

**Biblical Counseling 301 – Class Seven**  
**July 22, 2018 *Marriage Counseling, part 2***

**I. Three Primary Goals for Marriage Counseling**

**9:05-10:00**

- **Discern where unity is broken**  
(*Covered last week*)
  
- **Spiritual assessment and plan**
- Where are they spiritually?
- Clear testimony of relationship with the Lord?
- Is the gospel clear? (See Appendix)
  
- Do they possess a confident, assured relationship with the Lord? (1 John 5:13)
- Do they understand that it is by grace through faith? (Eph. 2:8-9)
- Are they clear on what Christ has done for them and not vice versa? (Rom. 4:5)
  
- What is their maturity level? Need to  
decide how fast to move, and how much ground to cover. They may have a strong foundation in the scriptures and personal knowledge of the Lord, yet be blind to what they each contribute to the problem. Or their commitment to the Lord may be immature, lacking essential knowledge of the Lord and His Word.
  
- What is their growth commitment?  
If these six things are not in place in their lives, you will usually repeatedly hit “speed bumps” that slow their growth and change. They are the foundation for counseling.
  - a. Do they understand and are they now committed to progressive sanctification? (Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 5:9; Col. 1:28; 1 Thess. 5:23) You may have to teach this principle.
  - b. Biblical dependency? (Matt. 7:24-28; Rom. 10:17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17)
  - c. Biblical confidence? (Psalm 19:7-12; 2 Peter 1:2-3; 1:19-21)
  - d. Renunciation of their own wisdom? (Proverbs 16:25)
  - e. Readiness to repent? (2 Cor. 12:21; 2 Tim. 2:25; Rev. 2:5, 16. 21-22; 3:3, 19)
  - f. Do they understand blindness/deceit of their own heart? (Jer. 17:9)  
  4. What is their grasp of their need for community and commitment to local church?
    - a. Eph. 4:1-16 – called to unity, gifted to serve, designed to bring about maturity
    - b. Romans 12 – called as a servant-member of a Body, serving one another in love in gifted ways, meeting the needs of others.
    - c. Titus 2:1-8 – Older men and women are to disciple younger men and women
    - d. Hebrews 3:12-15 (10:24-25) – We share a daily need for “sharpening”

- To what extent do they understand how we live the Christian life?
  - We live the Christian life by faith just as we were saved by faith. (Col. 2:7)
  - We need to understand who we are (our identity) in Him. (Ephesians 1:4, 7, 9-14)
    - c. We need to understand what was begun by faith is finished by faith. (Gal. 3:1-14)
    - d. We must understand that we were crucified with Him, died with Him, were buried with Him, have been raised with Him and seated with Him (Romans 6; Col. 3:1)
    - e. We need to understand that we have been given all things necessary for life and godliness through the true, personal knowledge of Christ. (2 Peter 1:1-3)
  - **Role assessment and plan** (plan should emerge from areas of demonstrated weakness)
  - ***The counselors*** need to clearly understand God's call on the man and woman. *Biblical Pillars* course, *Rocking the Roles* by Robert Lewis, or articles on FL/CBMW websites can help.
2. Examine the three parts of functional family life (from Dr. Tom Parker, formerly DTS):
- a. Husband is in charge
  - b. Husband and wife are on the same page
  - c. Children know they are not in charge
- Help the husband examine himself for eleven things specific to husbands:
    - a. Does he accept his role as head of (leader for) his wife? (1 Cor. 11:1-3; Eph. 5:23)
    - b. Does he live with her "according to understanding"? (1 Peter 3:7)
    - c. Does he treat her as a "weaker vessel" since she is a woman? (1 Pet. 3:7)
    - d. Does he treat her as an equal recipient of the grace of God? (1 Pet. 3:7)
      - e. Does he willingly lay his life down for her (or does he lay down her life for his, i.e., throw her under the bus)? (Eph. 5:25)
      - f. Does he recognize his sacrificial relationship with her as a parallel of Christ's relationship to the church? (Eph. 5:25)
    - g. Does he grasp that he has a sanctifying effect on her? (Eph. 5:26-27)
      - h. Does he permit the curse of "thorn and thistle" to preoccupy him over his responsibility to care for her and for the kids? (Gen. 3:17-19)
    - i. Does he repent of where "masal" (rule harshly) as Gen. 3:16 warned happens?
    - j. Does he love her as commanded in Eph. 5:32 (see 1 Cor. 13)?
    - k. Does he work to provide for her and for rest of family (1 Tim. 5:8)?
  - Third, help the wife examine herself for six things.
    - a. Does she see herself as his helper in aloneness and in filling the earth and in subduing it? (Genesis 2:18, ff.)
    - b. Does she willingly submit herself under his headship by refusing to take over, and refusing to try to verbally control or pressure him, realizing that is how she shows submission to Christ? (Eph. 5:21-24)

- c. Does she respect him (Eph. 5:32) and love him (Titus 2:5)?
- d. Does she speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:25), unfrightened by fear (1 Peter 3:6)?
- e. Does she take care of the house and love her children sacrificially (Titus 2:4-5)?
- f. Does she work hard to be a great value to her husband (Prov. 31:10-31)?

- **Additional Marriage Counseling Principles 10:00-10:25**

- Regarding ‘Counseling Proper’

1. You have learned about and practiced the idea of “building involvement.”

In Marriage Counseling, everything you learned about gaining involvement – *getting their ok for you to be involved, drawing out their commitment to the process, and submitting it all to the Lord* – is twice the job. You need to do it with each person. The first video of Randy Patten with Deb and Trey was a good example of the things you need to do to maintain involvement with each person. The second video showed the fruit of careful involvement. Really, each step in counseling a couple is twice the job, but the first places you have to get used to it are in the stages of *gaining involvement*, *giving hope* and *gathering data*.

- The couple doing the counseling does not need to have a whole session mapped out up front, (e.g., who will speak and when). But you do need a plan you are both committed to following. It will take 30 minutes each session to map it out. For example:

- a. Pray for them and for you.
- b. We will go over this homework (record of the assignment you gave at the last meeting

should be written in front of you).

- c. You may plan “She-CR will ask about this” and “he-CR will ask about this.” You may think

through, “If X or Y comes up, (like he didn’t do his homework or she is minimizing much of what he says), he CR will address the issue with the guy and she CR will address the issue with the girl. Do not take these as wooden and absolute, but just have some guiding principles you get from the Word. For example, since biblically women do not teach men (1 Tim. 2), and since biblically women help women (Titus 2:2-6), you *generally* follow such principles and you do that as a team.

- d. We will try to teach and emphasize this principle from these two passages.
- e. We will try to give them homework on these two things.
- f. Remember to pray for them and for yourselves.

- Generally, I advise meeting a married couple together the first session to hear what is happening and what they each want to change. I *normally* make a practice of separating them within the first few sessions to make sure I am hearing all I need to hear and know, so that I know what we have to deal with. For functionally mature couples who are ready to work, you can often keep them together the whole time. When there is a lot of tension, distance or harshness, you may need to separate and work with them individually for a while during counseling.

- Guard against keeping secrets for one or the other of the couple – it often backfires. If

someone brings something up to you in private, in hopes it won't be disclosed, part of your job is helping them see the wisdom and necessity of sharing it in the marriage. You may have to help them figure out how to do that skillfully – clearly, gently – and be ready to provide support. There are times where that “sharing” will take place between them privately, and other times when it may take place with you as witnesses/mediators. It doesn't always happen the very next meeting, but it should be a commitment to take place in short order so that you are not the keeper of secrets between a couple, and so that they are actively addressing the things that risk breaking their unity. Remember: unity is broken by the secret more than by the thing that they thought required secrecy. Unity is available not through avoidance, but through the gospel being applied in their marriage.

- Because conflict between a couple should expose their sin, including their idols, you must be prepared to dispense liberal doses, not only of truth about sin, but of the gospel.
- **Homework**
- **Open Notes Test**. See questions on and answer on pages 4-5. Share answers at table next week.
- Please spend at least thirty minutes reading through the workbook we are giving you. If married, choose one exercise to do with your wife or husband this week and one the following week.

### **Marriage Counseling Test**

1. What are the three **primary goals** of marriage counseling? (Marriage Counseling Class #1)
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
2. What are the four areas **unity often breaks** down? (Class #1)
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
3. What are the four most prominent **examples** of communication breakdown? (Class #1)

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

4. What are the **two biblical principles** which help a communication breakdown? (Class #1)

- a.
- b.

5. What are some of the **spiritual assessments** required and why? (Marriage Counseling Class #2)

- a.
- b.

6. What **three areas** of family roles determine family functionality? (Class #2)

- a.
- b.
- c.

7. List **five out of the eleven** things we gave you about a man's role that determine how effectively he is impacting his family for good (and provide scripture). (Class #2)

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

8. List **three of six** things about a woman's role that help determine how effectively she is impacting her family for good (and provide scripture). (Class #2)

- a.
- b.
- c.

9. What are 3-4 of the things you need to coordinate with your counseling partner if you end up doing marriage counseling? (Class #2)

10. What questions about marriage counseling do you have that you have not had answered?

### Appendix One – Clear Gospel

The gospel is much maligned and often confused. While I am not worried at all about the gospel being maligned in our circles, I *am concerned* about the gospel being confused.

I wish to present here what I understand to be the gospel. I do this not because I question whether you know it, but because I wish to encourage us to all maintain clarity of focus on the gospel since it is the gospel that changes lives eternally. That is not only true with respect to a person's **justification** (the application of the gospel to an unsaved person by faith such that they are declared righteous in the sight of God, and promised life eternal, Romans 3:21-26), but also with respect to a person's **sanctification** (the application of the gospel to a saved person by faith such that they experience the growing righteousness of Christ's life being lived out in their bodies, Romans 8:4).

This is the gospel. *By the determined foreknowledge and plan of God, Christ was crucified for all sinners, died, was buried, and was raised again to a new life, never to be killed again, and offers eternal life to all who believe on Him. Every sinner who trusts in Christ's work and promise of eternal life receives the gift of eternal life, never to be rescinded.*

The gospel is made unclear in many ways. "Inviting Jesus into my heart" and "giving my life to Jesus" are two of the most common unclear approaches that people do not get from the Bible. Another is when people attach some obligation other than believing the gospel, or when people say that the believing the gospel also includes with it a personal pledge of

faithful devotion and obedience. For example, "Believing the gospel of Christ involves turning from your sins and committing to following Jesus Christ as Lord." Or, "if you do not turn away from your sins and follow Christ obediently as Lord, you cannot believe the gospel." These statements are not supported biblically, they are ambiguous, and they carry a great call to discipleship to people who are not yet even regenerate.

If there is any lack of clarity for you in this matter, I encourage you to read the following passages for starters. They each help contribute to clarity in the matter for me and for many others.

John 1:11-12

John 3:36

John 5:24

Rom 3:10, 21-23

Roma  
ns

4:5

1 Cor.

15:1-

3

Ephe

sians

1:1-1

5

Ephe

sians

2:8-9

1

John

5:13