

Life on Life 201 – Looking at Yourself First
Class 12 – March 28, 2021

“You will take others no further than you yourself have gone.”
Imitate me as I imitate Christ. 2 Cor. 11:1

- I. Discussion** **9:00-9:15**
- A. First, take 2-3 minutes by yourself to write on one of the 3x5 cards on your table the six steps involved in biblical counseling (in order) with a one sentence definition of each step. Then share with your neighbor what you got.
 - B. Listen as someone in class reads a short article by AW Tozer (pages 5-6).
Open Class Discussion: *What stands out to you about it?*
- II. Introduction** **9:15-9:30**
- A. God is pleased to use the Body of Christ to “counsel” one another.
 - 1. Romans 15:14 – You are able to admonish
 - 2. 1 Corinthians 11:1 – Imitate me as I imitate Christ
 - 3. Colossians 1:28-29 – We admonish every man, teach every man... that we may present every man complete
 - 4. 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12; 5:14 – Like a mother, like a father; admonish, encourage, help, be patient...
 - B. He wants our counsel to be biblical.
 - 1. 2 Tim. 3:16-17 – profitable for instruction, rebuke, correction, training
 - 2. Jeremiah 9:23-24 – do not boast in wisdom, strength or wealth but in Him
 - 3. Matthew 4:4 – man does not live by bread... but by every word of God
 - 4. Psalm 19:7-14 – law... restores soul, makes the simple wise, rejoices heart...
 - C. But our lives get in the way.
 - 1. Our knowledge and skill is partial
 - 2. Our obedience is incomplete
 - 3. Our own walk with the Lord suffers
 - 4. Sometimes we lack heart for others
 - 5. We are still blind in some ways to the way we think and act (Jeremiah 17:9)
 - D. Therefore it is **VITAL** that we are sensitive to our daily dependence on the Lord (i.e., am I walking in the Spirit?) as well as what God has shown us about ourselves that may need attention so that we are more useful at helping others. Our maturity (or lack thereof) will be the grid through which the Lord ministers. (e.g., *Galatians 6:1* “you who are spiritual” refers to *Galatians 5:16-26*)
- III. Self-Counsel (Dr. Kevin Carson)** **9:30-9:45**
- A. Definition – *The daily perpetual invitation to heart searching, heart repentance, and heart renewal through God’s Word.*
 - B. Examine thoughts, motives, desires, and behavior under Christ (1 Co. 11:27-28)
 - C. Allowing God’s Word to examine you (Col. 3:16; Psalm 139:23-24; Heb. 4:12-13)
 - D. Paul examines himself and challenges the church to do the same (Acts 20:17-28 and Philippians 3:9-21)

- E. Follow this prescription (1Tim. 4:12-16)
 1. Let no one look down on your youthfulness
 2. Live conscientiously of your speech
 3. Watch carefully your conduct
 4. Let your love be evident to all
 5. Recognize your faith is on display
 6. Let your purity be an example to all
 7. Pay close attention to both your life and your teaching

IV. Ongoing Principles for Biblical Counselors **9:45-9:50**

- A. Walk with God humbly and daily. Are you? Do you need accountability?
- B. Openly ask 2 or 3 people how you come across. We all come across somehow. We may come across as “nice” or “to ourselves” or “have it together” or “caring” or “defensive” or “optimistic” or “have time for others” or “caught up with Christ” or “convinced that God has something better” or “full of ourselves” or “fearful” or “smart” or “angry” or “distant” or “resentful” or “loving and patient” or something. People “read” us. We make them feel something in our interactions. We are often blind to what we make others feel, for good or bad, and it affects our ability to work with them.
- C. Deal with your stuff honestly and faithfully. Ask those closest to you. Do you?
- D. Humility which results from dealing with your own stuff makes you able to help:
- E. When you deal with your own stuff on an ongoing basis:
 1. It gives you grace towards others;
 2. It makes them not feel like you are the standard they could never reach;
 3. It makes Jesus more visible;
 4. It makes you more likely to give them scripture than your opinions.
- F. “Maturity” is required. It is primarily indicated by the Fruit of the Spirit.

V. Two Key Passages - Group Discussion **9:50-10:25**

- A. Matthew 7:1-6 Observations
 1. Don’t judge so you won’t be judged; you will be judged as you judge. (7:1-2)
 2. Why focus on other’s shortcomings and avoid looking at your own? (7:3-4)
 3. To avoid hypocrisy, lay aside your own unrighteousness first. (7:5a)
 4. Then you can see clearly enough to take the speck from their eye. (7:5b)
 5. Do not try to help someone see fault who shows antagonism to truth. (7:6)

B. Regarding Matthew 7:1-6

1. The passage tells us “not to judge” (v. 1) but tells us (with some conditions) to “take the speck out of your brother’s eye” (v. 5). What is the difference between **judgment** that we are not to do and **taking the speck out** that we are to do? What most helps you avoid the first one and do the second?
2. Following the instruction about removing the log from our own eye and removing the speck from their eye, we are warned not to “give what is holy to dogs or throw your pearls before swine” lest they trample what you offer and tear you to pieces. What does this mean, practically?

C. Hebrews 3:12-13 Observations

1. Brethren – talking to believers (*That is us!*)
2. Take care (of yourselves) – i.e., *recognize your vulnerability*
3. Your heart may be unbelieving – doesn’t mean non-Christian; means not trusting God. This is true of us at times and of those we counsel.
4. You can fall away from God
5. Antidote to this: Daily encouragement from each other
6. Until He returns (“*as long as it is called ‘today’*”)
7. So you won’t be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness

D. Regarding Hebrews 3:12-13:

1. What does this warning mean and why is it necessary?
2. What do “day by day” and “as long as it is still called today” signify?
3. What spiritual blessing happens only if we do this?

VI. Homework

A. Take 10 minutes to answer two questions between you and the Lord.

1. What does God most want to change in your life? _____
2. What are you doing about it? _____

B. Based on that question and answer, spend 30 minutes completing the assignment found on page four, “The Process of Self-Counsel” (by Kevin Carson)

C. Before our next lesson on Pride and Humility, read Romans 13 and James 4.

Record your answers to the following questions.

1. Based on these two passages, what roles does pride play in our ongoing sin?
2. What are some of the indications in these two passages of how humility will directly lead to conquering some of our greatest struggles?
3. What implications are here for you when you counsel others?

D. Memorize Ephesians 5:1 or 1 Corinthians 11:1.

The Process of Self-Counsel
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1. Read 1 John 3:1-3 two times. It asserts that a person who understands the great love of God for them does something very specific. What is it?

2. Choose a problem to deal with (probably the same one you did on the previous page under VII A) _____
3. Describe the relevant aspects of this problem (again, just for you and the Lord).
 - a. What is the problem? _____
 - b. When, where or how does it surface? _____

 - c. Describe specific thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, behaviors (done or avoided), words, etc. that relate to this problem at all.

 - d. Are there other related significant facts you should consider? _____

 - e. What have you done in the past to solve this problem and why has it not worked? _____

4. Why do you choose this problem now? _____

5. To discuss your current understanding of the problem biblically, list 4 passages that address this problem and/or its solution along with a paraphrase of each.

6. What would growth and change and headway look like in this area? (Be specific)

7. Keep a journal/log of responsible changes you need to make, keep track of them this semester, and find an accountability partner to help you maintain progress. Will you? _____ Do you have such a partner? _____ Who? _____

On Receiving Admonition

by A. W. Tozer

AN ODD LITTLE PASSAGE in the Book of Ecclesiastes speaks of "an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished." It is not hard to understand why an old king, especially if he were a foolish one, would feel that he was beyond admonition. After he had for years given orders he might easily build a self-confident psychology that simply could not entertain the notion that he should take advice from others.

His word had long been law, and to him right had become synonymous with his will and wrong had come to mean anything that ran contrary to his wishes. Soon the idea that there was anyone wise enough or good enough to reprove him would not so much as enter his mind. He had to be a foolish king to let himself get caught in that kind of web, and an old king to give the web time to pet so strong that he could not break it and to give him time to get used to it so that he was no longer aware of its existence.

Regardless of the moral process by which he arrived at his hardened state, the bell had already tolled for him. In every particular he was a lost man. His wizened old body still held together to provide a kind of movable tomb to house a soul already dead. Hope had long ago departed. God had left him to his fatal conceit. And soon he would die physically too, and he would die as a fool dieth. A state of heart that rejected admonition was characteristic of Israel at various periods in her history, and these periods were invariably followed by judgment. When Christ came to the Jews He found them chuck full of that arrogant self-confidence that would not accept reproof. "We be Abraham's seed," they said coldly when He talked to them about their sins and their need of salvation.

The common people heard Him and repented, but the Jewish priests had ruled the roost too long to be willing to surrender their privileged position. Like the old king, they had gotten accustomed to being right all the time. To reprove them was to insult them. They were beyond reproof.

Churches and Christian organizations have shown a tendency to fall into the same error that destroyed Israel: inability to receive admonition. After a time of growth and successful labor comes the deadly psychology of self-congratulation. Success itself becomes the cause of later failure. The leaders come to accept themselves as the very chosen of God. They are special objects of the divine favor; their success is proof enough that this is so. They must therefore be right, and anyone who tries to call them to account is instantly written off as an unauthorized meddler who should be ashamed to dare to reprove his betters.

If anyone imagines that we are merely playing with words let him approach at random any religious leader and call attention to the weaknesses and sins in his organization. Such a one will be sure to get the quick brush off, and if he dares to persist he will be confronted with reports and statistics to prove that he is dead wrong and completely out of order. "We be the seed of Abraham" will be the burden of the defense. And who would dare find fault with Abraham's seed?

Those who have already entered the state where they can no longer receive admonition are not likely to profit by this warning. After a man has gone over the precipice there is not much you can do for him; but we can place markers along the way to prevent the next traveler from going over. Here are a few:

1. Don't defend your church or your organization against criticism. If the criticism is false it can do no harm. If it is true you need to hear it and do something about it.
2. Be concerned not with what you have accomplished but over what you might have accomplished if you had followed the Lord completely. It is better to say (and feel), "We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."
3. When reprov'd, pay no attention to the source. Do not ask whether it is a friend or an enemy that reprov's you. An enemy is often of greater value to you than a friend because he is not influenced by sympathy.
4. Keep your heart open to the correction of the Lord and be ready to receive His chastisement regardless of who holds the whip. The great saints all learned to take a licking gracefully – and that may be one reason why they were great saints.

Article taken from The Root of the Righteous, Chapter 7