

Blueprint for Helping People Change

Introduction: preparing to disciple or counsel

1. Know how people change (Mark 7:20-23; Matt 12:34; Ezek 36:26; Rom 12:1-2; Prov 4:23; 23:7; 2 Pet 1:3-11; Col 3:12-17; Eph 4:22-24; 2 Tim 3:16-17)

to ^oput off ^pyour old self,⁶ which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through ^qdeceitful desires, **23** and ^rto be renewed in the spirit of your minds, **24** and to put on ^sthe new self, ^tcreated after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. Ephesians 4:22-24

And he said, ^l“What comes out of a person is what defiles him. **21** For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, ^mmurder, adultery, **22** coveting, wickedness, deceit, ⁿsensuality, ^oenvy, ^pslander, ^qpride, ^rfoolishness. **23** ^sAll these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.” Mark 7:20-23

2. Know what you are working with (Jer 17:9; Gen 6:5; Ps 51:5; Rom 6:6-7; Gal 5:17; 2 Pet 1:3)

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? Jeremiah 17:9

We know that ^wour old self¹ ^xwas crucified with him in order that ^ythe body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. **7** For ^zone who has died ^ahas been set free² from sin. Romans 6:6, 7

3. Know what tools you have

- Triune God (Jer 17:10; Ps 139:23-24; 1 Cor 3:6-7; James 1:5)

Search me, O God, and know my heart! ^yTry me and know my thoughts!³ **24** And see if there be any grievous way in me, and ^wlead me in ^xthe way everlasting!⁴ Psalm 139:23, 24

If any of you lacks wisdom, ^klet him ask God, ^lwho gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. James 1:5

- God's word (2 Tim 3:16-17; Heb 4:12)
- Your ears
 - Listen well (Prov 18:13, 17)

If one gives an answer ^obefore he hears, it is his folly and shame. Proverbs 18:13

An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge. Proverbs 18:15

→ Pay attention and keep focused (Prov 20:5; Phil 2:3)

The purpose in a man's heart is like ^adeep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out. Proverbs 20:5

Do nothing from ^kselfish ambition or ^lconceit, but in ^mhumility count others more significant than yourselves. Philippians 2:3

→ Listening provides comfort (Ps 116:1-2)

I ^ylove the Lord, because he has ^zheard my voice and my pleas for mercy. Because he ^ainclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live. Psalm 116:1,2

→ Pray for God's grace to help you listen

→ Learn to ask questions in response to listening to what the counselee is saying

• Your words (Prov 12:18, 25; 15:4, 7, 30; 31:26; Ecc 12:11; Is 50:4; Job 4:4; 1 Thess 4:18)

→ Prov 12:18 – Words can be healing, so being thoughtful about the words used and purposefully speaking words of healing are important.

→ Prov 12:25 – Words can make an anxious heart glad, bringing joy and comfort to a family member. Using thought in words is helpful and choosing to speak may bring comfort to an uneasy heart.

→ Prov 15:4 – Calm, choice words brings life to a person, whereas horrible speech only crushes someone's spirit. Thoughtful and purposeful words should be employed to prosper someone's life.

→ Prov 15:7 – Words can be used to spread knowledge from one person to another, informing their soul according to life and godliness

→ Prov 15:30 – People can use their words to make others healthy and glad. Without such words, people may be robbed of such goodness.

→ Prov 31:26 – Words impart wisdom and shower people with kindness.

→ Ecc 12:11 – Words may be used to spur people on and encourage them to persevere under trial or progress in sanctification. Without using words or being thoughtful about their use, people won't utilize this tool for spurring other people on to good deeds.

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- Isaiah 50:4 – People can use words to help those who are weary. Choice words can help sustain people and to not utilize them would be an unloving way to respond to those who are weary.
 - Job 4:4 – For those who are trembling under the pressure of life for lack of strength and energy, thoughtful words will help stabilize them, giving them the strength to endure.
 - 1 Thess 4:18 – Words bring comfort, especially words concerning God's revealed truth. "Smalltalk" does not make use of God's revealed truth and "undertalk" ignores it altogether, holding back potential comfort for someone's soul.

4. Know your chief end

- The chief end of counseling is to present every man complete in Christ unto God's glory (Col 1:28)

Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone ^umature in Christ. Colossians 1:28

- Believers must know how to put off sin and put on righteousness (Heb 5:14; Eph 4:25-32; Col 3:9-10, Romans 12:1,2)

I appeal to you therefore, brothers,¹ by the mercies of God, ^ato present your bodies ^bas a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.² **2** ^cDo not be conformed to this world,³ but be transformed by ^dthe renewal of your mind, that by testing you may ^ediscern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.⁴ Romans 12:1, 2

5. Know how to help people change – key elements

- Gather data
- Discern problems
- Establish involvement
- Give hope
- Give instruction
- Assign homework

We begin Six Key Elements that the counselor uses to help a person. Next we'll talk about Six Key Biblical Themes and help them move in the right direction.

Gather data

1. We must know the context and content of a person's problems (Prov 18:13)
 - Past life context - The instruction and modeling that a person has had throughout his life greatly impacts his manner of life (Prov 22:6; 2 Tim 1:5; 3:15).
 - Present life context – The current patterns and practices of one's life help give insight into what motivations and desires a person might have (Rev 2:2-3; 3:8-9; 2 Cor 1:8-9)

For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers,² of ^mthe affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. **9** Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us ⁿrely not on ourselves ^obut on God ^pwho raises the dead. 2 Cor. 1:8-9

2. We must know what we need to know
 - Define the problem
 - What is their **presenting problem**?
 - / I am depressed and unhappy
 - What are their **behavioral responses or reactions**? – Shows what they believe is important, their level of self-control and what they are willing to do to get what they want.
 - / Take drugs, go shopping, go into hiding, overeat, etc.
 - / Gen 3:1-11 - Adam and Eve hid because they were afraid - they knew what they did was wrong - they had a sense of right and wrong
 - / 1 Sam 18 - Saul was bent on killing David - Saul's behavior displayed what he valued or what he was concerned about
 - What are their **thinking responses**? – Shows who, what, they think is important; provides basis for seeing how far off they are to thinking biblically
 - / "I deserve to be happy", "God wants me to be happy", "If I'm a Christian then I will be happy."
 - / 1 Sam 18 - Saul's thoughts are driven by his own selfish desires
 - / Ps 115:1-8 - thinks highly of God and that any other god was foolish
 - What are their **desires, goals, wants, motives and purposes for living**? - Provides basis for why they do what they do and show how far from biblical desires, goals, values, motives and purposes they are

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- / The person wants to be happy and comfortable. Always wants to feel good. Lives for self. Loves and cherishes self.
 - / Heb 4:12; Gal 5:19-21,16 - has their heart been seared by God's word or the world
 - / Gen 30:1 - what they are willing to do shows their values and desires
 - / James 1:14-16 - what does he do with temptation - shows whether he likes to sin
 - Investigate the person on several levels (PREACH)
 - Physical – health related issues
 - Resources and relationships – people in their lives, or not in their lives (family, pastors, accountability, friends at work, etc.)
 - Emotions – control and impact of emotions (how do they handle disappointment, trials, suffering)
 - Actions – doing or not doing (what are habits in their lives that add to the problem or actually are the problem)
 - Conceptual – motivation, thoughts and beliefs (what gets them up in the morning. What encourages them. What shuts them down)
 - Historical – their walk, how they have been living (have they ever had a vibrant, intimate walk with the Lord to speak of)
3. We must know how to get these facts
- Ask proper questions
 - Thoughtful and gracious (Col 4:6; Eph 4:29)

Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. Colossians 4:6

- Relevant
- Produce specific facts
 - / What?
 - / How?
 - / Why what? What for?
 - / Where?

/ How often?

/ Give me an example

→ Open ended questions not closed (unless you have an unresponsive counselee)

/ Closed: Do you want to get married?

/ Open: What are thoughts about marriage?

/ Closed: Are you satisfied with your job?

/ Open: What do you like or dislike about your job?

/ Closed: Do you get along with your parents?

/ Open: Describe your relationship with your parents.

/ Closed: Do feel angry or anxious or depressed?

/ Open: What circumstances might bring on anger or depression?

/ Closed: Will you do what the Bible says you should do?

/ Open: What role does the Bible play in your life?

→ Ask extensive and intensive questions

→ Examples of useful questions – see Appendix

- Practice good listening

→ Listen for the non-verbal messages

→ Listen for verbal messages (Prov 18:2) – [case study]

/ listen for content

/ listen for evaluation statements

/ listen for meaning

/ listen for intention

→ Listen to understand the person

- Use data gathering homework

→ Lists

- / Log samples
- / What pleases you?
- / What do you appreciate?
- / What do you typically get into conflict about?
- / What are your desires and wants?
- / If only list
- / What resentments do you have?
- / What ticks you off?
- / What fears do you have?

→ Journals or diaries

- / What happened?
- / What did you feel?
- / What were your thoughts?
- / What did you desire?
- / What did you do?
- / What else could you have done?
- / How would God have wanted you handle this?

- By a variety of other methods

- Float your perspective, suggestions, interpretations by the person and invite feedback
- Have them tape some of their conversations
- Write letter to offending person in which they write what they would like to tell him
- Observe the person as he interacts with other people
- Through the prayers of the person

Discern Problems

1. We must understand things as God does

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- Compare the person's behavioral responses and reactions to God's Word.
 - Compare the person's thinking to God's Word.
 - Compare the person's desires, goals, wants, motives and purposes for living with God's Word.
2. We must ensure that the counselee sees as God sees
- Often our language and thought patterns are full of ignorance – "I thought that I was so supposed to be happy and that I deserve to be happy and that if I'm not then something is wrong with me. I must have unmet needs or low self-esteem or something."
 - We need to have this replaced by biblical language and thoughts – God wants me to love Him above all else and to love others as myself; I will be happy as I am delighting myself in my God and His purposes.
 - We also must realize that God's authority demands belief (James 1:5-8 – ask and believe) – There is no option here. If I am a disciple of Christ then I deny myself and I follow Him.

Give Hope

1. Giving hope is vital to bringing comfort or confronting sin (Ps 34:18; Prov 15:13; 17:22; 18:14; Matthew 11:28-30)

The Lord is near to ^qthe brokenhearted and saves ^rthe crushed in spirit. Psalm 34:18

Come to ^qme, all who labor and are ^theavy laden, and I will give you rest. **29** Take my yoke upon you, and ^slearn from me, for I am ^tgentle and lowly in heart, and ^uyou will find rest for your souls. **30** For ^vmy yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-20

2. Hope produces great things in the lives of people (Heb 6:19-20; 2 Cor 3:12; Prov 10:28; Heb 11:24-26; 1 Thess 1:3; Lam 3:18-21)
 - Heb 6:19,20 - we have an anchor for our soul to be assured that we will spend eternity with Christ - hope gives us stability and assurance, so we won't be tossed back and forth
 - 2 Cor 3:12 - hope gives us boldness in knowing what we speak is sure - hope gives us confidence
 - Prov 10:28 - hope gives us gladness in our daily lives - comes from the hope in the truth of God's word
 - Heb 11:24-26 - hope enables us to withstand trials and turn away from sin
 - 1 Thess 1:3 - hope gives us the strength to work hard and persevere

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- Lam 3:18; Isa 57:10 - (depression) when you recall the truth of God, hope keeps you afloat and causes you to praise (Lam 3:18-25, 32-33, 38)
 - Use Scriptures from the Trials and Suffering pages that help platform difficulty to be used for God's purposes

3. A lack of hope has awful results

- Instability
- Boldness is lacking
- Gladness and joy are lacking
- Patience is lacking
- Despondency and despair
- Obedience is lacking
- Holiness is lacking
- Endurance is lacking
- Spiritual strength is lacking
- Often will lead to broken relationships, especially from those who have hope
- Often will lead to other ways to feed the flesh, instead of feeding the Spirit

4. The essence of true biblical hope

- An expectation of good that is based on the promises of God (Titus 1:2; Rom 8:28; 2 Cor 9:8 Ephesians 1: every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies)
- Possible only for those who have been born again (Eph 2:12; 1Pet 1:3; Rom 8:28; Eph 1:18,3,4; 1Pet 3:15; Col 1:4-5, 25-27)
- Based on the grace of God (Luke 18:9-14; 2 Thes 2:16)
- Inseparably bound to diligent, consistent and accurate study of scripture (2 Tim 2:15; Matt 22:29; Luke 24; Rom 15:4; Ps 119:49; Ps 130:5)

Remember ^eyour word to your servant, in which you have made me ^fhope. Psalm 119:49

- Generated by biblical thinking (Matt 22:29; Ps 115:1-8; 33:17-22; Rom 5:2; James 1:2ff; 2 Cor 1:3ff; 1 Cor 19:1-14; 2 Tim 1:7)
- Produces endurance (Heb 11; 2 Cor 4:8-9,16-18).

- Often sustained through fellowship with other hopeful believers (1 Thess 5:11; Heb 3:13; 10:24-25)
- Always Christ centered (1 Tim 1:1; Col 1:27; Heb 12:1-11; Titus 2:13; 1 John 3:2; 1 Pet 3:15)

5. How do we help others develop and maintain an attitude of hopefulness?

- Help them develop a vital relationship with God and hope-filled people
- Help them focus on the attributes of God that are most relevant to the issues at hand
- Help them make the scriptures relevant to the situation (Luke 24:13-25; Acts 8:26-40)
- Help them consider how often people just like us have faced similar difficulties successfully, especially Jesus (Heb 4:14-16)
- Help them pray and learn to take charge of their thoughts, talking to themselves instead of listening to themselves
- Help them recognize that we as believers are free from slavery of sin and external circumstances
- Help them identify and confess their own sin, taking responsibility for their sins and laying out a specific biblical procedure for change

Establish Involvement

1. Be more interested in them than their problem. See them as a child of God, not a problem child.
2. Point them to Christ
 - He is the One Who is primarily involved, you are secondary
 - They should leave saying, “What a wonderful God I have” not “What a wonderful counselor I have.”
3. Pray for them (Col 1:3-14, esp. 6, 9-12)
4. Be compassionate (Heb 2:14-18)
 - Observe how Jesus showed compassion (Matt 9:35-38; Mk 6:34; Heb 4:15-16)

And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. 36 ^oWhen he saw the crowds, ^phe had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, ^qlike sheep without a shepherd. Matthew 9:35-38

- Observe how Paul showed compassion (Acts 20:31; Phil 1:3-8; 2 Cor 11:28-29)

- Remember your own forgiveness and the grace that has been shown you (Matt 18:21-35)
5. Be gentle and humble (Matt 11:28-30; Gal 6:1)
 6. Show them respect (Lk 6:31; Rom 12:10) Remember their problem IS NOT their identity. So easy for use to see it that way and easy for them to see it that way. Jesus is their identity.
 - Show genuine interest in what they say
 - Take no personal offense
 - Take their word at face value
 - Treat them as responsible
 - Take their problems serious – don't make light of them
 7. Be genuine and honest (Eph 4:15)
 8. Take pains to communicate well (Eph 4:29)
 - Good in content – what
 - Good in motivation – why
 - Good in manner – how
 - Good timing – when
 - Good place – where
 9. Take pains to listen well (Prov 18:13; Ps 116:1-2)
 - Listen with the outer man
 - Listen with the inner man
 - Listen with eagerness and expectation
 - Listen with restraint and self-control
 - Listen with humility, as a servant
 - Ask good question in response to listening to what the person is saying
 - Pray for God's grace to help you listen
 10. Love them (1 Cor 13:1-7)

- You will be of no value without love (vv. 1-3)
- Practice these characteristics when ministering to others (vv. 4-7)

Give Instruction

1. Know what God says (2 Tim 3:15-17; 2 Pet 1:3-4; Ps 119:105) – your counsel is only as good as it is biblical
 - Be familiar with the background of a passage
 - Be familiar with the context of the passage (immediate context & larger context)
 - Know the meaning of important words
 - Strive to know the author's intent
 - Know the dynamic of change, putting off and putting on and renewing the mind
2. Know how to teach what God says
 - Use appropriate outlines or studies
 - Teach in a way that motivates people to action (James 1:22)
 - Differentiate between God's directive and man's suggestions
3. Know that they understand what God says
 - Use any legitimate teaching tools – bible studies, cds, books, etc.
 - Have them teach you what they have learned
 - Have them share with others what they have learned
 - Get feedback on how that passage applies to their situation
4. We must challenge people with the need for a commitment to change
5. We must help them see the mercy and grace of Christ (Heb 4:14-16; Ps 32; Rom 3:24-25a)
6. We must press for a commitment with biblical motivation (2 Tim 2:20-22; Matt 7:5; James 1:20)

7. We must handle a variety of resistance (1 Thess 5:14) – know how to handle various situations
8. We must also secure a commitment to doing homework (James 1:22)
9. We must remember that the heart of the issue is the issue of the heart

Assign Homework

1. Plan your agenda – what do they need to know to change their motives, thoughts, speech and behavior
 - Ex. happiness in life
 - Ps 1:1-2 – joy and happiness in God’s Word
 - Ps 32 – dealing with unconfessed sin for happiness
 - John 15 – abiding in Christ through obedience breeds happiness
2. Plan for change – what are the appropriate put offs and put ons
 - Heart desires – put off idolizing comfort and happiness and put on worshipping and glorifying God (Luke 10:27)
 - Thoughts – put off thinking that you deserve to be happy or must be happy and put on thinking what God wants to accomplish in you and through you (1 Cor 10:31)
 - Speech – put off grumbling and complaining and put on thanking and praising God (1 Thess 5:18)
 - Behavior – put off going into hiding and put on repentance and one anothering (Rom 12:10; Heb 10:24-25)
3. Plan for temptation (1 Cor 10:12-13; Prov 22:3; Ps 119:11)
4. Plan for failure (1 John 1:9)
5. Plan realistically
 - Requires daily dying (Luke 9:23)
 - Change is a process (2 Cor 3:17-18)

6. Have them integrate biblical change into all of life (2 Cor 5:17; Heb 13:21)
7. Have them develop and practice the spiritual disciplines
8. Have them integrate themselves into Christ's body (Eph 4:16)
9. Have them minister God's Word to others (Matt 28:18-20)
10. Criteria for determining when integration has occurred
 - Person understands and interprets problems and solutions biblically.
 - Decrease in frequency and intensity of temptation.
 - Experience of victory where and when person had previously failed.
 - Failures understood and handled biblically.
 - Person's self-evaluation and analysis.
 - Reports of others.
 - Person becomes counselor, discipler, servant and evangelist.
 - Continued progress over time.

when to stop discipling [time permitting]

- When the counselee understands what caused his problems and the biblical way of handling them.
- When the counselee becomes comfortable with the new response pattern(s).
- When the counselee begins to practice the new pattern(s) automatically.
- when to stop discipling
- When the counselee has failed and can diagnose the reason for the failure and make plans for correcting the problem.
- When the counselee can state specifically how he has changed.
- When the counselee has been tested and has been victorious in the test.

- when to stop discipling
- When others have verified the changes in the counselee.
- When the counselee starts to share with others what he is learning in counseling, effectively becoming an informal and spontaneous counselor to others.

Six Key Biblical Elements for Change

SIX KEY ELEMENTS that we encourage counselees to practice. These are **Interactions between the COUNSELEE and God**. The practice of these will interact with the above six key elements and the counselor will allow these to be intentional investment opportunities that will build involvement, provide instruction, give hope, bring heart issues to light

1. **Making No Provision for the Flesh** – Romans 13:14 tells us to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh. If someone is an alcoholic and works in a liquor store, what should she do? This is about removing anything in a person's life that places a welcome sign before them to sin. Proverbs talks about avoiding the forbidden woman and not even going near the door of her house. Corinthians tells us that bad company corrupts good morals. There are people and situations in our lives that lend themselves to bringing us down. Here is a list of common provisions for the flesh
 - Watching the news a lot if you struggle with fear and anger and worry
 - Internet use that is unmonitored and unfiltered
 - Any internet use
 - Netflix, YouTube, Sports Illustrated
 - Particular movies and shows
 - Gaming
 - Old college buddies or old relationships
 - Going out to unsavory places with people from work
 - A particular drive to work that passes places of temptation
 - Untraceable spending / cash in wallet
 - Internet shopping or mall hopping if struggle with greed, envy, jealousy or identity
 - Particular romantic shows if you are lonely
 - Old Country Buffet if gluttony is a struggle

Do not be deceived: ^z“Bad company ruins good morals.” 1 Corinthians 15:33

Keep your way far from her, and do not go near the door of her house, Proverbs 5:8

Matthew 5:29 - If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell.

Because we are called to not only put off, but also put on (Eph. 4:22-24, Romans 8:13, Romans 13:12-14, Col. 3:9-12, Gal. 5:16-23, then we must also put on.

to ^oput off ^pyour old self,⁶ which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through ^qdeceitful desires, **23** and ^rto be renewed in the spirit of your minds, **24** and to put on ^sthe new self, ^tcreated after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. Ephesians 4:22-24

For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you ^dput to death the deeds of the body, you will live. **14** For all who are ^eled by the Spirit of God are ^fsons⁶ of God. Romans 8:13,14

Do not lie to one another, seeing that ^uyou have put off ^vthe old self⁴ with its practices **10** and ^whave put on ^xthe new self, ^ywhich is being renewed in knowledge ^zafter the image of ^aits creator. **11** ^bHere there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave,⁵ free; but Christ is ^call, and in all. **12** ^dPut on then, as ^eGod's chosen ones, holy and beloved, ^fcompassionate hearts, ^gkindness, ^hhumility, meekness, and patience, **13** ^hbearing with one another and, ⁱif one has a complaint against another, ^gforgiving each other; ^gas the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. **14** And above all these put on ^jlove, which ^kbinds everything together in ^lperfect harmony. Colossians 3:9-14

2. **Making Provision for the Spirit:** If we just put off wrong things, but do not replace them with right things, we are just keeping the space in our lives and hearts open for the enemy to tempt us. Here are some ways we position ourselves in such a way that we invite the Spirit of God to change us:

- Devotional life
- Prayer life
- Scripture memory, reading, meditation, praying
- Listening to sermons
- Small group
- Reading biblical teaching
- Conferences
- Quiet before the Lord
- Half days of prayer
- Listening to God glorifying music

b. Sponge Illustration

c. Downward spiral, upward spiral Romans 1: 28-30

3. **Repentance:** Acts 3:19 tells us that times of refreshing come from the Lord when we repent. David spoke of repentances in Psalm 32 and Psalm 51 and the great peace that comes from dealing with our sin. We want this to be a solid practice in our lives. And, not just for the seemingly big sins, but everything. Regular repentance makes us sensitive toward sin and temptation in our lives and should be the quick default when we have stumbled in sin. Repentance agrees with God that Jesus has covered our sin. Repentance is an acknowledgement of the sovereign character of God, the promise of the cross, and the ineptness in ourselves to save ourselves. True godly repentance (2 Cor. 7:8-11), though humble in nature is really a celebration of God's gift toward us.

4.

And ^rthe Lord's servant⁵ must not be quarrelsome but ^skind to everyone, ^table to teach, patiently enduring evil, **25** correcting his opponents ^uwith gentleness. God ^vmay perhaps grant them repentance ^wleading to a knowledge of the truth, **26** and they may come to their senses and escape from ^xthe snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will. 2 Timothy 2:24-26

For ^xgodly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas ^yworldly grief produces death. **11** For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, ^zwhat zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter. 2 Cor 7:8-11

5. **Mercy:** Any time we help someone get outside themselves and serve others, we are helping them to not focus on their own problems. Gal. 6:1, 2 Cor. 1:3, Phil. 2:3,4, Luke 9:23, 24 and Romans 15:1-3 are just a few Scriptures that talk about serving others. When we are truly focused on honoring God by loving on others, we cannot be focused on ourselves at the same time. We need to help people see people as God sees them: created for His glory, needy for salvation and loved by God. This is particularly helpful when it comes to lust, envy, jealousy, bitterness, anger and other sins that are directed toward other people. Mercy praying, which is praying for others the things that God desires for them (and not what we want for them) is helpful because it gets us out of the picture and puts others and their needs before the throne of God.

Lust vs Mercy

Parents prayer

Anthony

Brothers, ¹ ^oif anyone is caught in any transgression, ^pyou who are spiritual should restore him in ^qa spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. **2** ^rBear one another's burdens, and ^sso fulfill ^tthe law of Christ. Galatians 6:1,2

Blessed be the ^gGod and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and ^hGod of all comfort, **4** ⁱwho comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 2 Corinthians 1:3,4

Do nothing from ^kselfish ambition or ^lconceit, but in ^mhumility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you ⁿlook not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Philippians 2:3,4

And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him ^tdeny himself and ^utake up his cross ^vdaily and follow me. 24 For ^wwhoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. Luke 9:23,24

We who are strong ^hhave an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2 ^uLet each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. Romans 15:3

6. **Gratefulness:** So many struggles are due to just a discontent, ungrateful heart. David, Adam and Eve, Judas, King Saul and others were guilty of just wanting what God had not given or promised, then rising up in ungratefulness. The first step onto the spiraling down that Romans 1 talks about is a decision to be ungrateful. We want to encourage people to be thankful, not just for the big stuff that is on our radar constantly like family, food, car, house, etc., but for the hard stuff, trials, and the things we take for granted like pillows, hot water and air. Again, gratefulness gets us outside of ourselves and it is agreeing with God that He only gives good gifts and that His gifts are destined to be useful in making us more like Jesus and bringing glory to Himself.

Gratefulness lists

Incorporating gratefulness throughout the day and in every prayer

True test of gratefulness is when we thank God for trials, suffering, hardship, not getting our way

Contentment

“Be it unto me.”

“If I perish, I perish.”

“Not my will but yours be done.”

“What you meant for evil, God meant it for good.”

“Where you go, I will go.”

“The Lord giveth and taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.”

7. **Obedience:** It is not enough to talk about all these things, we must do them. James 1:21, 22 tells us to be doers, not merely hearers of the Word. Jesus said in John 14:15 that if we love him we will KEEP his commandments. James 4:17 instructs that if we know the right thing to do and do not do it, it is sin.

Jesus did all these things. These are just basic Christianity things. The truth is, many or most believers do not regularly practice these things. But, if these elements are moving and increasing, then we are engaging in obedience to the Father more and more. There will be change that happens as a person begins to practice these essentials and as we come alongside them and practice the first key elements.