

**Biblical Counseling 301**  
**July 29, 2018 // Class Eight – Good Counseling Tools**

**I. Introduction**

- A. Today we are going to look at some of the “tools” that counselors should have in their “toolbox” to help counselees see and understand some important concepts. Most of these are helpful in a broad cross-section of counseling situations you will encounter. Our hope is to eventually get these and others on the website so any biblical counselor/mentor can get to them easily.
- B. If you want an electronic version of these so that you can reproduce them more easily for counselees, please ask my secretary, Sherri Libby, at [sherril@fbcva.org](mailto:sherril@fbcva.org)

## Anger "Hot Button" List

Adapted from Lou Priolo's *Complete Husband*, p.115-116

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

It is our responsibility to not become bitter and angry towards other people (Ephesians 4:30-32; Hebrews 12:15). Let's see if we can identify exactly what it is that provokes you to anger.

1. Place a check next to the items below that push your "hot button." As you look at these items, ask yourself what provokes you towards angry responses.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> To be more respectful to me               | <input type="checkbox"/> To not challenge my decisions           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To support my decisions more              | <input type="checkbox"/> To spend less time on the phone         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To not be so controlling                  | <input type="checkbox"/> To not be so spiritually superior       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To be more trusting of me                 | <input type="checkbox"/> To be content                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To not be a people-pleaser                | <input type="checkbox"/> To not disagree with me in public       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To not share so much personal stuff       | <input type="checkbox"/> To not expect me to read their mind     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To be more affectionate                   | <input type="checkbox"/> To be "lighter," more easy-going        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To better control their temper, words     | <input type="checkbox"/> To manage their weight better           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To be less needy                          | <input type="checkbox"/> To not be so anxious or moody           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To take better care of their appearance   | <input type="checkbox"/> To follow through                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To be more attentive to me                | <input type="checkbox"/> To not have unrealistic expectations    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To be more of a giver/less of a taker     | <input type="checkbox"/> To be more godly                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To spend less money                       | <input type="checkbox"/> To be less critical                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To be more self-disciplined               | <input type="checkbox"/> To be more forgiving                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To be more gracious                       | <input type="checkbox"/> To understand the pressures of my job   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To ask for my opinion more                | <input type="checkbox"/> To try harder to please me              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To better prioritize their spiritual life | <input type="checkbox"/> To follow instructions more carefully   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To be more punctual                       | <input type="checkbox"/> To be less occupied with her interests  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To not have to have the last word         | <input type="checkbox"/> To not waste so much time               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To be more grateful                       | <input type="checkbox"/> To be more interested in my activities  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To not be so moody or temperamental       | <input type="checkbox"/> To be more fun and willing to do things |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To verbally express love more readily     | <input type="checkbox"/> To be closer to me than anyone else     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other? _____                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Other? _____                            |

2. “Hot buttons” – the things that make it easy for us to get angry – are very often things that are reasonable to want. If they were merely “wants,” they would be no problem because we could want them but be at rest when they do not happen. They are often very normal parts of life and relationships that most people would agree are good things to wish for and to practice.

However, as James 4:1-10 teaches us, these seemingly reasonable things actually become idols for us if they lead to anger and conflict. An **idol** is something we put in the place of God. We expect it because we want it **too much**. This “reasonable” thing is so important to us, that we often sin when they don’t occur. For example, we become angry to the point of hating others, hurting others or just failing to love them because we are so disappointed, hurt or angry. (See also Romans 12:19-21)

3. Now that you’ve identified your ‘hot buttons’ (your idolatrous desires) you must work on **dethroning these idols**. You must prayerfully and actively replace those inordinate desires with desires that are in accordance with pleasing and glorifying God, rather than pleasing and glorifying yourself. You must learn to change the way you think about your desires and the extent to which you think the people around you must meet them.

4. You may have been thinking, “This person \_\_\_\_\_  
(insert what you say to them or think about them) for not doing this (very reasonable) thing.”  
But Romans 12:2 says, “Be not conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Philippians 2:3 says “with humility of mind, consider others as more important than yourself.”

What would a renewed mind be like if you had a reasonable desire which someone failed to deliver? What would a biblical way of thinking be? You must learn to think, “Having a person in my life who doesn’t \_\_\_\_\_ (insert your desire from above that feels reasonable but which really is inordinate), is not the worst thing in the world. I must learn to love the Lord and to love them more than I love my \_\_\_\_\_ (insert your inordinate desire).”

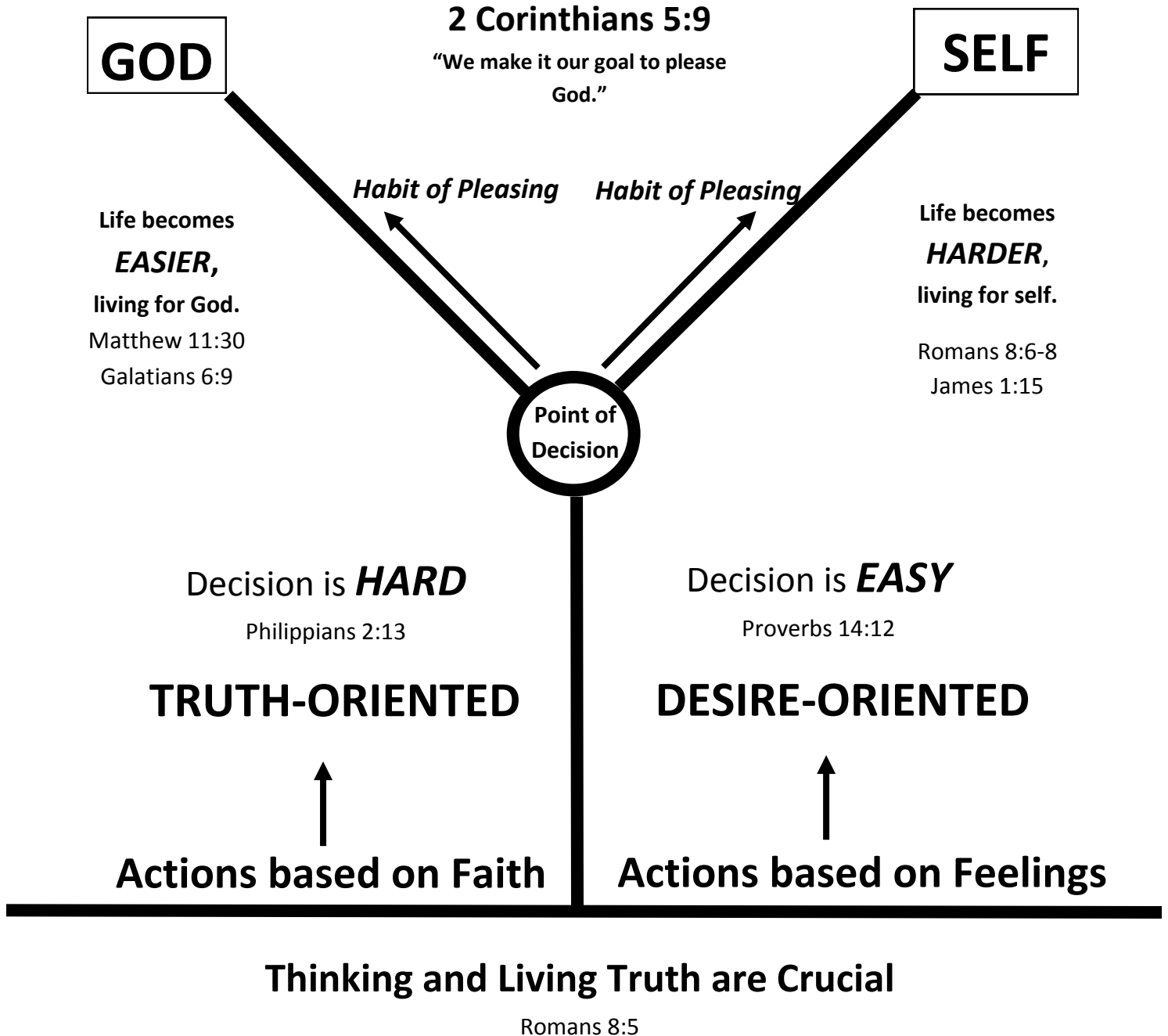
Learning to repent of *allowing my desires to become demands* is an important part of spiritual growth. It pays HUGE dividends in relationships. One of the best passages to study as you make this more of a practice in your life is **James 4:1-10**.

5. Try your own example.

I got angry when \_\_\_\_\_. I got angry because all I wanted was for \_\_\_\_\_. I think it is pretty reasonable to want that, and can’t see anything the matter with the desire. However, my anger tells me that I **wanted it too much**. I wanted it more than I love God and love this person. The evidence for that is \_\_\_\_\_.

I want to “transform my thinking.” Though I may want this same thing in the future, I need to accept that it may or may not happen, and either way, the Lord is sufficient for me (Psalm 37:4; Philippians 4:11-13, 18-20; 2 Peter 1:2-3). I can communicate my desire and hope for it, but my love for and trust in the Lord and my love for \_\_\_\_\_ has to remain in place regardless.

# The “Y” Chart



## Identifying Personal 'Idols'

*"Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Psalm 139:23-24*

### Questions to ask yourself *as you search your own heart*

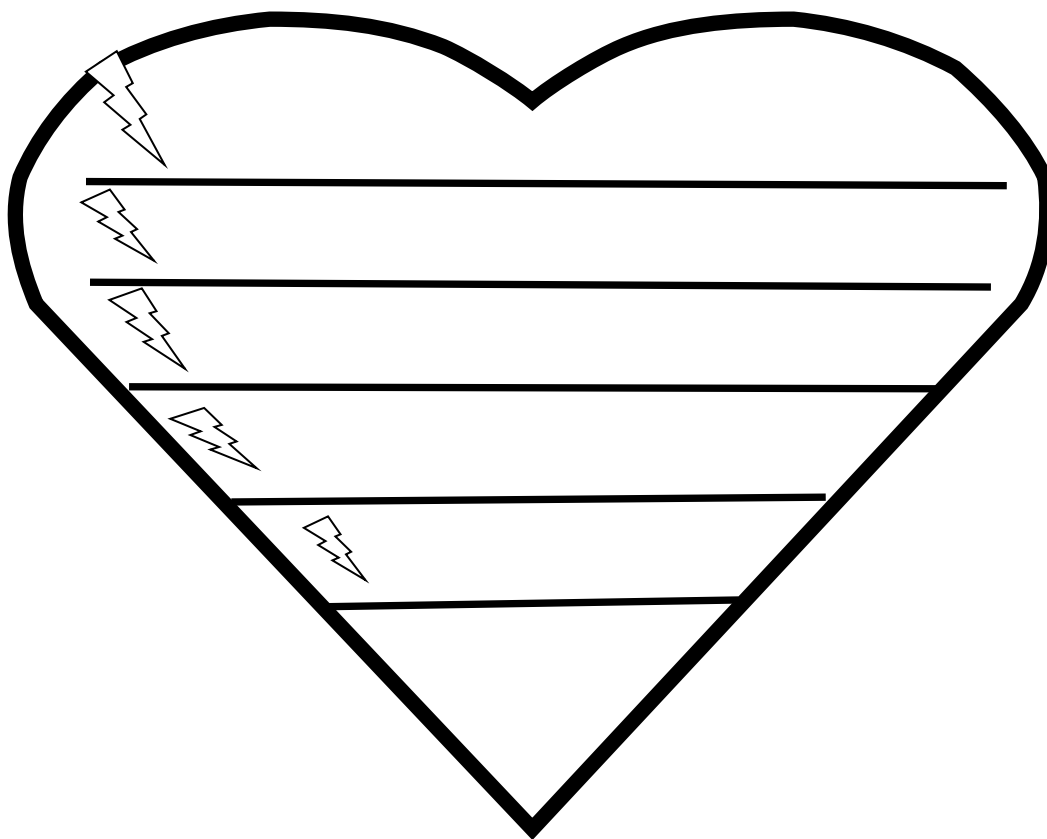
- What do you want, desire, seek, aim for, pursue, hope for?
- What are your goals, expectations, intentions?
- What do you feel like doing? Do you want what you want, or do you want Christ's lordship over your life?
- Where do you look for security, meaning, happiness, fulfillment, joy, or comfort? Where you do put your 'basic trust'?
- What would make you happy?
- What do you fear? What do you tend to worry about?
- What do you love and hate most of all?
- How do you define success or failure in a particular situation?
- What image do you have of who you are? Ought to be or want to be?
- At your deathbed what to you would sum up your life as worthwhile?
- What do you see as your 'rights'?
- When you are pressured or tense, where do you turn? What do you think about?
- What do you pray for?

### Place a ☒ next to the items / issues that you think might be current or potential 'idols' in your life

- ☐ **Performance** – especially for **significant others** – you try to please to get or to keep acceptance or approval. When you fear man or live to please man rather than God, this is idolatry.
- ☐ **Performance for Self** (Perfectionism/pride) – trying to perform up to our own standards that we have set. When I meet the standard, I feel good; when I don't I feel bad.
- ☐ **Performance of Others** – I make a list of what others should do. E.g., For my spouse to be a good wife husband / s/he **must** ... (1,2,3, etc.). If he/she doesn't do these things, I become judgmental and unloving.
- ☐ **Good Health** – My goal shouldn't be this, but to glorify God. It's OK to pray for healing but don't let getting healed become an idol. God may want you to be sick in order to glorify Himself (**see John 9**).
- ☐ **Love of Money** – I take a promotion just to get more money or resent my spouse for blocking me from it
- ☐ **Success** – What's a good day to you? Answering this question helps to reveal idols of the heart. What made it a good day in your mind? Usually it's "I got a lot accomplished / done." Or "I pleased significant others." Or "I got my way... Others did for me what I want them to do."
- ☐ **Fairness** - Life should be fair! (Ps. 73) "I've been trying to please God; these others aren't even trying and they prosper." This can cause you to almost forsake the faith (**Ps. 73:2**).
- ☐ **Pain-Free Life** – I don't want to deal with problems. There shouldn't be any difficulties. I shouldn't have to go through anything unsettling... because I want peace.

- ☐ Physical Appearance
- ☐ Being respected / admired
- ☐ A material thing – car, house, jewelry, etc.
- ☐ Athletic abilities / achievements
- ☐ Hobbies
- ☐ Pleasures (food, sex, comfort, etc.)
- ☐ Being in Control
- ☐ Getting married or having a child or children or having them turn out a certain way

Now write the top 5 present or potential 'idols' from your check-list onto this heart



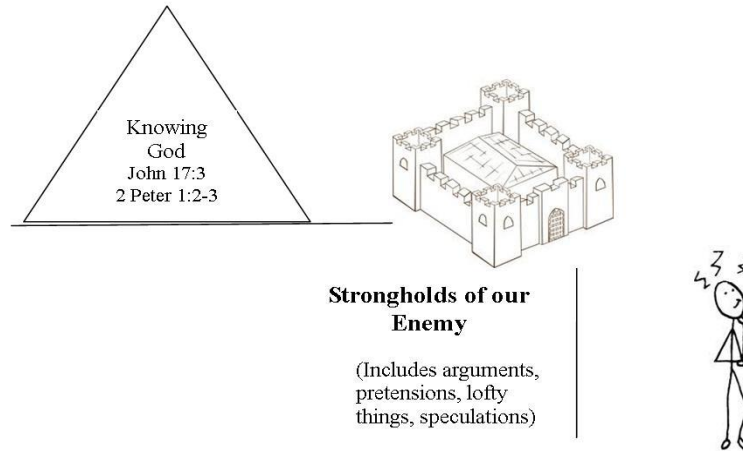
**Ask Yourself...**

1. Am I willing to sin to get this or keep from losing it?
2. Do I turn to this as a 'Refuge' and comfort instead of going to God?

"Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs." **Jonah 2:8 (NIV)**

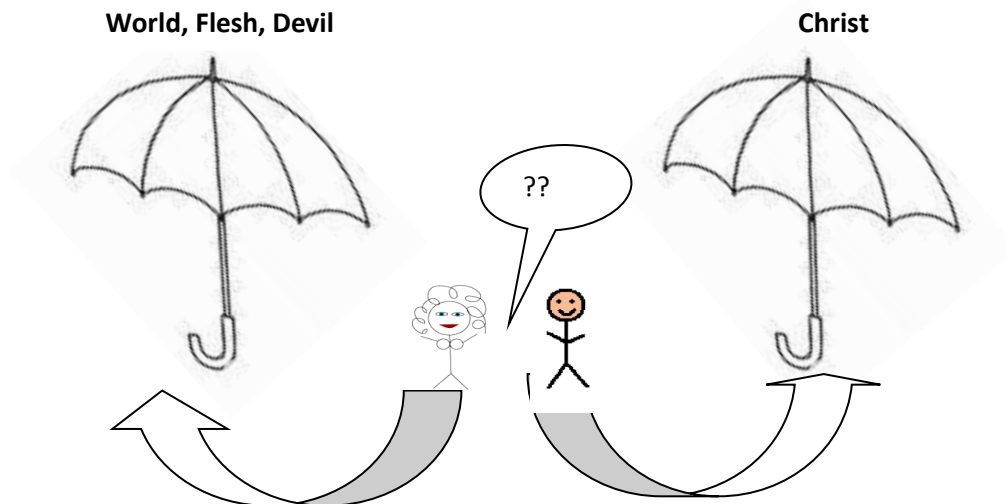
## The Spiritual Battle

2 Corinthians 10:3-5



## Holding Thoughts Captive

2 Corinthians 10:3-5



1. We are in a battle (v. 3)
2. Our weapons are not natural, but are spiritual (v. 4)
3. The war is about keeping us from knowing God (see John 17:3, 2 Peter 1:2-3 and 3:18 as to why) (v. 5)
4. The war is won by holding all thoughts captive to Christ's obedience (v. 5)



Circle of Concern

*Not my responsibility or within my  
ability to be able to do*

**I must TRUST the Lord**

Circle of Responsibility

**This is where I must**

**OBEY God**