

Chapter 2

Developing a Counseling Plan

I. CHAPTER I REVIEW

A. As previously discussed, all believers should be involved in counseling others.

B. Prior to the first meeting:

1. The counselor should review Chapter 1, “AN OVERVIEW OF COUNSELING,” taking special note of the following key elements:
 - a. Counseling should be restricted to “Biblical” advice, not personal.
 - b. The chief goal of counseling is to restore people to God, rather than “fix” them. Christ alone has the power to overcome sin, and therefore, He must be the focus of all our counseling.

Proverbs 20:9 Who can say, “I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin”?

John 15:5 “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

- c. Think about the sin they are struggling with and let God examine your heart before you counsel them.

Galatians 6:1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

Matthew 7:1-5 “Judge not, that you be not judged. ² For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. ³ And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? ⁴ Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye’; and look, a plank is in your own eye? ⁵ Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

II. FIRST MEETING

A. Goals for the Counselor:

1. **GAIN TRUST.** Counseling is the process of developing a relationship with someone until they feel AS SAFE AS THEY WOULD WITH JESUS.
2. **LISTEN.** Counseling is the process of becoming a good listener.
 - a. Check what you are hearing: Throughout all the sessions, verify what you think they are saying by using phrases like, “I think you are saying...” If they feel you don’t understand, then ask open questions until they trust that you understand.
 - b. Listen intently: convey to the person that you care and are paying attention.
 - c. Write down your thoughts: The counselor’s goal for the first meeting is to understand the situation from God’s view.

- d. Use the fewest words possible to communicate. Too many words make it difficult to listen.

3. **GIVE THEM HOPE.**

B. GOALS for the person receiving counsel:

1. There is only one goal for the first meeting: **GIVE THEM HOPE!**

Proverbs 13:12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick, But when the desire comes, it is a tree of life.

2. They are not the first to experience such a trial.

1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

- a. God wants to forgive them.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- b. Jesus Christ is capable of helping them overcome **anything**.

Hebrews 2:17-18 ¹⁷ Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

Hebrews 4:15-16 ¹⁵ For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

III. SECOND MEETING

A. Goals for the Counselor:

1. Pray daily for the person.
2. The goal of this second meeting is to identify one unbiblical thought or action hampering their relationship with Jesus Christ and help them be reconciled to Him.

2 Corinthians 5:18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,

3. Review the portion of the Biblical Counseling booklet that covers this sin and highlight various topics or Scriptures that the Lord gives to you.
4. Confirm that they are serious about receiving counsel by completing homework.

Luke 16:10 He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.

5. During the 2nd meeting, check what you are saying to them. Is it something they need to hear or something you want to say? Speak only the things that they need to hear.

James 1:19-20 ¹⁹ So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; ²⁰ for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

B. Goals for the person receiving counsel:

1. To acknowledge the sin between them and God and to repent.
2. To seek God’s forgiveness for this sin.
3. To look to God’s Word for the plan to overcome this sin.
4. To trust in God’s grace and power to overcome this sin.

IV. THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS

A. Repeat the goals of the second meeting.

B. At the beginning of the session, determine whether they have completed their homework and are serious about receiving counsel.

C. If they are truly making an effort to repent from sin but failing, then help them develop two plans.

1. An Action Plan, one that makes “no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts.”

Romans 13:14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

2. An Emergency Backup Plan – what to do when they are suddenly overcome with temptation.

Matthew 5:29 If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

D. Each session should only deal with a single sin rather than addressing many. New counseling issues should not be addressed until the last one was repented, addressed by God’s Word and change has occurred.

E. Once all of the issues seem to have been addressed, it is good to prepare a few topical Bible studies from the booklet which contain information they seem to lack about God's will and their current situation (i.e. family life, finances, anger, etc.).

HOMEWORK:

1. Identify one sin that you struggle with:
 - a. Find a Bible character that struggled with this sin.
 - b. In what way was Jesus tempted by this sin?
 - c. How did Jesus overcome it?
 - d. Develop an action plan by drawing the “path of circumstances” that leads you to your sin.

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