like penance which the therapist has demanded of the client. Penance is the un-Scriptural idea that by doing something the contrite sinner can "make it right." Penance is an act of work-righteousness and not a fruit of repentance. It is all in the attitude and the motivation and the purpose of the act. A true fruit of repentance is like a true good work. It is something which is done by the believer out of love and thankfulness for God's forgiveness in Christ; done to the glory of God; and done in keeping with God's Ten Commandments. While a good work may be anything done according to these principles, a fruit of repentance is connected with the sin repented of and would usually be viewed by the one sinned against as something good done by the sinner showing both contrition and faith in Christ's forgiveness. The Law is used as a guide - this is God's Will. The Gospel is used as the reason for making the change or producing the fruit of repentance.

Demonstrate how you would encourage both Amy and Fred in the following situation to produce fruits of repentance:

Amy and Fred are both repentant about the fighting that has occurred in their marriage. You have assured them both of God's forgiveness. Write out, using a questioning methodology and Scripture, how you will encourage them towards change (change in attitude, action, word choice in communication, conversation patterns, or other change) that will be fruits of repentance. Remember the way we described a fruit of repentance in the introduction. The Scripture you may use is Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, or Song of Solomon.

Procedure

1. Add whatever particulars you may want to add regarding the characteristics of the case of Fred and Amy that will make it easier for you to apply your Scripture in encouraging fruits of repentance.
2. State the specific purpose for the use of your passage(s).
3. Write out how you will encourage both Fred and Amy to produce specific fruits of repentance using a questioning methodology.