Every Friday | 6AM | Des Peres Schnucks | Men

TOPICS THAT WILL BE COVERED —

✓ Biblical Counseling Movement—intro. (beginning Friday, August 15th, 2014)
✓ Addictions//Drug Abuse
✓ Adultery
✓ Anger
✓ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
✓ Biblical Decision Making
✓ Bipolar
✓ Demonic Activity
✓ Depression
✓ Eating Problems
✓ Fear (paralyzing fear, anxiety, worry)
✓ Homosexuality
✓ Insomnia/Chronic Fatigue
✓ Life-Dominating Sins
✓ OCD - obsessive, compulsive disorder
✓ Pornography
✓ Schizophrenia
✓ Sexual Abuse
✓ Resisting Gossip/Slander/Backbiting

“We must know that God’s way is qualitatively different from everything else available in the bazaar of options, of other counsels, other schemas, other practices, other systems. The only sanity and wakefulness is to know Him-who-is. Anything else perpetuates our insanity, our sleepwalk: “See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ”(Col. 2:8).”

— David Powlison
SESSION 1

Biblical Counseling Movement

Introduction:

What most people think of as “counseling” is controlled by the elitist habits of the modern mental health system: a designated professional with an advanced degree, and with expertise in supposedly objective, non-religious ideas and techniques from psychology or psychiatry; a designated and diagnosed patient/client, who suffers from a syndrome with a medical-sounding label; a formal and consultative relationship that mediates ideas and solutions from science and/or medicine; a fee-for-service exchange occurring in a time-out from real life social relationships; a fundamental asymmetry between doctor and patient, expert and client, healthy and sick. Seen against this backdrop, the Bible seems to say little about the ideas, solutions, methods, and institutional structures necessary for effective counseling (David Powlison).

The psychologies and psychotherapies self-consciously compete with the Faith’s interpretations and intentions. Sigmund Freud, for example, conceived of his work this way: “The words, ‘secular pastoral worker,’ might well serve as a general formula for describing the function which the analyst...has to perform in his relation to the public.”1 Freud saw himself doing “pastoral work in the best sense of the word.” But this pastoral ministry did not offer people the mercy and grace of the personal Lord who searches every heart and shepherds souls. Instead, when Freud counseled someone, he would seek “to enrich him from his own internal resources.” Freud was a bold evangelist for such trust in human resources, calling for the day when “a new kind of Salvation Army” trained in psychoanalysis would go forth as “a band of helpers for combating the neuroses of civilization (David Powlison).

Secular theories of healing

A common, unbiblical understanding of so-called ‘mental-illness’—

“Like cancer and heart disease, mental illness is a medical condition, and those who have mental disorders struggle to cope with everyday life because of their altered moods, thinking or behavior. Fortunately, treatment for mental illness or mental disorders can lead to recovery; and although treatment may include medication, it ideally also includes psychosocial therapies and support” (Meredith Bower).

Top 5 mental illness in America:
1. major depression
2. anxiety disorder
3. OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder)
4. Bipolar
5. Schizophrenia

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Some basic tenets of modern psychology (and Sigmund Freud — father of modern psychology) include the following:
1. Human nature is basically good
2. People have the answers to their problems inside them.
3. The key to understanding and correcting a person's attitudes and actions lies somewhere in the PAST
4. Individuals' problems are the result of what someone else has done to them.
5. Human problems can be purely psychological in nature -- unrelated to any spiritual or physical condition.
6. Deep seated problems can be solved only by professional counselors using therapy

*NOTE*: ALL of these are directly opposite & contradictory of what Scripture teaches.

Hopelessness & Impotency of Secular Counseling/Therapy (models and methodologies)

Those who deny or minimize the sufficiency of Scripture or view the Bible as more of a passive screen should always remember that the other supposed sources of truth for building an approach to counseling (=secular/integrative) are suspect. This has become even more apparent as secularists argue amongst themselves as they try to assemble the latest version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders - V (or, DSM). Two theorists from the University of Nevada School of Medicine recently commented on those who are stirring up “a vigorous discussion about the weaknesses of psychiatric diagnostic classification as well as troubling elements related to the DSM in general. Three troubling observations arise…
1. Our diagnostic system has not led to the identification of any biomarkers or biological causes for mental disorders
2. The diagnostic categories are heterogeneous within categories and often overlap with each other as well as with normalcy
3. Diagnoses can cause real harm, not just to a few people, but to millions.  

Biblical Counseling

What biblical counseling is—
1. Biblical counseling discerns desires, thinking, and behavior that God wants to change.
3. Biblical counseling seeks the sanctification of the Christian (into Christ-likeness) for the glory of God.

To put it simply, nouthetic counseling consists of lovingly confronting people out of deep concern in order to help them make those changes that God requires (Jay Adams).

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"Too many have bought the lie that a crucial realm of spiritual wisdom exists outside Scripture, and that some idea or technique from that extrabiblical realm holds the real key to helping people with their deep problems" (John MacArthur).

**The Role of the Holy Spirit in Biblical Counseling**

“The simple & external demonstration of the Word of God ought, indeed, to suffice fully for the production of faith, did not our blindness and perversity interfere. But such is the propensity of our minds to vanity that they can never adhere to the truth of God, and such is their dullness that they are always blind even to His light. Hence, *without the illumination of the Holy Spirit the Word has no effect*” (John Calvin, *emphasis added*).

The Holy Spirit ordinarily effects his characterological work in the lives of believers through the means of grace. He uses the ministry of the Word, the sacraments, prayer and the fellowship of God’s people as the principal vehicles through which he brings about such changes...Methodology and technique, skill and
exercise of gifts are all constant with the work of the Spirit. What makes the difference is one’s attitude and inner motivation: does he do what he does in reliance upon his own efforts, in dependence upon methods and techniques, or does he acknowledge his own inability and ask the Spirit to use his gifts and methods? (Jay Adams).

Biblical Counseling involves: **P.O.W.E.R.**

- **P**rayer
- **O**ngoing relationships
- **W**ord
- **E**arnest Diligence
- **R**esiding Spirit

Man's basic needs are to know God (be forgiven and know His person) and glorify God. By man's meeting these needs, his other secondary needs are met as a by-product (safety, acceptance, belonging, properly evaluating himself) (1 Cor.10:31; 2 Cor.5:9; Phil.1:6; Matt.6:33; Jer.9:23-24).

**The Ultimate Goals of Biblical Counseling**

1. To allow him to acquire the biblical perspective and practical theology relative to his presenting problem(s)
2. To facilitate a meaningful walk with God in Christ-like behavior (Isa.55:8-9; Jer.9:23-24; Rom. 8:28-29; Phil.2:1-11; 3:10)

The ultimate purpose: CHRISTLIKENESS! 2 Cor 5:9 - pleasing to Him!

"Psychotherapy cannot solve anyone's spiritual problems. At best it can occasionally use human insight to superficially modify behavior. It succeeds or fails for Christians and non Christians equally because it is only a temporal adjustment --- a sort of mental chiropractic. It cannot change the human heart, and even the experts admit that” (John MacArthur).

Scripture is comprehensively sufficient for understanding those aspects of human nature and those processes of change that are essential for wise and effective counseling. The [secular/psychological] “counseling” implications one draws usually serve the interests of one's own autonomy from God. Biblical counselors turn this observation and concern inside out and upside down” (David Powlison).

**Biblical Counseling in the Environment of the Local Church**

We want CFBC not only to have a counseling ministry but to be a counseling ministry. We want the church to be a place where the sufficiency of Scripture and the doctrine of progressive sanctification permeate everything. We want CFBC to be a discipleship factory (adapted from Rob Green & Steve Viars).
"If there were anti-depressants in the biblical times, then we wouldn't have the Book of Psalms or the Book of Job."

**Some Affirmations & Denials of Biblical Counseling**

We must know that God’s way is qualitatively different from everything else available in the bazaar of options, of other counsels, other schemas, other practices, other systems. The only sanity and wakefulness is to know Him-who-is. Anything else perpetuates our insanity, our sleepwalk: “See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ” (Col. 2:8).

We **affirm** that the Scripture defines and speaks to the gamut of problems in living for all people in all situations.

We **deny** that biblical truth is limited to a narrow sphere of “religious” or “spiritual” beliefs, activities, persons, emotions, and institutions, separated from the other spheres of daily life.

We deny that any particular realm of human life can be sectored off as the unique province of the theories, practices, and professions of the modern psychologies.

We **affirm** that the Bible teaches, invites, warns, commands, sings, and tells the solution for what troubles humankind. In the good news of Jesus Christ, God acts personally. In word and deed, He redeems us from sin and misery through the various operations of His past, present, and future grace. God uses many means of grace, including the face-to-face conversations of wise counseling.

We **deny** that any other solution or therapy actually cures souls, and can change us from unholy to holy, from sinners to righteous, from insanity to sanity, from blindness to sightedness, from self-absorption to faith-working-through-love.

We **affirm** that the Bible explicitly teaches the fundamentals of counseling method by precept and example. Through speaking the truth in love, we act as tangible instruments of God’s grace in the lives of others.

We **deny** that the modern psychotherapies rightly understand or practice wise counseling methodology, though they may evidence analogies to elements of biblical wisdom.

We **affirm** that the personality theories are essentially false theologies, and the psychotherapies are essentially false forms of the cure of souls. Even the more descriptive and empirical psychologies are significantly skewed by secular presuppositions, and their findings need to be reinterpreted by the biblical worldview.

We **deny** that psychological research, personality theories, and psychotherapies should be viewed as “objective science,” as that term is usually understood. Neither should they be seen as extensions of medicine and medical practice.

**The Biblical Counseling Process**

Can be summarized by six practices:

1. **Gathering pertinent information** (listening, gathering data, taking notes, asking heart-probing questions) (Proverbs 18:13, 15, 17; Proverbs 20:5)
2. **Sorting out the problems** (where is the sin, what is the issue, how are they responding, what needs to be changed, how can responses be different?) (Proverbs 23:7; 4:23; Ezekiel 14:1-8; Ephesians 4:22; Galatians 1:10)

3. **Involvement** (ongoing help, discipleship, counseling relationship, searching Scripture) (Acts 20:31; 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8; Philippians 4:9)

4. **Hope** (providing hope to the counselee(s) from God’s Word) (Psalm 42:5; Romans 15:4; Philippians 1:6)

5. **Instruction** (the path forward: what needs to happen to bring about God-glorifying change?) (2 Timothy 3:16; 1 Peter 5:5; Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Ephesians 4:22-24; 1 Timothy 4:7-8)

6. **Homework** (give the counselee specific tasks to promote change; to strip & mortify sinful old habits and to put on, replace the old with new good habits and mindsets) (John 13:17; John 14:15; James 1:22)

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**Conclusion**

"The most experienced psychologist or observer of human nature knows infinitely less of the human heart than the simplest Christian who lives beneath the Cross of Jesus. The greatest psychological insight, ability, and experience cannot grasp this one thing: what SIN is. Worldly wisdom knows what distress and weakness and failure are, but it does not know the GODLESSNESS of man. And so it also does not know that man is destroyed only by HIS SIN and can be healed only by FORGIVENESS. Only the Christian knows this.

In the presence of a psychiatrist, I can only be a sick man; in the presence of a Christian brother I can dare to be a sinner. The psychiatrist must first search my heart and yet he never plumbs its ultimate depth. The Christian brother knows when I come to him: here is a sinner like myself, a godless man who wants to confess & years for God's forgiveness. The psychiatrist views me as if there were NO God. The brother views me as I am before the Judging and Merciful God in the Cross of Jesus Christ" (Dietrich Bonhoeffer).

“O let it be the daily, earnest prayer of me and thee, that our hearts prove not false and unwilling to follow the Directions which are given us, lest we condemn ourselves in the things which we allow. Your practice now will show, whether it be through want of will or skill, if henceforth you unfaithfully neglect your duty. If you are willing, obey now what is plainly taught you, and show by your diligence that you are willing” (Richard Baxter).

**BIBLICAL COUNSELING BOOKS & RESOURCES**

- *Introduction to Biblical Counseling*, by John MacArthur, Wayne Mack, The Master’s Seminary Faculty**
- *Women Counseling Women*, by Elyse Fitzpatrick & Carol Cornish, Eds.
- *Competent to Counsel*, by Jay Adams**
- *A Theology of Christian Counseling*, by Jay Adams
- *Power Encounters*, David Powlison
- *Seeing With New Eyes*, by David Powlison (read everything Powlison writes!)**
- *Why Christians Can’t Trust Psychology*, by Ed Bulkley
- *How to Counsel from Scripture*, Martin & Deidre Bobgan
- *The Christian Counselor’s Medical Desk Reference*, By Robert Smith, M.D.
- *Men Counseling Men*, by John Street
- *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, edited by James Macdonald, Bob Keller and Steve Viars**
- *Counseling the Hard Cases*, by Stuart Scott and Heath Lambert
SESSION 2
Addictions & Drug/Alcohol Abuse

Introduction:
• According to the DSM [Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders — DSM, published by the American Psychiatric Association] here is a list of addictions to substances — alcohol, tobacco, opioids (heroin), prescription drugs, cocaine, marijuana, amphetamines (meth), hallucinogens.
• Here’s a list of impulse control disorders (disorders where impulses cannot be resisted) — kleptomania (compulsive stealing), pyromania (compulsive setting of fires), gambling.
• Other behaviors that can be addicting — food, sex, pornography, playing video games, working, cutting, shopping, and even ‘religious obsession’ (as opposed to ‘religious devotion’!) [uh oh, are we in trouble?] All of this in the DSM confirmed by Harry Croft, MD (Psychiatrist)

Columnist for the Huffington Post, Therese J. Borchard, provides 12 addiction ‘zappers’ [her words!]:
1. Get some buddies
2. Read away the craving
3. Be accountable to someone
4. Predict your weak spots
5. Distract yourself
6. Sweat
7. Start a project
8. Keep a record
9. Be the expert
10. Grab your security item
11. Get on your knees
12. Just do nothing

But are these real, lasting solutions that can get to the real root and inner heart of the addiction problem?

So the question today:
Is the church a place that can minister to addicts? Is it possible for the church to be a place where addicts find acceptance and support? Does the gospel even speak to addictions?

The Secular Understanding & Terminology
The Encyclopedia of Psychology (& American Psychological Association):
Addiction is a condition in which the body must have a drug to avoid physical and psychological withdrawal symptoms. Addiction’s first stage is dependence, during which the search for a drug dominates an individual’s life. An addict eventually develops tolerance, which forces the person to consume larger and larger doses of the drug to get the same effect.

From Medical News Today article published in 2009:
People with an addiction do not have control over what they are doing, taking or using. Their addiction may reach a point at which it is harmful. Addictions do not only include physical things we consume, such as drugs or alcohol, but may include virtually anything, such abstract things as gambling to seemingly harmless products, such as chocolate - in other words, addiction may refer to a substance dependence (e.g. drug addiction) or behavioral addiction (e.g. gambling addiction).

Lea Winerman, American Psychological Association, writes:
More than 40 million people in the United States — 16 percent of all Americans over age 12 — suffer from nicotine, alcohol or drug addiction.
The DSM defines it as:
**Substance dependence** is *When an individual persists in use of alcohol or other drugs despite problems related to use of the substance, substance dependence may be diagnosed. Compulsive and repetitive use may result in tolerance to the effect of the drug and withdrawal symptoms when use is reduced or stopped. This, along with Substance Abuse are considered Substance Use Disorders.*

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**The Real Root Issue**

The word addiction is not in the Bible, but the concept is everywhere. The human tendency to be completely committed to the pursuit of destructive, self-defeating behaviors is a strong theme in Scripture. It springs from the fall of mankind and our descent into depravity (Timothy Lane).

**Addictions:**
People sin because their hearts have been captured by something other than God (Tim Lane) (cf. Solomon in Eccl. 2.10)

We intensely pursue what we love. It intoxicates us (whether a chemical is involved or not). And when it fades, we pursue it again. With this understanding, it is possible to view any life-dominating struggle as an “addiction.” In fact, our culture has already done so. People addicted to their jobs are called work-aholics; people addicted to shopping are shop-aholics (Tim Lane).

*Romans 6:19
“The downward spiral of idolatry finally comes to rest at slavery. Idols originally promised freedom. The gods could be at your disposal, doing your bidding. They held out life, camaraderie, and pleasure; but they deliver slavery [what we now call ‘addictions’]: “for a man is slave to whatever has mastered him” (2 Peter 1.19)” (Ed Welch).

**Inaccuracy of Addictions/Substance Abuse & the “Disease” Mentality**
- Incompatibility of diagnosis and treatment—the treatment is not medical but moral.
- A lack of empirical evidence to support the disease model.
- Reflects the frustration of those trying to understand it – people don’t know what else to call it.
- The presence of multiple addictions damages the disease model.
- It is against God’s law & sinful (cf. Eph. 5:18)
- Makes genuine repentance impossible.
- Underestimates the enemy and enslavement to sin.
  - **PROPER CONCLUSION:** Addiction is **not** a disease.

**Biblical Anthropology**
- Man is dependent by nature.
- Man was created to live dependently on God in order to find life and blessing.
- Man strives for autonomy and self-sufficiency. This is the height of pride, self-worship & blasphemy.
- Man remains a dependent creature in spite of his sin.
- His dependence then turns to other things, any other things — these are his IDOLS.
• Man is captivated and ensnared by the idols he trusts and loves, resulting in addiction. ‘I need…’
• PEOPLE BECOME DEPENDENT BECAUSE THEY ARE DEPENDENT.

The Ultimate Solution

IMPORTANT!! The goal of Biblical counseling is easily lost with the incessant demands of chemical abuse. Your goal for them must always be to become God’s kind of person, not just stop the abuse.

We worship our way into sin and we must worship our way out of sin (Tim Lane).

Consider the illustration of Jesus healing a paralyzed man when his friends brought him to Jesus. Jesus didn’t ignore the man’s physical symptoms; instead, he highlighted the even deeper problem and deeper solution of the heart (Matthew 9:1-8)!

The real issue for the addict is not an addiction problem, it’s a worship problem. The heart wants something more than God. The addict has turned that ‘something’ into his god.

Heart Questions for the Addict:
• What do you really want?
• What is your purpose in life?
• What/whom do you really love?
• When do you get most sad and depressed? What happens, describe the situation and circumstances that lead up to it.
• When do you get hopeless? (note: the addict is not getting what he desires)
• What do you get most excited about? What brings you the greatest pleasure?
• What is your dream?
• How would you like to be remembered?
• What do you especially want to avoid?

Consider this spiritual truth.
The root problem of addictions is false worship of the heart. So if the root problem is in fact false worship, the answer is knowing the Lord, the One who deserves our worship. This is true theology, the study of God Himself (Ed Welch).

Proverbs 25:28 — Like a city that is broken into and without walls is a man who has no control over his spirit (cf. Prov 29:11; 1 Thess 4:4-5; 1 Pet 1:13; 2 Pet 1:5-6).

Counseling the Addict
1. Breaking a life-dominating sin requires a total life change.
   Col 2:23; Gal 5:17; Eph 4:22; Titus 2:12; James 1:14; 1 Pet 4:1-6

2. Permanent change is a two-sided (two-factored) process.
   Eph 4:22-24
   (consider Psalm 130:3; Eph 1:7)
3. The change involves radical amputation.
   Matt 5:29-30 (cf. 1 Cor 13:4; James 5:20; Gal 6:1-2)
   “When you are doing battle with sin, it requires preparation and a desire to absolutely eradicate it from your life. To settle for a truce or a peaceful coexistence is a thinly veiled commitment to fall back in love with the desired substance [sin]” (Ed Welch).

4. The believer must involve himself regularly with other church members (Heb 3:13; 10:24ff; Gal 6:1-2).

**Counsel to the Counselor on Helping the Counselee**

One of the most effective ways to involve the church in comprehensive change is assigning your counselee to another mature believer for weekly, and if necessary, daily meetings of accountability. Sometimes they may meet for breakfast where the focus is upon establishing a consistent personal Bible study habit along with a discussion of his daily schedule.

You may give your counselee homework to invite an elder and his family over for dinner and then let them demonstrate family devotions and prayer. The goal is to engulf the counselee, his thinking and behavior patterns, in the Word of God. These changes must be taken very seriously. There is nothing more effective than a structured, disciplined lifestyle to break the enslaving habits of sin.

To really help the addict, we must learn the most critical aspect of change is to understand the importance the heart plays in our thoughts, beliefs, and desires. We must look to God’s view of our self-focused heart and see it as deceptive and desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9).

Be patient — be like Christ, a patient Shepherd with us (dumb) sheep:
   “Christ’s sheep are weak sheep, and lacking in something or other; he therefore applies himself to the necessities of every sheep. He seeks that which was lost, and brings again that which was driven out of the way, and binds up that which was broken, and strengthens the weak… His tenderest care is over the weakest” (Richard Sibbes).

Be encouraged: YOU (yes, you!) can help an addict:
   “Don’t supersize the issue of addiction. While it has its complexities, the myth that “it takes an alcoholic to help an alcoholic” is simply not true. It takes the Word of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit to help ANYONE with any problem including addicts, idolaters, and drunkards (Mark Shaw).

Don’t forget God the Spirit!
Luke 11:13 — "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"
   Ask for the Spirit of Christ and you will get it. If we are not seeing the Spirit of Christ being poured out, it is usually because we haven’t asked for it.

**So the question we began with…**

Is the church a place that can minister to addicts? Is it possible for the church to be a place where addicts find acceptance and support? Does the gospel even speak to addictions?
   The answer to all of these questions is YES—because of God’s grace and reckless love.
SESSION 3
Adultery

Introduction
- In the recent DSM-5 [The Diagnostic & Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders, 5th edition, published by the American Psychiatric Association], Dr. Martin P. Kafka, an associate clinical professor of psychiatry at Harvard University who was a member of the DSM-5 work group on sexual disorders said:

"There is no doubt in my mind that this [mental] condition exists and that it's serious …. There are definitely men who are consumed by porn or consumed by sex with consenting adults — who have multiple affairs or multiple prostitutes. The consequences associated with this behavior are very significant, including divorce, pregnancy" and sexually transmitted disease, he said.

Is this a “condition”? Is it a disease? A disorder? Or is it sin? Why?

Secular Terminology/Diagnoses
- 3 pieces of advice to remain faithful (from Jeremy Nicholson, PhD, psychologist in Boston)—
  1. Emphasize Love and Caring
  2. Enhancing Physical Appearance
  3. Rewarding Them

“Monogamy, in my opinion, is a failed experiment.” (Noel Biderman).
Biderman continues: “Life is short. Have an affair.”

The Biblical Texts
- Ex 20:14  (Deut 5:18)
- Lev 20:10
- Prov 6:32
- Jer 3:9; 5:7; 7:9; 23:14; 29:23
- John 8:3
- James 2:10-11
- 2 Pet 2:14
- Hebrews 13:4


The Root Problem
- Prov 4:23 - watch over your heart.
- Matt 5:27-28 - the heart (even Matthew 15:19 says that adultery comes out of the heart)

Adultery doesn’t start with the sex-act. It began long ago with secret, hidden, unmortified sins.
Adultery did not begin with the bed. It began with the secret exhilaration of private transgressions.
We do bad things because in our hearts, we want (desire!) bad things. The action manifests our heart.
The Progression from the Heart to the Conduct:

2 Samuel 11:1-5: David

He saw…
He inquired…
He took…
He lay with her...

**Prov 4:20-27 - WARNING: travel on the path to sin [including adultery]**

1. Neglect the Scriptures (20-22)
2. Ignore your heart (23)
3. Believe your lies (24)
4. Carelessness with eyes (25)
5. Unwillingness to repent (26-27)

**Steps to Adultery (Proverbs 6:25-35)**

You think about her (25-26)
You forget sin’s grip (27-28)
You ignore God’s judgment (29-31)
You destroy your soul (32)

**Steps to Adultery (Proverbs 7:1-27)**

You walk by (6-9)
You notice her (10)
You touch her (11-13)
You listen to her (14-15)
You fantasize with her (16-18)
You hide everything (19-21)
You follow her (22-23)

SOLUTION: You must guard your heart & flee from her (vv.24-27)

The Bible makes it clear that when we commit sexual immorality, we are bowing down — at least internally — at the idol of sex and doing what the ‘god’ of sexual desire wants us to do (Wayne Mack).

*Two root issues for sexual immorality (including adultery) in Scripture: (1) the heart problem; (2) idolatry.*

**A Proper View of Sex & Sexuality**

Denny Burk speaks about his book: *What Is the Meaning of Sex* in the following:

“What is the meaning of sex?” My answer is that the deepest meaning of our sexuality is the glory of God. Because the glory of God is the ultimate purpose of all things, all sexual morality must be judged by its ability to achieve that end.

So what is that purpose of sex? If we clear away all the subordinate purposes, we find that the ultimate purpose of sex is the glory of God. Sex, gender, marriage, manhood, womanhood—all of it—exist ultimately for the glory of God. The glory of God as the ultimate purpose of sex is not merely a theological deduction. It is the explicit teaching of Scripture (Burk, *Meaning of Sex*, 25-26).
The four purposes of sex are (1) the consummation of marriage, (2) procreation, (3) expression of love, and (4) pleasure. These four purposes comprise the means by which we glorify God with our sexuality. [The following four points are adapted from Denny Burk’s book *Meaning of Sex.*]

1. **Consummation of Marriage**
   Sex completes the initiation of the marriage covenant, and “every sexual act after the initial consummation is an ongoing affirmation of the husband and wife’s unique union.” It tends toward the glory of God in that it effects a union that is designed to be an image of Christ’s marriage to his bride, the church (Eph. 5:32).

2. **Procreation**
   Procreation tends toward the glory of God as it is a means by which the glory of God will cover the earth through his image-bearing vice-regents.

3. **Expression of Love**
   The Song of Solomon speaks of the emotional love that exists between the lover and the beloved (Song 2:4; 7:7; 8:6–7). But in these three texts, it is not merely the emotion that is in view but the marital act. The sexual union is so closely associated with the emotion that the author uses the word love to refer to the deed itself. In this way, the Song teaches sex as a unique, bodily expression of love. How does the expression of love tend toward the glory of God? The apostle Paul says that this passionate union of spouses serves as a living metaphor of the loving union that Christ has with his church: “This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church” (Eph. 5:32).

4. **Pleasure**
   Indeed, biblically speaking, God is not averse to pleasure. It is true that pleasure can become an idol when it is treated as an end within itself (Prov. 21:17; 1 Tim. 5:6). But when the pleasure of sex is enjoyed in keeping with God’s comprehensive purposes, pleasure glorifies God. That is why the apostle Paul commands the Corinthians to “glorify God” with the use of the body for sex (1 Cor. 6:20). Sexual pleasure in the service of God is doxological.

**Offering Help to the Adulterer**
- A warning that ‘adulterers’ don’t inherit the kingdom (1 Cor 6:9; Gal 5:19-21).
  
  Examine yourself! (2 Cor 13:5).
- The destruction of adultery is very real. Its disgrace is lasting. It is to be avoided at all costs. But it still is not more powerful than the grace of God (Jon Bloom).

**Immediate Actions to End the Affair/Adulterous Situation**
1. The Importance of Getting Wise Counsel
2. Begin by Giving Thanks to God for His Forgiving Grace
3. Cut Off the Relationship Right Away
   - All communication (phone, email, text messages, social media connections) must be cut off.
   - Any mementos that have an association with the other person need to be discarded. Other than asking for forgiveness, this is the first way that the one who had the affair can display how serious their commitment is to their spouse. It is important to deal radically with sin (Tim Lane)
4. Immediately get a Medical Exam to Determine if There are Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)
5. Confess to Your Spouse What You Have Done

**Rebuilding the Marriage After Adultery Has Occurred & Been Confessed**
[This section is largely adapted from Tim Lane.]
1. Each Spouse Can Work to Make the Marriage Better
   - The problems in the marriage did not cause the affair and this in no way justifies the adultery. Yet it can still be a place where both people grow. Both can admit their own failures, sins and weaknesses and make new commitments to the marriage. This happens more effectively when the
spouse who has committed adultery is honest and open about what they have done and clearly states their spouse was not the cause of the affair.

2. It is Imperative to Get Beneath the Surface
For the person who has committed adultery, he or she must begin to gain clarity on why they did what they did. In Luke 6:43-45, Jesus says that all behavior grows out of our hearts. James 1:13 says the same thing. We sin, not primarily because of our circumstances but because we are dragged away by our own desires. What Jesus and James mean is that all sin begins inside of us - not outside of us. It is important to begin to understand the motivations that drove the person to commit adultery. If they don’t tackle sin at this level, they will not deal with the real problem nor will they go deep enough with their repentance. They may also be more susceptible to another affair.

3. Trust Must be Re-built Over Time
4. Forgiveness Must be Practiced as a Lifestyle
For the person who has been betrayed, this will be where the war is waged. While they may grant initial forgiveness, practicing forgiveness on a daily, moment-by-moment basis will be critical. It will be tempting for the spouse who has been sinned against to become bitter and resentful if they are not guided to continually practice forgiveness. Since the unfaithful spouse must build trust; the spouse who was betrayed must practice forgiveness. Both of these can only be done by the empowering work of the Spirit.

How Can You Counsel Couples After Sexual Sin — Adultery?
1. They must choose to forgive and rebuild (Matt. 12:31; Luke 17:3).
2. Give them hope that the marriage can be rebuilt (1 Cor. 10:13; Phil. 4:13).
3. Teach them the biblical directives about marriage (Gen. 2:18-24; Eph. 5:22-23).
4. Deal specifically with their own sins and failures (Matt. 7:1-5; Phil. 4:2).
5. Make specific plans about how they will change (James 4:6; Eph. 4:20-32).
6. They must commit themselves to be obedient to God’s commands regardless of how they feel (Luke 11:28; Romans 12:17-21).
7. They must learn to practice biblical communication (Eph. 4:25-32).
8. They must make changes for the right reasons, namely, to please God (2 Cor. 5:9)
9. They must persist in practicing those changes (1 Tim. 4:7-8; Rom. 13:14).

Conclusion
• Understand what real repentance is (cf. JC Ryle, “Repentance” at www.gracegems.org - *fabulous article*)
• A person who has fallen into adultery (not limited to this but all sin, including sexual sin) must manifest the following (all adapted from Wayne Mack):
  • He is willing to call the adultery what God calls it — sin.
  • He is willing to accept personal responsibility for all his sinful and unbiblical thoughts, choices, and actions.
  • He understands the seriousness and horrendous nature of his sin.
  • He shows a concern about heart sins (his attitudes, desires, motivations) as well as behavioral sins (Matt 5:27-32; James 4:8)
  • He is willing to turn to Christ for the forgiveness of his sins and is willing to be saved by the grace of God alone.
  • He displays a sincere desire to be free from sin itself, not just the problems/sequences caused by sin.
  • He is willing to commit himself to obeying and serving God rather than self, and he takes the Lordship of Christ very seriously.
  • He is willing to work on changing the things in his life and marriage that are displeasing to God (Luke 3:7-14; 2 Cor 7:9-11; 1 Thess 1:9-10).
SESSION 4

Anger

“Cease from anger and forsake wrath; Do not fret; it leads only to evildoing” —Psalm 37:8

“Some Christian people today who would never curse, steal, miss a prayer meeting, or think of getting drunk, respond with unrestrained anger toward those who disagree with them … These Christians overreact, slaying their brothers and sisters in Christ and plundering the Church” (Alexander Strauch)

“Nothing, I maintain, so constantly gives the Devil an opportunity as loss of control in anger” (Martyn Lloyd Jones)

Introduction

• God gets righteously angry (Ps. 7:11, Rom. 1:18, John 3:36)
• God’s anger is a right and just response to what is wrong and offensive. God’s anger is not sinful (James 1:13, Lev. 11:44,)
• Jesus was righteously angry at times (Matt. 21:12-13, Heb. 4:15, 1 Peter 2:22)
• Therefore, God demonstrates that anger can be utterly holy, right, good, and even a loving response to sin
• Though the capacity for human anger may be linked to being made in the image of God, sin has so twisted the human heart that human righteous anger, untainted by sin, seems highly unlikely.

Definition of Anger

Anger is a whole-personed, active response of negative moral judgment against perceived evil.

Anger is “the rising up in the heart in passionate displacency against an apprehended evil, which would cross or hinder us of some desired good” – Richard Baxter (17th c. Puritan Pastor).

The New Testament has three words for anger:

1. Thumos (θυμός) – explosive anger, the boiling agitation of the feeling and passion of anger (“wrath” in NASB) – Eph. 4:31, Gal 5:20; Col 3:8
2. Orge (ὀργή) – an abiding, settled attitude of indignation that frequently seeks revenge (“anger” in NASB) – Eph. 4:31, Rom 12:19; Col 3:8; 1 Tim 2:8; James 1:19-20* (cf. Prov 15:1)
3. Parorgismos (παροργίσμος) – anger mingled with irritability, exasperation, and embitterment (“anger” – NASB) – Eph. 4:26

Why is anger so bad? Because anger is, like a fire...

It can be used for heating and cooking or it can burn down the house. When disputes arise and analytical judgment is most needed, anger often flares out of control. It turns reason into irrationality and confusion. It short-circuits open and fruitful communication and hinders honest discussion of the issues (Strauch, Bite and Devour, 53).

Some Key Scriptures:

• James 4:1-3, 1:19-20 [the root of all anger]
• Ephesians 4:26-32 (Colossians 3:8) [how to put off anger & what to replace it with]
• Philippians 2:3-5 [how to act instead of being angry]
Faulty Ways of Thinking About/Handling Anger

Under the "Disruptive, Impulse-Control, and Conduct Disorders" category in the DSM -V [The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition, by the American Psychiatric Association], there is something called: **Intermittent explosive disorder** (IED): a behavioral disorder characterized by explosive outbursts of anger, often to the point of rage, that are disproportionate to the situation at hand (i.e., impulsive screaming triggered by relatively inconsequential events).

“There is currently little agreement among mental health practitioners as to what constitutes an anger problem” (Bunmi O. Olatunji & Jeffery M. Lohr, both Dept of Psychology at U. Of Arkansas).

From the American Psychological Association

“Remember, you can't eliminate anger—and it wouldn't be a good idea if you could. In spite of all your efforts, things will happen that will cause you anger; and sometimes it will be justifiable anger. Life will be filled with frustration, pain, loss, and the unpredictable actions of others . . . . Because anger is a psychological issue, it is possible to treat symptoms with medication. While the goal of treatment programs will be to eventually make the patient self-sufficient, particular medicines can be helpful in the treatment phase. Antidepressants such as Prozac, Celexa and Zoloft are commonly prescribed for anger issues.”

“Based on what I believe is fair, I have the right to be angry about the disappointments in my life.” (WRONG!)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vented Anger</th>
<th>The Slow Burn</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yelling, screaming</td>
<td>Clamming up/moodiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slamming things around</td>
<td>Being frustrated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cursing</td>
<td>Being irritated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Telling someone off</td>
<td>Being disgusted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Verbal attack/name-calling</td>
<td>Glaring</td>
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<td>Hitting</td>
<td>Huffing</td>
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These are **UN**biblical ways of responding/reacting to situations. These may be natural, but they're **NOT** biblical nor God-honoring.
Secular psychologists/psychiatrists may encourage a practice called “venting.” If they have a client who is angry or resentful toward someone else — perhaps a mother/father — they might hand them a pillow and encourage their client to do to the pillow what they would like to do to the person they’re upset with.

Another practice among secular ‘therapists’ is something called “transference.” In this method of dealing with anger, the counselor tries to take the place of the person with which the client is upset. The counselor may say: “Pretend that I’m your mom & tell me everything that you would like to tell her. Just let it all out. Let me really have it.” The psychiatrist tries to encourage the client to attack a substitute. But God never encourages us to attack a substitute, or transfer our anger to another person.

**1. Most think their anger is a justified and normal response to how they have been treated**

**2. Some even think that not expressing or “validating” your anger is the real source of people’s problems**

**3. Yet the Bible consistently warns people to **not** be angry (Ecc. 7:9, James 1:19-20, Rom. 12:19, Eph. 4:31, Ps. 37:8)**

**4. Instead, the Bible calls for a different response to what most people think is a normal and justifiable occasion for anger (Matt. 5:44, 22:39, Rom. 12:18, Eph. 5:25)**

**Unbiblical Ways of Interpreting Bouts of Your Anger-Flares** *do you ever say/think the following?*

“I deserve much more than I’m getting”
“If she only had listened to me”
“I’m going to be late & it’s a horrible thing to be late. I hate being late!”
“I told her what I wanted and she’s not cooperating. She is so selfish”
“That person totally misrepresented what I said or what I did.”
“After all I’ve done, this is what I get?”
“I deserve praise or recognition more than the person who got it does”
“My husband/wife is never satisfied”
“No one ever pays attention to me”
“No one cares what happens to me”
“People are always taking advantage of me”
“I’m always the one who has to do the dirty work”
“She never wants to do what I want to do. She always has to have her own way.”

*And, there can be physical effects...*

In one’s physical appearance/demeanor (Genesis 4:5)
Certainly high blood pressure, etc.

*“A hot tempered man abounds in transgression” (Proverbs 29:22)*

**Why Do We Get Angry** *the biblical diagnosis/the root problem*

Usually we are angry for selfish reasons: pride, hurt feelings, etc. Then we express anger in sinful ways (Jim Newheiser).

Anger demonstrates a great dissatisfaction with God’s sovereignty in your life. Anger arises out of living to please self instead of living to please the Lord and causes much trouble.
1. Anger is something that a person chooses to do. People do not make us angry (Ps. 37:8, Eph. 4:31) Saul as a perfect example (his jealousy led him to choose sinful anger): he became angry and tried to kill his oldest son (1 Samuel 20:30-33).

“In facing up to our anger, we need to realize that no one else causes us to be angry. Someone else’s words or actions may become the occasion of our anger, but the cause lies deep within us—usually our pride, or selfishness, or desire to control” (Jerry Bridges).

2. Anger comes as a result of idolatry: putting self in place of God (Rom. 12:19, James 4:3) Uzziah, the King of Judah, confronted by the priests for his unfaithfulness to the Lord [and pride/self-idolatry], became enraged when he was confronted with his sin and was struck with leprosy until the day of his death (2 Chronicles 26:16-23)

3. Anger is mental murder (Matt. 5:21-22, James 4:3) Anger always involves thoughts and intentions (Proverbs 4:23; Ephesians 4:17-18)

4. Anger is extremely deceptive (Heb. 3:13)

5. It deceives us into thinking that it is right for us to hurt people who have hurt us

6. It deceives us into thinking that we must obey it – that we can’t help our angry response

Anger involves a lack of self-control (Proverbs 17:27; 25:8; 29:11; 2 Peter 1:6) Jonah was greatly displeased and angry when the Lord showed compassion on Nineveh, and God subsequently rebuked and humbled him (Jonah 4:1-11). He felt as though he had to be angry.

7. Anger is both taught and modeled to us in life the more we spend time with angry people (Prov. 22:24-25). It can become a habit or second nature through practice (Prov. 19:19).

The Big Point: Anger is a heart issue. (Mark 7:21 Matt. 12:34; Leviticus 19:17-18)
The bottom line reason for much of our sinful anger is related to the fact that we have an agenda and someone or something is standing in the way of our fulfilling that agenda (Wayne Mack).

It’s not a mental condition that happens to come but a heart-sourced, self-worshiping transgression that sees my plan, and my desire, and my wants thwarted (or in danger of being thwarted). It thus is a sin against God that began with a self-motivated, self-loving, self-worshiping, self-planned desire for something.

How to Overcome Anger
Anger must be mastered before it becomes malicious.

For a Christian: Since God’s Word commands you to put away anger and bitterness, it is possible to do so. You don’t have to give into anger; God provides a way out (1 Corinthians 10:13; Eph 4:31-32)

1. Recognize that the vast majority of anger is sinful
2. Must adopt a biblical view of their anger.
   We are responsible before God for our anger. It’s not their fault. I’m not a victim. I’ve sinned & am guilty.
3. Must be taught the ‘log’ principle — don’t be self-deceived/in denial (Matt. 7:1-5)
   Pluck out your plank: You can’t deny ("internalize") that you are angry or bitter.
4. Identify the thinking and ruling desires (idols) that govern the heart (James 4:1-3)
   • Ask yourself, "What is it I am wanting so badly?" Let go of it as something you must have. The only desire you must have is to glorify God!
   • Ask yourself, "What am I thinking that is wrong?"
   • Ask yourself, "What should I be thinking?" Use your new thoughts and Scripture
• Ask yourself, "What is the right goal?"
• Ask yourself, "How can I be patient and think of others?"
• Ask yourself, "What do God and others want?" and "How can I serve them?"
• Ask yourself, "Is there something right that I should do about the problem or issue?" (Address someone's sin in the right way, plan a solution, get counsel, etc.)

Here is a Sample-Plan to Slaughter the Sin of Sinful Anger in Your Life

1. Memorize helpful Bible verses
2. Identify your person pattern – develop a “plan for righteous responses” [what happens?, where are you?, when?]. Carefully assess the situation.
4. Consistent practice of righteous responses is the key to growth and change (1 Tim. 4:7b-8).
5. Quickly stop and repent when you begin to respond in anger. Don’t pretend it didn’t happen. Don’t ignore it. Confess and seek forgiveness quickly (Eph. 4:26).
6. Keep an anger journal to help you
7. Monitor your thoughts and “self talk.” Repent as soon as you catch yourself thinking angry, sinful thoughts. Replace them with biblical thinking.
   a. What do I want that I’m not getting; what am I getting that I don’t want?
   b. What compelling desires of mine are driving me, ruling me, demanding to be fulfilled?
8. Be aware of other sins which often accompany and feed anger (pride, bitterness, slander, gossip, evil intent, murder, sexual sin, other deeds of the flesh)
9. Make sure you seek forgiveness from all whom you have been angry with.
10. See God in the midst of the trial (Gen. 50:20, Rom. 8:28-29)
11. Make room for the wrath of God (Rom. 12:19)
12. Return good for evil (Rom. 12:21) -- what will you choose to do? Will you choose to obey God or self?

Be on guard! And Don’t be naive about angry people: One angry person can destroy an entire congregation!

Heart-Searching Questions Getting to the ‘Heart of Anger’

What did I want that I didn’t get?
Is there something I am wanting too much?
What sinful thoughts and desires was I entertaining?
Does my anger tend to fit a pattern?
With whom am I typically angry?
In what contexts am I likely to get angry?
Under what circumstances am I likely to be angry?
How long am I angry?
Do I tend to blow up, clam up? Volcano or slow simmer? Deny it? Attack a substitute? Leave?
What do I feel are my ‘rights’?
• Right to have/control personal belongings
• Right to my own privacy
• Right to have/express personal opinions
• Right to earn and use money

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• Right to receive respect from others
• Right to be understood and to be treated fairly
• Right to be successful
• Right to have good health
• Right to date/be married
• Right to be considered worthwhile and important

After You Are Sinfully Angry, How Should You Respond?

1. Ask yourself, "How did I sin?" Be **specific**.
2. Ask yourself, "If I had this to do over again, what should I **think** and do differently?"
3. Take care of your sin of anger as soon as possible (Ephesians 4:26).
4. Confess and ask forgiveness of God and anyone else who may have been aware of or the recipient of our sinful anger. Be specific about how you were sinfully angry: wrong thinking, wrong actions, lack of love, etc. (Psalm 32:5; James 5:16). Call sin *sin* & humbly repent & seek forgiveness.
5. Tell God and others what you plan to do in the future instead of becoming sinfully angry (Psalm 119:59-60).
6. Be on guard once again (1 Peter 5:8).

It is important that you not entertain the thinking: “This is impossible!” or “I’ll never be able to change!” … With God’s grace, God’s Word, and your sincere efforts, you will be able to change … remember that being tempted is not a sin, but following through with sinful anger is. Do not grow weary in ‘well doing’ (Stuart Scott).

**CONCLUSION:**

According to the biblical writers the origin of sinful anger does not reside with a critical spouse, a distant husband, a disobedient child, an unjust boss, a difficult employee, or the guy who is driving recklessly in traffic. No, Christ and the apostle point to the heart as the root of the problem. Their proclamation reveals the inaccuracy of the statement cited earlier: “You make me angry.” According to scripture, the proper way to look at your anger is to say, “I make myself angry” or “My anger flows from my own heart and is my responsibility.” With such a view in place, you are free to work towards godly transformation even if those in your life that you consider troublesome never choose to change (i.e., critical wife, distant husband, disobedient child, etc.). Additionally, by adopting a biblical worldview, you will begin to operate from a foundation that will facilitate true and lasting change in your life, and the means to do so will be very different than secular methodologies [adapted from the Association of Biblical Counselors].

**For Further Reading & Study**

Lou Priolo, *The Heart of Anger* (Calvary, 1997)
Lou Priolo, *Get a Grip* (Calvary, 2006)
David Powlison, *Anger* (google this & find a 3-part series in the Journal for Biblical Counseling [FREE!])
Stuart Scott, *Communication & Conflict Resolution* (Focus, 2005)
Wayne Mack, *Anger and Stress Management God’s Way*
Paul Tripp, *War of Words*
SESSION 5
A.D.H.D [Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder]

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is said to be the most common disorder diagnosed in children. It begins in infancy and continues through teen and adulthood. It can cause difficulties in the areas of school, home, and jobs.

Discipleship! This is the most important gift you can give someone who fits the criteria for ADHD. Read through Proverbs and notice how the contrast to ADHD-like behavior is wisdom. Wisdom is available to all of us, but we expect it to come gradually, one small step then another (Ed Welch).

Introduction

Is there really such a disorder as ADHD or another label given by the medical association to give an excuse for parents, and families not to training their children, or to let adults be irresponsible for their actions.

In previous centuries, the theory held was that all attention disorders and learning disabilities were caused by head injures, or complications at birth.

Summary of the Issue
In ADHD the most common behavior falls into 3 categories: (1) inattention, (2) hyperactivity, and (3) impulsivity.

(1) Inattention:
People with inattention have a hard time keeping focus on one thing, or become bored with a task after a few minutes. But they give large amounts of time to things they enjoy. Sometimes it doesn’t seem as if they are listening. They struggle to follow through on task and have problems with organization. They may lose thing, are easily distracted, and forgetful in everyday activities.

(2) Hyperactivity
Hyperactivity people are very fidgets with there hands and squirm in their chairs. Children have a difficulty staying in their seats, while teens/adults seem very restless.

(3) Impulsivity
Impulsivity people don’t think before the act. The blurt out inappropriate comments, blurring out answers, talks excessively and interrupts or intrudes up others. All of these cause problems in different environments.

The Secular Diagnosis

The American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Fifth edition (DSM-5), is used by mental health professionals to help diagnose ADHD. It was released in May 2013 and replaces the previous version, the text revision of the fourth edition (DSM-4). This diagnostic standard helps ensure that people are appropriately diagnosed and treated for ADHD. Using the same standard across
communities will help determine how many children have ADHD, and how public health is impacted by this condition.

There were some changes in the DSM-5 for the diagnosis of ADHD: symptoms can now occur by age 12 rather than by age 6; several symptoms now need to be present in more than one setting rather than just some impairment in more than one setting; new descriptions were added to show what symptoms might look like at older ages; and for adults and adolescents age 17 or older, only 5 symptoms are needed instead of the 6 needed for younger children.

Diagnostic Criteria for the three subtypes of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder according to DSM:

**Criterion #1** — “Persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that is more frequently displayed and is more severe than is typically observed in individuals at comparable level of development.” Individual must meet criteria for either (1) or (2) below:

1. Six (or more) of the following symptoms of inattention have persisted for at least six months to a degree that is maladaptive and inconsistent with developmental level:

   **Inattention**
   - Often fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork, work or other activities
   - Often has difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or play activity
   - Often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly
   - Often does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish schoolwork, chores or duties in the workplace (not due to oppositional behavior or failure to understand instructions)
   - Often has difficulty organizing tasks and activities
   - Often avoids, dislikes, or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort (such as schoolwork or homework)
   - Often looses things necessary for tasks or activities (e.g., toys, school assignments, pencils, books or tools)
   - Often is easily distracted by extraneous stimuli
   - Is often forgetful in daily activities

   **MORE INACTIVITY BEHAVIORAL PATTERNS:**
   - Often fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork, at work, or with other activities.
   - Often has trouble holding attention on tasks or play activities.
   - Often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly.
   - Often does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish schoolwork, chores, or duties in the workplace (e.g., loses focus, side-tracked).

2. Six (or more) of the following symptoms of hyperactivity-impulsivity have persisted for at least six months to a degree that is maladaptive and inconsistent with developmental level:

   **Hyperactivity**
   - Often fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in seat
   - Often leaves seat in classroom or in other situations in which remaining seated is expected
   - Often runs about or climbs excessively in situations in which it is inappropriate (in adolescents or adults, may be limited to subjective feelings of restlessness)
   - Often has difficulty playing or engaging in leisure activities quietly
   - Is often “on the go” or often acts as if “driven by a motor”
   - Often talks excessively

   **Impulsivity**
   - Often has trouble organizing tasks and activities.
   - Often avoids, dislikes, or is reluctant to do tasks that require mental effort over a long period of time (such as schoolwork or homework).
   - Often loses things necessary for tasks and activities (e.g. school materials, pencils, books, tools, wallets, keys, paperwork, eyeglasses, mobile telephones).
   - Is often easily distracted.
   - Is often forgetful in daily activities.
(h) often has difficulty awaiting turn
(i) often interrupts or intrudes on others (e.g., butts into conversations or games)

**Criterion #2** — Some hyperactive-impulsive or inattentive symptoms must have been present before age 7 years.

**Criterion #3** — Some impairment from the symptoms is present in at least two settings (e.g., at school [or work] and at home).

**Criterion #4** — There must be clear evidence of interference with developmentally appropriate social, academic or occupational functioning.

**Criterion #5** — The disturbance does not occur exclusively during the course of a Pervasive Developmental Disorder, Schizophrenia, or other Psychotic Disorders and is not better accounted for by another mental disorder (e.g., Mood Disorder, Anxiety Disorder, Dissociative Disorder, or a Personality Disorder).

Interestingly! Dr. David Rabiner (Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience at Duke University) said:

In DSM-5, ADHD is included in the section on **Neurodevelopmental Disorders**, rather than being grouped with the disruptive behavior disorders, i.e., Oppositional Defiant Disorder and Conduct Disorder. This change better reflects the way ADHD is currently conceptualized [that is, it’s an ‘organic’ issue].

**Why is ADHD So Overwhelmingly Popular Today?**

1. It relieves people of responsibility
2. It provides an excuse for failure
   
   People can say: “the biological devil made me do it.” (Richard Bromfield, Psychologist at Harvard Medical School).
3. It provides an opportunity for health care professionals to make money.
4. It provides an opportunity for pharmaceutical companies to make money
5. It provides special treatment in the work place.
6. It provides access to supplemental income.
7. It allows teachers to lower expectations for lower achieving students

**A Cure?**

At the present, there is no cure or known preventions for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. There are medications which can help with symptoms and thus allow a person to perform more effectively and efficiently.

The following is a partial list of drugs used for ADHD drug treatment: Amphetamines (called psycho stimulants), like Ritalin, Cylert, Dexedrine, Adderall, and also, Antidepressants, like, Zoloft, Norpramine, Tofranil, Prozac, Wellbutrin, Elavil, Pamelor; and other drugs.

Other helpful ways of treating ADD include psychotherapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, social skills training, support groups, coaching, and parenting skills training. Psychotherapy helps individuals with ADHD to like themselves.

"The label ADHD is placed on a child who exhibits certain behavioral symptoms. These are symptoms -- not blood work, laboratory tests, or objective diagnostic criteria — only behavioral symptoms" (Dr Gary Gulan).
In *TIME* magazine, columnist Claudia Wallis wrote: "In the absence of any biological test, diagnosing ADHD is a rather inexact proposition."

**The Real Issue from a Biblical Perspective**

In looking at how ADHD is diagnosed we find that it is *subjective* to the observer, not *objective*. Parents and teachers fill out a checklist to help in the diagnosis, which is subjective, but they *cannot diagnose what is in the heart*. The Bible says that the issues of life come from your heart (Proverbs 4:23) Remember that we are all born in sin — children included (Romans 3:23).

There are two common root problems in children [commonly, yet wrongly, victimized with “ADHD”] — *anger* and *lack of self-control*. With *anger* you will see: disrespect, argumentative behavior, fighting, easily frustrated, and vengeful, etc. *Lack of self-control* reveals: disobedience, inattentiveness, forgetfulness, making demands, underachiever and disorderly, etc. [These are heart issues/sin issues!]

We must also remember that attention can be affected by a number of things such as interest, sleep and nutrition.

**Heart-Searching Questions/Areas to Examine**

**INATTENTION ACTIVITY**

**Fail to Pay Attention**

- What was the child’s goal when making careless mistakes? (2 Cor. 5:9; 1 Cor. 10:31)
- Evaluate by generating a checklist of most frequently made errors (Col. 3:22, 23; Prov. 22:29)

**Difficulty Sustaining Attention During Activities**

- Stewardship of the mind God gave you. (1 Pet. 1:13, 14; Prov. 1:8-9)

** Doesn’t Want to Listen to/Pay Attention When Spoken to Directly**

- Failure to listen is selfishness and refusal to give honor. (Rom. 12:10; Prov. 19:20, 21; Prov. 19:27)
- Get child’s attention, give clear visual and verbal instruction, enumerate with fingers, and oversee the task.
- Require a verbal response each time the child is spoken to. (Prov. 16:23)

**Often Does Not Follow Through on Instructions & Fails to Finish Tasks/Work/Chores, etc.**

- Children must not only start well, but finish well. (Gal. 6:9; 2 Tim. 4:7)
- Parents must quickly come down on God’s side of the issue.

**Has Difficulty Organizing Tasks/Activities**

- Orderliness is a godly characteristic. (1 Cor. 14:33, 40; Col. 2:5)
- Everything has a place and everything must be in its place when it’s not being used.

**Often Avoids, Dislikes or is Reluctant to Engage in Tasks that Require Sustained Mental Effort (schoolwork, homework, job, etc.)**

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3 Much of the outline, bullet points & Scriptures are adapted from Bill Shannon’s counseling notes on this issue.
• Hard” doesn’t mean impossible.
• Children must learn to be responsible. (Phil. 4:13)

Misplaces Necessary Items for School, Work, Activities (Losing Things)
• Teach the biblical doctrine of stewardship. (1 Cor. 4:2)
• What I expect, I will inspect. (Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10)

Often Easily Distracted by Extraneous Stimuli
• Be diligent to give attention (Prov 4:1)
• Keep focused on my responsibility. (Luke 9:62)
• One needs a plan for change. (Eph. 4:22-24)

INATTENTION ACTIVITY
Often Fidgets with Hands or Feet or Squirms in his seat
• Teach the character quality of attentiveness (Prov 4:1, 20; 5:1; 7:24; 16:20; Zech 7:11)
• Use your whole body to listen to others. (1 Cor. 9:27)

Leaves His Seat in the Room/Classroom or in Other Situations in Which Remaining Seated is Expected
• Teach him to be obedient even when he doesn’t feel like it. (John 13:17)
• God commanded children to obey their parents. (Col. 3:20)

Has Difficulty Playing or Engaging in Leisure Activities Quietly
• Set enforceable guidelines even for leisure activities. (Prov. 21:23)
• Teach the appropriate use of an “inside” and an “outside” voice. (Eccl. 3:7)

Often Talks “Excessively”
• Discuss corrupt communication versus edifying others. (Eph. 4:29)
• Be a peacemaker, not a gossip. (Prov. 26:22; Rom. 12:1, 2)
• Help your children become others-oriented by learning to serve. (Mark 10:43-45)

Frequently Blurts Out Answers Before Questions Have Been Completed
• Respect others by listening. (Prov. 18:13)
• Be quick to hear; Be slow to speak (James 1:19)

Much Difficulty in Waiting in Turn (Wants to be First in All Things)
• This problem stems from selfishness. (Phil. 2:3-4)
• Clothe yourself with humility every day (1 Pet 5:5)

Often Interrupts or Intrudes in Others’ Conversations/Games/Activities
• Be quick to listen and slow to speak. (James 1:19)
• Take the focus off of what I want to say. (John. 4:34)

A Biblical Strategy for Change
PARENTAL ISSUES
1. Parents must remember that their children are born in sin, they have foolish hearts, and are selfish, self-worshiping, and self-focused.

2. Parents must remember that God blesses them with the busy, necessary, and rewarding task of discipling, instructing, training, and disciplining their children in God’s Word and in God’s ways.

3. Parents are not relieved of the responsibility of disciplining their children for their behavior. Parents must teach children to sit still, pay attention, focus, complete tasks, work hard — all to God’s glory.

4. Parents must remember that every occasion for discipline (lack of self control, lack of paying attention, outburst of anger, etc.) provides an opportunity for ‘gospel proclamation’ & calling kids to Christ!

Hear, O sons, the instruction of a father, And give attention that you may gain understanding, For I give you sound teaching; Do not abandon my instruction. — Proverbs 4:1-2 (cf. 4:20; 5:1; 7:24; 16:20; cp. Zech 7:11).

CHARACTER ISSUES THAT NEED TO BE BIBLICALLY TAUGHT

1. Humility (Phil 2:3; Prov 15:33; 18:12; Eph 4:2)


3. Service (Gal 5:13; Mark 10:42-45)


5. Gospel-driven action (Prov 12:27; 15:19; Matt 25:14-30)

6. Patience (Eccl 7:8; Col 3:12; 1 Pet 2:20; Gal 5:22)

7. Listening (Prov 1:33; 8:34; 12:15; 21:28; James 1:19; Prov 29:20)

8. Paying Attention (Prov 4:1, 20; 5:1)

9. Work (Prov 12:27; 1 Thess 4:11; 1 Cor 10:31; Col 3:17, 23)

A few helpful reminders:

1. God states that there are consequences to being hasty (Prov 21:5).
2. There is value in listening before speaking (James 1:19).
3. It is wise to listen to a matter before answering (Prov 18:13).
4. Patience and longsuffering (holding back passion) signify spiritual maturity (Gal 5:22; James 1:2–4).

We must remember to help/counsel individuals control their own thinking. The Bible talks of renewing the mind (Rom 12:2; Eph 4:23). God instructs us to focus on eight godly attributes in Phil 4:8.

| Jake, 9 years old, is starting to avoid school. His teacher reports that he squirms around in his seat, stands up unexpectedly and seldom finishes his work. The kids sitting near him in class say he’s always interrupting and shouting out the answers (generally wrong). His desk is in disarray; papers are on the floor and his work is disorganized. He’s often not picked for soccer games and then tries to spoil the game for the others. |
| Sarah, 14, chooses to sit in the back of the classroom, and much of the time she’s doodling in her notebook or staring out of the window. She seldom completes assignments and often forgets to bring the right books to class. Her desk is a mess and she usually can’t find what she’s looking for. Then she gets resentful and says that everybody picks on her. |
| Danny, 4, attends nursery school. He has an aide assigned specifically to help him comply with the routine of the group. He would prefer to roam around the room, picking up toys here and there but doesn’t really get interested in any one activity. During story time he doesn’t become involved in the story, but keeps repeating the same questions in a loud tone of voice. Danny’s mother states that she avoids family gatherings and celebrations because he gets overly excited and then she can’t control him. |
SESSION 6
Biblical Decision Making *[Help! What Should I Do?]*

“The Bible must be our standard. Whenever we are confronted with a question about Christian practice, we must apply the teaching of the Bible. Sometimes the Bible will deal with it directly, and we must go by its direct teaching. Often the Bible will not deal with it directly, and then we must look for general principles to guide us. It does not matter what other people think. Their behavior is not a standard for us. But the Bible is a standard for us, and it is by the Bible that we must live”

The insistence of Jesus and the Old Testament writers was not on the importance of discovering the will of God, but always upon the necessity of doing it. It was as if they took for granted that we would know what we were to do (revealed will). The battle for us seems to be in the diligent study of His revealed will (2 Tim. 2:15), the application of it (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Jas. 1:19-27), along with the proper motivation (Ps. 1:2; 40:8; 119:16, 24, 35, 47, 70, 77, 174).
— Stuart Scott

**Introduction**

“I feel like…”

“God told me to…”

“I know the Bible says that, but…”

**More Simple Decisions That People May Face**
- Should I marry him or her?
- Who should I marry?
- Should I go into full-time Christian ministry/service?
- Should I be a missionary?
- How should I tithe? How much?
- Is it right for me to change churches?
- Would it be good for me to quit my job?

*Serious decisions – but overall, relatively simple.*

**More Difficult Decisions That People May Face**
- Is it right for me to separate from my spouse for the children’s safety?
- What if you are a pastor and you discover your teenager has denied the faith? What do you do?
- Should we use fertility treatments to have a baby? Is it ethically OK? Or does the Bible endorse all natural means?
- What do you do if you have an illegal immigrant as a member of your church?

**Secular/Worldly Wisdom**

“The best decision makers let the situation guide them. The more experience you have with a particular type of decision, the safer it is to go with your intuition, since your subconscious has a wealth of reliable information from which to draw” (Catherine Price, columnist for the *Huffington Post*).

University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, Psychology department lists a seven step process for decision making

**Step 1:** Identify the decision to be made.
Step 2: Gather relevant information.
Step 3: Identify alternatives.
Step 4: Weigh evidence.
Step 5: Choose among alternatives. Once you have weighed all the evidence, you are ready to select the alternative which seems to be best suited to you.
Step 6: Take action. You now take some positive action which begins to implement the decision
Step 7: Review decision and consequences.

Dr. William Doverspike, of the Georgia Psychological Association, writes:
Good decisions are often judged not so much by their outcomes as they are by the principles on which they are based. There are essentially two ways that people make decisions---the intuitive method and the deductive method. The intuitive method, which is the way 99% of our decisions are made throughout the day, involves our ordinary judgments and feelings. In other words, it involves making decisions based on our feelings---deciding with our gut. The deductive method, which is the more complicated strategy, involves a more systematic and logical process. It is this second type of decision making model that is discussed below.

[In the decision making process], consider overarching moral principles. When encountering a situation in which there is a conflict between standards or principles, one useful strategy is to consider overarching moral principles. Overarching moral principles, which are the underlying foundation principles upon which all other standards are based, include autonomy [Autonomy refers to the right of self-determination as evidenced by the freedom of an individual to make one’s own decisions and choose one’s own direction], beneficence [promoting good for others], nonmaleficence [avoiding doing harm to others], justice, fidelity, and veracity. In plain English, each principle is described below” (emphases added).

The big problem with the “secular” model?

Mark This! “No decision is wise if it's made independently of God” (Kenneth Boa).

The Importance of the Issue

No decision is wise if it’s made independently of God (Kenneth Boa).

“The church has become lazy. It has moved away from careful biblical thinking and has tolerated far too much shoddy teaching. Fewer and fewer Christians are approaching life with the Berean perspective. They haven’t developed the habit of discerning or applying biblical principles to their daily situations. Consequently, when they get into problems, they assume Scripture can’t help them. Then they turn to humanistic or worldly alternatives that only compound their grief. They witlessly renounce their sufficiency in Christ and then struggle to fill the voice with utterly inadequate substitutes” (John MacArthur).

“Your testimonies also are my delight; They are my counselors” (Ps 119:24)

Some Key Terms

4 Much of this study is adapted from Stuart Scott’s notes on Biblical Decision Making.
1. God’s Decretive Will (Sovereign will)

God’s absolute right to do all things according to his own good pleasure (Dan 4:25; Rom 9:15-23; 1 Tim 6:15; Rev 4:11)

The providence of God

2. God’s Desirous Will (Preceptive will; the Moral will)

Not mysticism
Not hearing from God
But God’s wisdom

What is not covered in clear right and wrong categories in Scripture can be made through biblical discernment and prudence

You must obey the moral will of God as it is revealed in Scripture. If Scripture prohibits the action in question, your decision is easy: don't do it (John MacArthur).

Presuppositions in the Biblical Process

1. We do not need to know God’s decreed will and how He is providentially bringing it about before we make a decision (Deut. 29:29).
2. The Holy Spirit’s role is to convict, teach and conform us – all through the vehicle of the Word of God (John 16:8; 17:17).
3. God only guides or leads His people today in 2 ways:
   1. By providence (we know it after the fact) – Proverbs 21:1
   2. By Scripture (we can know it before we act) – Psalm 73:24
4. God is a gracious God who has provided everything we need in order to do what He wants us to do (2 Pet. 1:3).
5. God holds us fully responsible to search out and follow His preceptive (revealed, moral) will (God’s written Word) in all of life (2 Tim. 2:15).
6. If we make a decision based on biblical commands and principles alone we can fully trust that we are pleasing God in our decision and fully trust that He will providentially (by circumstances out of our control) change our choice if it is not within His decreed will (Ps. 119:30; Prov. 16:9).
7. To rightly interpret and apply the Word of God we must use a prayerful, literal, historical, contextual, and grammatical method of studying it (2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Pet. 1:20).
8. No one is ever outside of God’s decreed plan (Lam. 3:37-38; Rom. 8:28-29)*.
9. Every believer needs pastoral oversight and the body of Christ to help him stay true to God’s Word (Prov. 18:1-2; Heb. 13:17).* [don’t underestimate the role of ‘counselors/shepherds/pastors’]

Be Cautious of the Following “Methods” of ‘Finding God’s Will’

A. Misusing the Bible (proof text; a particular version; a ‘random verse’ — examine Context!)
B. Personal Advice
A Biblical Method for Decision Making

First, Essential Marks to Remember Throughout

1. Be rightly related to Christ (2 Cor. 5:14-21)

2. Pursue a life of worshiping God (John 4:23-24; 2 Cor. 5:9; Phil. 1:21; 3:10-14)

3. Recognize God's sovereignty over all (Ps. 115:3,8; Eph. 1:11; Eph. 5:17; James 4:13-16; Prov. 16:9; Rom. 8:28-29)

Remember! “Those who are in Christ know that despite all the decisions we face, the mistakes we make, the sins we repent of, and the things we did not anticipate, God works in all things for the good of transforming us into the image of Christ, the Son of God (Rom 8:28). Through His providence toward his children, God our Great Shepherd leads us by His mighty staff toward eternal life. If that is your goal in life, you are in very good hands” (James Petty).

Second, Some Principles to Bear in Mind

1. Scripture has bearing on All decisions, one way or another (direction, motives, behavior, etc.)

“True discernment requires diligent study of the Scriptures ... No one can be truly discerning apart from the mastery of the Word of God. All the desire in the world cannot make you discerning if you don’t study Scripture. Prayer for discernment is not enough. Obedience alone will not suffice. Good role models won’t do it either. Even the Holy Spirit will not give you discernment apart from His Word. If you really want to be discerning, you must diligently study the Word of God” (John MacArthur).
2. Wisdom

“Good decision-making requires that you exercise biblical wisdom. Such wisdom comes from a diligent study of God's Word, coupled with God's generous provision. James encourages those who lack wisdom to "ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him" (James 1:5). To make wise decisions, you need to gather necessary information, consider all the options carefully, seek godly counsel, and then choose the option that is most sensible (Prov 2:1-11) (John MacArthur).

3. Purposeful freedom
b. Phil. 2:1-5
c. 1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23-24
d. Gal. 5:13

4. Desire
a. Ps. 37:4
b. Phil. 2:12-13
c. “Wishes” (1 Cor. 7:36, 39; 10:27)

“You need to consider your own desire. If the Bible is silent about your decision, and if one choice is not clearly wiser than the other, then do what you want. You have the freedom to do so, and God sovereignly works out His plan through your desires (Ps 37:4; Phil 2:13)” (John MacArthur)

Ask Yourself...
• Are my desires yielded to God’s desires?
• Do I desire God’s Will to come about in my life?
• Understand this: “I will never make the right decision until my will is surrendered to God’s will.”

Third, The Process
*Note the radically different foundation here from that of the ‘secular process’: God’s glory, His Word, His will & His wisdom is sought, needed, preeminent & obeyed as the believer embarks on this process.

1. Continually have a humble, yielded, and dependent will before God (Rom. 12:1-2).

2. Continually pray for wisdom (Jas. 1:5).

3. Gather all the factual data (Prov. 18:13).

4. Study any direct commands in Scripture concerning this particular issue (2 Tim. 2:15). Make use of a Bible concordance, Topical Bible (with caution), and other Bible reference books.

5. Study any indirect principles/statements in Scripture concerning this issue (2 Tim. 2:15)?

6. Weigh the purposeful use of freedom (Gal. 5:13; 1 Cor. 8).
a. Is there anything wrong with this activity? Is it lawful (1 Cor. 10:23)
b. Is it self-serving at the expense of someone else’s benefit? (Rom. 15:1-2; 1 Cor. 10:33; Gal. 5:13; Phil. 2:1-4)
c. Is this something I can thank God for? (Rom. 14:6; 1 Cor. 10:30; Col. 3:17)
d. Is this something that will glorify God? (1 Cor. 10:31; 2 Cor. 5:9)
e. Is this worth imitating? (1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 4:9)
f. Is this following the example of Christ? (Rom. 15:7-8; 1 Cor. 11:1; 1 John 2:6)
g. Will my choice affect others around me? If so, in what way?
h. Is it beneficial? Does it promote my spiritual life?
i. Is it a practice that over time will tend to master me? Will it stimulate a desire that will be difficult to control?
j. Is it constructive? Will it promote the spiritual well-being of other believers if they engage in this practice that is permissible for me?” (adapted from Jerry Bridges, *The Discipline of Grace*, 213)

7. **Affirm that your desires are God-honoring (Ps. 37:4).**
   a. What do I want to do? Will it bring glory to God? (1 Cor. 10:31)
   b. Is this an occasion where my “flesh” (sinfulness) is seeking to indulge itself? (Gal. 5:13)

8. **If you still can’t decide:**
   a. Rom. 14:23; Heb. 11:25 (“holding principle” = if it involves the conscience)
   b. Gather more data (Start over)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions to Ask When Making Decisions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question #1: Is It My Primary Desire to Please and Glorify God?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question #2: Do I Have Any Sinful Desires Involved?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question #3: Do I Recognize that God is Absolutely Sovereign?</td>
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<td>Question #4: Will I Cause a Brother to Stumble?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question #5: Will I Have a Clean Conscience if I Do This?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question #6: How Can I Honor God While I Perform This Action?</td>
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### Concluding Thought & Application to Your Heart

“If God made more things explicit, we would tend to focus more on what we do rather than what we love. Like Pharisees, we would tend to whitewash our tombs with the appearance of obedience — to impress others — rather than deal with the dead bones of our self-righteous pride.

But in decisions that require discernment, the wheat is distinguished from the tares. We make such decisions based on what we really love. If deep down we love the world, this will become apparent in the pattern of decisions that we make — we will conform to this world.

But if we really love Jesus we will increasingly love what he loves — we will be transformed by renewed minds. And our love for him and his kingdom will be revealed in the pattern of small and large decisions that we make.

I say “pattern of decisions” because all of us sin and make mistakes. But conformity to the world or to Jesus is most clearly seen in the pattern of decisions we make over time.

That’s why God makes us wrestle. He wants us to mature and have our “powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil” (Heb 5:14) (Jon Bloom, emphases added).

### For Further Reading/Study

Alvin Baker, “Knowing the Will of God, Parts 1 & 2” (*Journal of Biblical Counseling*)

Garry Friesen, *Decision Making & the Will of God*.

John MacArthur, *Found: God’s Will*.


SESSION 7

Bipolar

Scripture does call us to self-control, and the bipolar experience seems to be in clear violation of this call. (Ed Welch)

“We need to connect the spiritual problems of people to the spiritual solutions found in Christ and his Word.” (Heath Lambert)

“The natural man is a sinner because and only because he challenges God’s selfhood in relation to his own….Yet so subtle is self that scarcely anyone is conscious of its presence. Because man is born a rebel, he is unaware that he is one. His constant assertion of self, as far as he thinks of it at all, appears to him a perfectly normal thing. He is willing to share himself, sometimes even to sacrifice himself for a desired end, but never to dethrone himself. No matter how far down the scale of social acceptance he may slide, he is still in his own eyes a king on a throne, and no one, not even God, can take that throne from him. Sin has many manifestations but its essence is one. A moral being, created to worship before the throne of God, sits on the throne of his own ‘selfhood’ and from that elevated position declares: “I AM.” That is sin in its concentrated essence” (AW Tozer)

Introduction

From a standard Christian Counseling Website:

“Currently, we do not have a clear understanding of precisely what causes bipolar disorder. The higher frequency of bipolar disorder among first degree relatives, however, strongly suggests a genetic basis as a major, if not the major factor in causing the disorder. Coupled with this genetic predisposition may be other physiological factors, as well as long-standing emotional conflicts…

Many fine Christians struggle for much of their lives with this distressing difficulty.

When Christians suffer from bipolar illness, they usually experience major shifts in their spiritual life. During manic states they can be excited and extra visionary, throwing themselves into Bible study, witnessing, or ministry with nearly superhuman effort. They are sure that God has given them a special plan. Then, during depressed states, they become lethargic, guilt-ridden, and even hopeless about having a relationship with God at all…

Medication, psychotherapy, and lifestyle changes minimize and overcome the most devastating effects of this disorder and enable the sufferers to generally live normal lives at home, work, school, and church. Treatment, however, must be planned for the rest of a person’s life, and it nearly always involves taking medication for many years. Although this can be difficult for bipolar patients and their family members to accept, it is absolutely essential.

The current drug treatments for bipolar disorder typically include what are referred to as mood stabilizers—usually lithium carbonate, divalproex sodium (Depakote), or carbamazepine (Tegretol).

One of the most helpful things family members can do for a person suffering from a bipolar disorder is to help him keep taking his medication. If you are close to someone with this disorder, encourage him or her to begin or continue psychotherapy and learn to deal with these issues. This will help the person accept dependence on medication and treatment—which could be life-saving.”

How utterly hopeless — and unbiblical! Why?

Definitions
Bipolar: “(Bipolar disorder) is ...behavior which goes from extreme blueness to extreme elation. With this condition, a person swings between the extremes of feeling good (to the point of euphoria called mania) and feeling very bad (depression). Because he swings back and forth in opposite directions between the extremes (or poles) of feelings, the name ‘bipolar’ is given” (Dr. Robert D. Smith).

From the National Institute of Mental Health
Bipolar disorder, also known as manic-depressive illness, is a brain disorder that causes unusual shifts in mood, energy, activity levels, and the ability to carry out daily tasks. Symptoms of bipolar disorder can be severe. They are different from the normal ups and downs that everyone goes through from time to time. Bipolar disorder symptoms can result in damaged relationships, poor job or school performance, and even suicide. But bipolar disorder can be treated, and people with this illness can lead full and productive lives.

Secular Understanding/Diagnosis/Treatment
From the DSM [Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, American Psychiatric Association] on “Bipolar Disorder” [By the way, in the DSM, bipolar appears under the ‘Mood Disorders’ Category]:
Bipolar disorder is characterized by more than one bipolar episode. There are three types of bipolar disorder (two listed here):

1. Bipolar 1 Disorder, in which the primary symptom presentation is manic, or rapid (daily) cycling episodes of mania and depression.
2. Bipolar 2 Disorder, in which the primary symptom presentation is recurrent depression accompanied by hypomanic episodes (a milder state of mania in which the symptoms are not severe enough to cause marked impairment in social or occupational functioning or need for hospitalization, but are sufficient to be observable by others).

According to the DSM, manic episodes are characterized by:

A. A distinct period of abnormally and persistently elevated, expansive, or irritable mood, lasting at least 1 week (or any duration if hospitalization is necessary)
B. During the period of mood disturbance, three (or more) of the following symptoms have persisted (4 if the mood is only irritable) and have been present to a significant degree:
   (1) increased self-esteem or grandiosity
   (2) decreased need for sleep (e.g., feels rested after only 3 hours of sleep)
   (3) more talkative than usual or pressure to keep talking
   (4) flight of ideas or subjective experience that thoughts are racing
   (5) distractibility (i.e., attention too easily drawn to unimportant or irrelevant external stimuli)
   (6) increase in goal-directed activity (either socially, at work or school, or sexually) or psychomotor agitation
   (7) excessive involvement in pleasurable activities that have a high potential for painful consequences (e.g., engaging in unrestrained buying sprees, sexual indiscretions, or foolish business investments).
The current thinking is that [bipolar] is a *predominantly biological disorder* that occurs in a specific part of the brain and is due to a malfunction of the neurotransmitters (chemical messengers in the brain). As a biological disorder, it may lie dormant and be activated spontaneously or it may be triggered by stressors in life.


Bipolar disorder tends to run in families. Some research has suggested that people with certain genes are more likely to develop bipolar disorder than others.

Steve Bressert continues...

**Medication** is nearly always a part of the recommended treatment course for bipolar disorder. People with undiagnosed bipolar disorder will sometimes self-medicate with alcohol or drugs to try and relieve their symptoms. However, such solutions rarely provide the type of long-term relief most people desire.

**4 main treatments for BIPOLAR:**

1. **Mood stabilizers**
   Older medications, such as lithium, which are reliable and well-tolerated by most. Once the first-line treatment for bipolar disorder, they have largely been supplanted by atypical antipsychotics.

2. **Atypical antipsychotics**
   Newer, more expensive medications for bipolar disorder that may provide greater symptom relief, but also have greater side effects.

3. **Psychotherapy & Self-Help Strategies**
   Psychotherapy and self-help strategies can keep someone with bipolar disorder stabilized and prevent relapse.

   Psychotherapy helps by helping patients accept themselves with their disorder. Illnesses such as bipolar disorder can tear at one’s self-esteem and make one feel lonely, isolated, and cut off from others.

4. **Other treatment strategies**
   Other treatments for bipolar disorder may include prescribing a combination of medications for bipolar, including antidepressants for bipolar.

Substance abuse is very common among people with bipolar disorder, but the reasons for this link are unclear. Some people with bipolar disorder may try to treat their symptoms with alcohol or drugs. Substance abuse can also trigger or prolong bipolar symptoms, and the behavioral problems associated with mania can lead to drinking too much (*National Institute of Mental Health)*.

How To Help Yourself If **YOU** Have Bipolar…

*(From the National Institute of Mental Health)*

- Talk to your doctor about treatment options and progress.
- Keep a regular routine, such as going to sleep at the same time every night and eating meals at the same time every day.
- Try hard to get enough sleep.
- Stay on your medication.
• Learn about warning signs signaling a shift into depression or mania.
• Expect your symptoms to improve gradually, not immediately.

**Behold the Hopelessness of the Secular Understanding**

“Bipolar disorder cannot be cured, but it can be treated effectively over the long-term. Proper treatment helps many people with bipolar disorder—even those with the most severe forms of the illness—gain better control of their mood swings and related symptoms. But because it is a lifelong illness, long-term, continuous treatment is needed to control symptoms” *(National Institute of Mental Health)*

**Sources for the precious sentences:**


The hopelessness of the “Christian” counseling/“Christian-psychology” solution…

One Christian counselor puts it this way:

Can’t God heal bipolar illness? Yes, He can. But He rarely does that apart from medication and the counseling and personal growth that comes from facing one’s suffering. People suffering from bipolar illnesses and their family members can receive great strength from their faith in Christ as well as their dependence on the Word of God.

**The Root Issue**

In order to locate “mania” in the Bible, you must first reduce it to concrete and descriptive terms. What does it look like? What does it do? How does it think? What does it feel like? As we answer such questions, an experience not initially cued to Scripture can *now be understood through a biblical lens* [because you’re getting to the heart issues with thoughts, behaviors & emotions]. As you do this, you will find that the manic end of the bipolar disorder continuum combines varying degrees of the following **thoughts**, **behaviors**, and **emotions**:

- elated mood [very happy, proud, jubilant, high spirits, excessively happy]
- extreme unwarranted irritation or anger
- decreased need for sleep
- unrealistically high self-estimation [autonomy, independence]
- talkativeness [the abundance of words]
- racing and impractical thoughts [the uncontrolled mind/heart/thoughts]
- impulsivity [acting hastily, without forethought]
- reckless behavior [foolish, unwise, ungodly, sinful]

So it becomes clear that though “manic” or “mania” or “bipolar” is **NOT** in Scripture, the very definition & meaning of these terms (thoughts, emotions, behavior) can be found throughout Scripture (both Old & New Testaments).

**Some Facts About Depressed People**

1. Have become immobile in dealing with top priority problems
2. Only talk about the problem, rarely seem to do anything about it (Prov 10:19; Acts 20:20)
3. Unbiblical check-points (God’s Word is not the standard, the goal, nor their zealous pursuit)
4. Feeling orientation—contrast 1 Cor 9:27 (cf. Ps 13)
5. My situation is unique (1 Cor 10:13; Hebrews 2:17)

And, do remember, sleep habits, exercise, and diet can contribute to ‘mood swings’. Lack of sleep and poor self care, along with multiple stressors can cumulatively weaken one’s resistance to the temptation in his life (Heath Lambert)

Here’s the testimony of one biblical counselor for how he handled one extreme bipolar case (Heath Lambert):

After ruling out any physical origin of his mood swings [after close physical examinations by trusted physicians] and determining the impact of other physical and/or situational factors influencing his mental and emotional state, we began to listen for themes in his story that would point to heart issues.

Wilhelm Wundt was the founder of the world's first psychological laboratory and is the father of experimental psychology. According to Wundt, all of a person's psychological processes are rooted in some element of their biology. What this means is that basically everything you think and feel begins in your physical parts (and that's what most psychologists believe today). But Jesus and the apostles said that everything we think and feel grows out of our heart or soul (Matt 12:33-37; Mark 7:14-23; James 1:14-15) (Heath Lambert).

*How NOT to Handle Depressed/Bipolar Persons*

A. Only be supportive = God has no answers
B. Minimize thoughts of hostility and guilt [that is, you overlook their sin of anger & don’t attend to their guilt which is a spiritual issue]
C. **Note**: Both A and B fail to treat the counselee as responsible before God and thus both above options remove hope. When hope is gone the depression leads to despair and then to suicide.

**The Biblical Solution**

As Christians we believe that our worldview is authoritatively informed by God’s Word, the Bible; that is to say, it is **theologically** informed. Counseling is, therefore by definition, a theological task (Heath Lambert).

All biblical counselors continue to believe in the authority, wisdom, relevance, and sufficiency of the Bible to help people with any problem that requires counseling (Heath Lambert).

1. **Get Plenty of Information**
   Questions, get to the heart, why do they feel this way, what happens, how do they act, react?

2. **Explain the Dynamics of Depression and How They Lead Into the Downward Spiral.**
   Study lives of Cain, Saul, Elijah
Give much hope (1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Pet. 1:3)  
They will live on your hope for awhile.

**3. Replace Old Habits with Biblical Habits.**  
Eph 4:22-24

**4. Reverse the Spiral.**  
Phil 3:1ff  
Acts 9  
Gal 1:13-24  

*Note: only a Christian can do this. Only a Spirit-indwelt person has the ability to do this (Rom 6)*

Remember Philippians 4:13  
“What Paul is saying here is that Christ infuses so much strength and power into him that he is strong and able for all things. He is not left to himself, he is not struggling alone and vainly against these mighty odds. It is a great power from Christ Himself which is entering, and has entered into his life, and it is there as a dynamo, as an energy and strength. ‘In this’, says Paul, ‘I am able for anything’ (Martyn Lloyd Jones).

**5. Creatively Minister to the Depressed Person in a Holistic Way**  
Galatians 6:1-2  
James 3:13-16  
Psalm 62  
James 1:2-12  
Romans 5:1-10

Martyn Lloyd Jones [in *Spiritual Depression,* p.21] compellingly and convincingly writes…

‘The main art in the matter of spiritual living is to know how to handle yourself. You have to take yourself in hand, you have to address yourself, preach to yourself, question yourself. You must say to your soul: ‘Why art thou cast down’ -- what business have you to be disquieted? You must turn on yourself, upbraid yourself, condemn yourself, exhort yourself, and say to yourself: ‘Hope thou in God’ -- instead of muttering in this depressed, unhappy way. And then you must go on to remind yourself of God, Who God is, and what God is and what God has done, and what God has pledged Himself to do. Then having done that, end on this great note: defy yourself, and defy other people, and defy the devil and the whole world, and say with this man: ‘I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance, who is also the health of my countenance and my God’.

That is the essence of the treatment [for depression] in a nutshell….The essence of this matter is to understand that this self of ours, this other man within us, has got to be handled. Do not listen to him; turn on him; speak to him; condemn him; upbraid him; exhort him; encourage him; remind him of what you know, instead of listening placidly to him and allowing him to drag you down and depress you. For that is what he will always do if you allow him to be in control….We must stand up as this man did and say: ‘Why art thou cast down? Why art thou disquieted within me?’ Stop being so! ‘Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him….’"
SESSION 8
Demonic Activity

No amount of learning, no superiority of talent, nor even the pretension to inspiration, can justify a departure from the . . . truths taught by men to whose inspiration God has borne witness. All teachers must be brought to this standard; and even if an angel from heaven should teach anything contrary to the Scriptures, he should be regarded as anathema, Gal. 1:8. It is a matter of constant gratitude that we have such a standard whereby to try the spirits whether they be of God (Charles Hodge).

God’s Word is our only reliable source of truth about Satan and demons (John MacArthur).

We fight against spiritual forces as we battle the lies and sins of those who know nothing of Christ. We are tempted by the devil who, like a roaring lion deprived of many of his offspring, rages against us. But there isn't one scintilla of evidence that people may any longer be possessed of the devil, there is not a single command to us to cast out demons, and absolutely no reason to think believers may be possessed or oppressed by Satan. Jesus' death changed things! (Jay Adams).

Introduction
As we strive to come alongside others in order to help them to overcome sin and grow in their obedience to Christ we certainly don’t want to give Satan more credit than he deserves. However, we also want to guard against a shallow understanding of the conflict that is presently raging in the invisible world and thereby be tempted to find more humanly acceptable explanations for spiritual struggles.

The shallowness of spiritual conflict in the West owes something, no doubt, to centuries of Christian influence and the relentless exposure of superstition. But, less honorably, it also owes something, nowadays, to raw secularism, and a pervasive world view that thinks of all reality on a naturalistic plane. In other words, our failure to perceive more of what is going on in the demonic realm may sometimes owe less to our Christian heritage than to our deep indebtedness to a culture that assigns sociological, psychological, and economic reasons for everything (DA Carson).

Idolatry in Scripture is akin to ‘demonic worship’ (Deut 32:17; Psalm 106:37; 1 Cor 10:20-21; Rev 9:20)

Why Has This Topic Become So Popular?
Neil Anderson, a Christian integrative psychologist, purported: “The prevailing belief among evangelicals today is that Christians cannot be severely oppressed by demons … nothing has done greater damage to diagnosing spiritual problems than this un-truth…those who deny the enemy’s potential for destruction area the most vulnerable to it” (in his very misleading book: Bondage of Destruction).

Demonology has been explained as a culturally or socially determined cause of certain problems that cannot otherwise be explained in sociological, psychodynamic, psychological, or psychiatric terms. Scientists have frequently expressed doubts regarding this phenomenon, and many psychiatrists view it with much skepticism (Dr. Amin Muhammad Gadit, M.D., professor of psychiatry at Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada) [and, many are skeptical of & unsubmitting to biblical truth anyway].

Some Christians and even secularists think of addiction as purely a demonic problem. When Josh Hamilton, an All-star caliber baseball player who professes faith in Christ, recently “relapsed” by drinking alcohol in a Dallas-area bar, one reporter stated: “Those are some pretty strong demons he’s fighting and he’ll likely be very upfront for the strength and support he’s seeking as he continues to battle them.”
The problem, however, is that places the person in the category of somehow not being responsible for what has resulted in their lives.

RC Sproul writes:

“We hear that particular demons cause particular sins. There is, they say, a demon of alcohol, a demon of depression, a demon of tobacco, and so on. Others say we can recognize the departure of a demon from a human soul by a manifest sign that is linked to the particular point of bondage. I have listened to recorded talks from well-known deliverance ministers (whose names I will not mention, to protect the guilty) in which they teach the signs of departure of the demon. A sigh, for example, indicates the departure of the demon of tobacco. Since the tobacco demon enters with the inhalation of smoke, he leaves with an audible exhale. Likewise, vomiting may be the sign of departure of the demon of alcohol. There are demons for every conceivable sin. Not only must each one of these demons be exorcized, but there are necessary procedures to keep them from returning on a daily basis.

I know of no polite way to respond to this kind of teaching. It is unmitigated nonsense. Nowhere in sacred Scripture is there to be found the slightest hint of this kind of demonic diagnosis. These teachings cross the line into the sphere of magic and result in serious harm to believers who are duped by them. Sadly, too much concern with Satan and demons means that we focus less of our attention on Christ. That must please Satan, and it is certainly not pleasing to God.”

Also adding to the confusion, many of the leading voices in today’s spiritual warfare movement are too quick to hail every profession of faith in Christ as proof of salvation. That reflects the easy-believism that has swept this generation.

**Current Understanding of “Spiritual Warfare Movement”**

On Trinity Broadcasting Network, Bob Larson promoted a video taped account of a 5-day, 30 hour exorcism of demons from a Christian woman, Linda. He said, “Demons had ruined her testimony for Christ.”

- This woman, which he proposed was a Christian, was *controlled* by a demon, but not *possessed* by the demon (interesting words – sounds the same to me!).
- He said you could be a part of this spiritual warfare team, “pulling down the strongholds of Satan in the name of Jesus.” For $150 you could get 3 videos and join the ‘spiritual-warfare team.’
- His book, *In the name of Satan*, tells of 20 years of accounts of practicing exorcism.

Ed Smith, the father of Theophostic counseling (a method that advocates instantaneous “healing” by a miraculous word or picture from God) believes that demonic influence may hinder the process. In his book, *Beyond Tolerable Recovery*, he has long sections about how to deal with demons. Like much of the rest of the book, in which he handles Scripture in highly questionable ways, so too what he says about demonic activity is misleading.

In Matthew 16:18-19, Jesus gave the apostles the authority to bind and loose—speak and act under God's authority—as the foundational representatives for the church. They did not act arbitrarily, nor did they operate apart from the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:42-47; 4:28-33). Some misapply that teaching to include binding Satan.

**Remember…**

There is no clear example in the Bible where a demon ever inhabited or invaded a true believer. Never in the New Testament epistles are believers warned about the possibility of being inhabited by demons. Neither do we see anyone rebuking, binding, or casting demons out of a true believer. The epistles never instruct believers to cast out demons, whether from a believer or unbeliever. Christ and the apostles were
the only ones who cast out demons, and in every instance the demon-possessed people were unbelievers (John MacArthur). [Note*: even the pastoral epistles, later NT books written, nothing is said of this; cf. Eph 6.10ff; 1 Pet 5.8]

Mark this: "Demon possession or oppression affords a ready-made cop-out from personal responsibility . . . wallowing for any length of time in the morasses of self-absorption can virtually lead one to convince himself of the truth of what may have begun merely as a suspicion, a fear, a misrepresentation, or as a convenient excuse. In a short while, it can become a dominant theme around which the counselee builds his life . . . Thus, the equipment that God has given to the counselor is adequate both for evangelism (to take captives from Satan's forces) and for edification (to punish all disobedience among such captives). There is nothing lacking. The enemy is powerful, but the mighty Counselor, under whom the Christian counselor serves, has subdued him." (The Christian Counselor's Manual.)

The critical question: Should we engage the enemy? No! [He is already a defeated foe!]

Dealing with Some Biblical Accounts

Good hermeneutics [the method/science of accurate biblical interpretation] help us realize the fallacy of the assumption, “If Jesus and the apostles did it, we should also practice it” (cf. Matt 10.1-4)

• Matthew 4//Luke 4
  The temptation of Christ

• Matthew 12:43-45
  Demonic activity in houses that are swept/cleaned — yet unchanged

Instead of responding with spectacular signs and wonders, Christ addressed their need for salvation. Many people appear to have their lives in order. But in reality, they have not trusted Christ as Savior and Lord. Their souls are “unoccupied” — that is, the Holy Spirit does not indwell them. Thus they are open to demonic invasion. That cannot be true of those whose bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (cf. 2 Cor. 6:16).

In this parable Jesus vividly and frighteningly pictures the consequence of religious and moral reformation apart from a right relationship to Him. Morality apart from the living Christ can never be more than a sham, and the more it is relied on the more dangerous it becomes (John MacArthur).

  The demon possessed man made whole

According to 1 Peter 1:5, when Christ reigns in a person’s life, that person is kept by God’s power. As a result, “the evil one does not touch him” (1 John 5:18). When the Holy Spirit inhabits a person, no demon can set up house as a squatter. Indwelling by demons is only evidence of a lack of genuine salvation (John MacArthur). To say it again, no true believer is indwelt/controlled by a demon [Rev 9:1ff].

How a Christian Should Handle the ‘Forces of Darkness”

5 These points are adapted from Dr John Street at The Master’s Seminary, Advanced Biblical Counseling Course Notes.
A few Scriptures to remember:
- Col 2:14-15 - Christ "disarming rulers and authorities" (demonic powers) by means of His cross.
- 1 John 5:1 - the evil one does not touch the believer because of the power of the crosswork of Christ.
- Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (2 Cor 3:17) If a person indwelled by the Holy Spirit can at the same time be sovereignly controlled by an evil spirit, then our redemption is meaningless.
- Col 1:13 - the believer has been transferred out of the kingdom of darkness (=satan) & into the kingdom of God’s Son.
- Eph 3:8-10 - the church should live so purely that the wisdom of God is displayed before the angelic (demonic) realm.

Jude 9 speaks of the LORD rebuking Satan. Not even Michael, the archangel would deal with Satan.

There is no scriptural command to bind Satan, nor is there any biblical example of the practice. Satan remains at large as the "prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2) until he is chained or bound (by an angel, not a human being) during the millennial reign of Christ (Revelation 20:1-3). The disciples cast out demons, but they never bound them or Satan.

**Yet Be Aware!** At the same time, “If you think spiritual warfare is irrelevant to you, you may already be losing the battle. At least you’re ripe for Satan’s picking” (Tope Koleoso)!

1. In dealing with Satan & his minions, this is the Lord’s work, not ours.
2. Believers do not have the right to take authority in Jesus’ name over the forces of evil.
3. Only unbelievers can be possessed by demons (Col. 1:13; 1 Cor. 15:54-57).
4. The gospel is the critical tool in dealing with demons (Rom. 1:16).
5. Believers are not immune from the clever satanic temptation and opposition (Job 1:6-2:10; Matt. 16:22-23; Lk. 22:31; 32; 2 Cor. 12:7).
6. Sometimes God uses Satan as an instrument of judgment or chastisement (1 Sam. 16:14-15; Lk. 22:3; Jn. 13:27; 1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:18-20).
7. Believers are instructed not to rebuke Satan and demons, but to resist them (1 Pet. 5:9; Jas. 4:7; Eph. 6:13).
8. In sum, “Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love” (1 Cor. 16:13-14; Eph 6:10-20).

Three key passages use the word “resist” — 1 Pet 5:9; James 4:7; Eph 6:13

There are two serious problems with the view that our sins are the result of controlling demons. The first is that we yield to the temptation to take no personal responsibility for our sin. How can we be responsible if in fact we are not able to resist? Second, we are lured into thinking that we are powerless without the aid of the deliverance minister. We are encouraged to think that we are not really guilty and that we are actually helpless without a minister with special powers of deliverance. This negates the entire biblical concept of sanctification. It is surely unbiblical to teach that we cannot lead lives pleasing to God unless some so-called expert on deliverance comes to our side. Therefore, I say with all urgency that believers must turn away from those who teach such things. Indeed, we should run for our spiritual lives (RC Sproul, *Pleasing God*).

**For Further Reading:**
SESSION 9

Depression

“In depression, the new way of living is to believe and act on what God says rather than feel what God says. It is living by faith.” (Ed Welch)

“The key to warding of depression, then, is this: do not follow your feelings when you know that you have a responsibility to discharge. Instead, against your feelings, you must do as you should. And when you do, even if at first you do so mechanically, simply because you want to please God and you know that He wants you to do this, in time your feelings will change. You must not wait until you feel like it, or you may never feel like doing that task. Nor must you try to change your feelings directly; you cannot do that. Do what you know God wants you to do, WHETHER YOU FEEL LIKE IT OR NOT, and a change in feelings will take place, as a by-product, in time.” (Jay Adams)

There is one who can conquer the deadly foe of depression. He does not live in a world oblivious to pain and unaffected by suffering. He felt every pain, he endured every test, he was forsaken and abandoned by all. Yet his life conquered the darkness and turned evil into good and death into life. Hope is found in a living and real Person — Jesus Christ. (Bob Somerville)

Introduction

“An Estimated 1 in 10 U.S. Adults Report Depression” [CDC — Centers for Disease Control & Prevention]

“Depression is a mental illness that can be costly and debilitating to sufferers. Depression can adversely affect the course and outcome of common chronic conditions, such as arthritis, asthma, cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, and obesity. Depression also can result in increased work absenteeism, short-term disability, and decreased productivity.”

“Depression is everywhere” (Andy Thompson, psychiatrist at Univ of Virginia)

Defining depression: “a debilitating mood, feeling, or attitude of hopelessness, which becomes a person’s reason for not handling the most important issues of life.”

It is distinct from discouragement. In depression, a person stops functioning. And, in discouragement, a person keeps going.

Reactive depression – is the most prominent by far – this is where circumstances dictate your mood for the day.

Identifying Depression

In the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders), depression is classified as a mood disorder. The DSM’s criteria for a major depressive episode (which needs to last longer than two weeks):

- Depressed mood (such as feelings of sadness or emptiness).
- Reduced interest in activities that used to be enjoyed.
- Change in appetite or weight increase/decrease.
- Sleep disturbances (either not being able to sleep well or sleeping too much).
- Feeling agitated or slowed down.
- Fatigue or loss of energy.
- Feeling worthless or excessive guilt.
- Difficulty thinking, concentrating or troubles making decisions.
- Suicidal thoughts or intentions.
The National Alliance on Mental Illness:  
Major depression is also known as clinical depression, major depressive illness, major affective disorder and unipolar mood disorder. It involves some combination of the following symptoms: depressed mood (sadness), poor concentration, insomnia, fatigue, appetite disturbances, excessive guilt and thoughts of suicide. Left untreated, depression can lead to serious impairment in daily functioning and even suicide.

Furthermore, researchers believe that more than one-half of people who die by suicide are experiencing depression. Depression is a leading cause of disability worldwide and represents a global public health challenge. According to the World Health Organization, it is the forth-leading contributor to Global Burden of Disease, and by 2020, depression is projected to be the second-leading cause. Devastating as this disease may be, it is treatable in most people. The availability of effective treatments and a better understanding of the biological basis for depression may lessen the barriers that can prevent early detection, accurate diagnosis and the decision to seek medical treatment.

**The Causes of Depression**

Most medical professionals practicing today believe that depression is caused by an equal combination of biological (including genetics), social, and psychological factors. A treatment approach that focuses exclusively on one of these factors is not likely to be as beneficial as a treatment approach that addresses both psychological and biological aspects, such as psychotherapy & medication (John Grohl, psychiatrist).

**The most common model today in the professional, medical community:**

**The biological or medical model**

This theory proposes that depression is the result of a chemical imbalance in the brain. Today, most would hold that depression is the result of low levels of the neurotransmitter, serotonin. But, brain physiology is still so poorly understood that no neurotransmitter imbalance or balance has ever been documented. Even if brain chemical levels were able to be measured, one could not determine if the chemical levels caused the depression or if the depression changed the chemical levels.

**The Secular Solution**

According to the professionals, there are three well-established types of treatment for major depression:

1. **Medications.** Medications often effectively control the serious symptoms of depression. It often takes two to four weeks for antidepressant medications to have their full effect.

2. **Psychotherapy.** Several types of psychotherapy have been shown to be effective for depression, including cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and interpersonal therapy (IPT). Support groups offer opportunities to share frustrations and successes, referrals to specialists and community resources, and information about what works best when trying to recover. Research has shown that mild to moderate depression can often be treated successfully with either medication or psychotherapy alone but that both together are often more helpful. Severe depression appears more likely to respond to a combination of medication and psychotherapy.

3. **Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT).** ECT is a highly effective treatment for select severe depression episodes and for severe depression with psychosis. When medication and psychotherapy are not
effective in treating severe symptoms (e.g., acute psychosis or thoughts of suicide) or if a person cannot take antidepressants, ECT may be considered. Memory problems can follow ECT treatments, so a careful risk-benefit assessment needs to be made for this intervention.

**The question that one must ask:**

Does depression (and its related moods, attitudes, behaviors, symptoms) come from the heart?  
Do these three solutions (mentioned above) get to the ‘root’ issue; or merely treat and alleviate the symptoms?  
Can’t the physiological effects (sleep deprivation, loss of energy, weight loss) be traced to one’s responses?

From one mainstream ‘Christian Counseling’ website (providing a case study of a pastor who was depressed):

The cause of depression is rooted in **brain chemistry**. The chemicals necessary to maintain this particular area of the brain are not sufficient. As a result, one’s mood is affected, and depression eventually can set in. Genetics has a strong impact on a person’s tendency to become depressed. It isn’t a matter of being Christian or not Christian, converted or not converted or saved or not saved.

When I went through my serious depression, I believed that working harder, praying more, and serving more would make me feel better. But that simply isn’t true. After weeks of therapy, my therapist told me I was a good candidate for anti-depressant medication. At first I felt like a total failure. Indeed, Me…a Christian pastor... needed... pills!

“**Calling depression a disease is depressing because it offers no hope.”** (Jim Newheiser)

**The Root Issue**

Biblically, depression *always* involves hopelessness & it *manifests* a low view of God at that moment.

**3 crucial biblical counseling diagnostic questions related to depression:**

1. Could God have changed the circumstances? (yes)  
2. Did he? (no)  
3. Is God good? (yes)  
   We must constantly repeat this in our counseling our own hearts (and others)

Depression often arises because of feeling-oriented versus commandment-oriented ways of living (Matt. 7:24-27). [E.g., I ‘feel’ that I should have gotten this, but I didn’t; so now I feel worthless, hopeless...]

Circumstances are *not* the issue. The issue is always how we *respond* to the circumstances. Consistently responding sinfully to circumstances is what feeds the feelings of depression (hopelessness, aimlessness).

The goal is to honor and please God, not to get my way or have my feelings change (2 Cor. 5:9-15).

Feelings follow actions (Gen. 4:7). Right feelings follow right actions.

People think they cannot do what is right until their feelings change.  
People think that changing their feelings is of first priority.

The Bible teaches that we must go against our feelings and do the righteous thing for God’s glory.

We must learn to talk to ourselves instead of listening to ourselves (Ps. 42:11, 43:5). Our feelings often lie. We must tell ourselves the truth (Phil. 4:8).
Think not on the comforts you want, but upon the mercies you have. Look rather at God's ends [purposes] in afflicting, than to the measure and degree of your affliction (Christopher Love, The Dejected Soul's Cure).

**Biblical terms:** downcast, despair, countenance falling, disturbed, near death, darkness

**Biblical examples:**
Cain – Genesis 4:6-7  
Elijah – 1 Kings 19  
David – Pss. 13, 32, 38, 51  
The Psalmists - Pss. 42, 43, 88  
Jeremiah – Lam. 3  
Paul – 2 Cor. 1:8

**Example — Psalm 42 [& Ps 43]**

Some causes of depression from David's life:

1. **sorrowing over the way things 'used' to be (v.3-4)** (things aren't the way they used to be)  
2. **falling down with despair in the soul (v.5)** (I feel so bad on the inside—in my soul; I'm depressed; I can't change)  
3. **experiencing the excessive/crushing weight of sorrows (v.7)** (I feel as I can't go on anymore...)  
4. **feeling forgotten and forsaken by God (v.9)** (Where is God...has he left me, abandoned me...why?)  
5. **receiving the mocking chants from others (v.10)** (others mock me & scoff at my trust in God...is it worth it?)

Another key element in getting to the root of depression (biblically) is that depressed people seem to focus on themselves far too much. Depression often stems from, manifests & leads to selfishness & self-centered thinking.

Remember God’s sovereignty (Eph 1:11-12) & the need for personal growth (Psalm 119:71)

**Biblical Helps for Battling with Depression**

A depressed Christian is a contradiction in terms and is a very poor recommendation for the gospel” (Martyn Lloyd Jones).

Christians still may struggle with depression. Six reasons why...

1. Struggle with indwelling sin (Galatians 5 – our flesh has been crucified, that is, finally and ultimately judged by God).  
2. Have not perfectly put off the old man with its corrupt patterns and practices and put on the new man which is renewed in true righteousness and holiness  
3. Have the temptations of difficult circumstances and people  
4. See through a mirror dimly and know only in part (1 Cor 13:12)  
5. Have only an earnest, a down payment of our inheritance (The Holy Spirit; Eph 1:13-14).  
6. Struggle with the world, the flesh, and the devil (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 6:10–18; Gal. 5:16; 1 Pet. 2:12)

Remember Hebrews 2:17-18

*We’re not content with using therapeutic terms and methods. We come with the power of the gospel & the power of a Person to bring about God-glorifying change in responding to the situation.*
Counseling the depressed soul (yourself or others):

1. Ask the heart-searching questions.
   a. Are you angry? Do you have a right to be angry?
   b. Why are you so downcast?
   c. Where is your treasure? What have you lost?
   d. What happened that you didn’t think should have happened? Why did it affect you so much?
   e. Where is God currently in your thinking? What part did God have to play in this event/situation?
   f. Are you especially worried about something? Why are you so afraid?
   g. Why do you feel so guilty?
   h. What do you feel like you must cover up?

2. It may benefit to have a current, thorough medical exam.

3. Establish a God-centered view of life (Rom. 8:28-29, 2 Cor. 5:9, 1 Cor. 10:13)

4. Understand the cycle of depression, including:
   a. Circumstances versus your own response (what happens & how you respond to what happens)
   b. Commandment-oriented living versus feeling-oriented living
   c. Feelings follow actions (did you act/do what your feelings led you to do?)

5. What does your depression teach you about your own heart?
   “I am afraid”
   “I am guilty” or “I am ashamed”
   “I lost something”
   “I need something”
   “I should have gotten this/that”
   “I feel lost, aimless, wandering & without purpose”
   “I am angry”
   “I must avoid something”
   “Woe is me”
   “I have no hope”
   “I am trusting in Christ and waiting on Him”

6. What do those beliefs, thoughts, desires, and motives reveal about who or what I am worshipping? What are my idols?

7. Confess and repent of anything that does not honor God. Actively trust in Christ.

8. Practice the put-off and put-on principle. Change thinking and beliefs (Rom. 12:1-2 & 2 Cor 10:3-5)

9. Habits you want to develop:
   a. Thankfulness (Eph. 5:20)
   b. Serving and ministering to others (=eyes/thoughts/focus off of self/situation & onto others; Phil 2:3).
   c. Taking every thought captive. Thinking on things that are true (2 Cor. 10:5, Phil. 4:8)
   d. Thinking biblically about God, self, and circumstances (1 Pet 4)
   e. Pleasing God versus changing feelings or circumstances (Daniel chapters 1-6)
   f. God-confidence and self-discipline (Prov. 14:26, 1 Tim. 4:7)

Very practical homework assignments for those struggling with depression (practical application)
The following list contains some assignments and specific strategies that have been helpful for many.

1. Take one biblical story, read it every day, and write down 10 (or more) applications of it. The basic idea with this assignment, and some of the others that follow, is that you want depressed people to meditate on something. Otherwise, their minds will drift into further despondency and you might try to throw every rope you can think of
rather than stick with one thing until the person does it. If a depressed person can see the merit in this battle strategy, and he or she is willing to do it, stay with the assignment until it is done. Too often, counselors throw out ideas and don’t follow through.

2. Find ten features of a friend that are good. Write them down and send them to the friend.

3. Write out your purpose for living. Allow it to be revised by others. Then memorize it.


5. Write down teachings or applications from the Sunday sermon that are good, important, and true & specifically apply it to your life daily.

6. Each day, speak or write something that edifies others (Eph 4:29).

7. Take one aspect of creation (e.g., grass, a shrub, a squirrel, a leaf) and consider it until you can say that it is good & the God who made it is good.

8. Each day, listen to God’s Word, music that points you to Christ, or another person who has spiritual wisdom. Be able to summarize what you heard. Practice listening.

9. Keep a sharp eye out for grumbling and complaining. Like gossip, these are sins that are acceptable in our culture, so we don’t see their ugly roots. What does the grumbling or complaining really say?

10. Consider these questions. In this culture, have we forgotten the benefits of hardships? What are the possible benefits to suffering? (Ps 119:67, 71; 2 Cor. 1:8-10; Heb. 5:8; James 1:3; Romans 5:1-5)

11. Since the label “depression” cannot capture the complexity of your experience, what are other words, especially words that can be found in Scripture, that more concretely capture what is going on in your heart? (see, e.g., the language/descriptions of the ‘depressed’ in Psalm 88)

12. Get help. Yes, humbly ask a few people to pray for you and speak the truth to you. When you ask for prayer, ask for more than just the alleviation of depression. Use this as an opportunity to pray big prayers. Find some of the prayers in Scripture and pray them. For example, pray that you would know the love of Christ (Eph. 3), that you would look more like Jesus (Rom. 8:29), that you would love others (Phil 1:9ff), and that you would discern what it means today to bring glory to God (Col 1:9ff).

13. Find Christ in Scripture. Then, as you grow in the knowledge of Christ, share it with others (2 Pet 3:18)

14. Review what you believe are your God-given responsibilities and, one at a time, begin working on them. This put-one-foot-in-front-of-the-other approach may not seem like an effective strategy to counter depression, but, as we work as unto the Lord, this is praiseworthy faithfulness. Viewed through the lens of Scripture, it is much more profound than it first appears.

**Martyn Lloyd Jones:**

“Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself? Take those thoughts that come to you the moment you wake up in the morning. You have not originated them but they are talking to you, they bring back the problems of yesterday, etc. Somebody is talking. Who is talking to you? Your self is talking to you. Now this man’s treatment [in Psalm 42] was this: instead of allowing this self to talk to him, he starts talking to himself. “Why art thou cast down, O my soul?” he asks. His soul had been depressing him, crushing him. So he stands up and says, “Self, listen for moment, I will speak to you.”

**For Further Studying:**


SESSION 10
Eating Problems

Looking at biblical examples and finding the concept of gluttony confirms our basic premise that gluttony is an out-of-control (or indulging) approach to food that makes what goes in the stomach to be of more value than God or his Word. (Rob Green)

But the fruit of the Spirit is … self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23)

Introduction

Food and body image idolatry are ‘big’ issues in our culture.

Sadly, there are many who have not learned this lesson. Our high schools are filled with teens struggling with the way their body looks. Our college campuses are inundated with people seeking a more attractive look. Our churches have people constantly wrestling with what they look like in the mirror. Contrary to popular belief, this is not an issue limited to the ladies. Guys struggle with self image as well. One look into a fitness facility will make that point clear. Guys are checking themselves out on a regular basis. Full length mirrors are common. So what should we do if we are struggling with our self image? How can we help one of our children? How can we help a counselee? How do we counsel our own souls?

Perhaps you don’t believe that overeating is a sin. Many of us have been brainwashed by magazine articles, television talk shows, and reality shows that tell us that food is the problem—you are simply eating the wrong things in the wrong way. Often even the Christian perspective views overeating as a diet problem rather than a sin problem. On the other hand, you may know that overeating is a sin, but it does not seem serious because it is often treated as one of those ‘little sins’ that are acceptable in the church. You don’t hear sermons or read books on the sin of overeating. Your focus is more on getting treatment for your problem of overeating than facing up to your personal responsibility of repentance and obedience. According to the above descriptions of sin, overeating is of folly, not of faith. It is failing to do the right thing. It is unrighteousness and lawlessness.

The following is a testimony from someone who struggled with overeating: “My eating was out of control. I ate solely to satisfy whatever craving I was having at the time. As a result, my health was suffering and I was not honoring God with my life and body He had given me. I was for the first time confronted with the fact that the way that I was eating was sinful. I knew that my eating was ‘not good,’ but I never considered that my eating was sin.” So, how do we recognize it & conquer it?

In this study, we are NOT condemning food, or eating well; nor do we say these things are evil. Kevin DeYoung helps:

Remember, most of the Bible is overwhelmingly positive about food. There are Old Testament feasts and visions of heavenly feasts. Jesus finished his ministry with a meal and instituted a supper for his remembrance in the church. If the New Testament has an overriding concern with food, it is that God’s people not be overly concerned about it.

Definitions

ANOREXIA
Anorexia is all about not eating. It is an all consuming fear of fat that leads you to starve yourself. Your fear might also lead you to try constant exercising, vomiting, and/or taking laxatives. What happens when these things don't make you feel any better? Your next step might be another form of self-punishment such as cutting. When others try to help you, it's easy for you to make them into your enemy. You don't want anyone standing between you and what you believe you need.

BULIMIA
Bulimia is all about overeating. A lot of food eaten secretly and rapidly is its trademark. In contrast to anorexia's control, bulimia is impulsive and out-of-control.

GLUTTONY/OVEREATING
“Overeating is a life-dominating sin, and it has a strong influence over your life. It affects your mind, your body, your spirit, your heart, your emotions, your relationships, and even your finances. The sin of overeating is practiced repeatedly so that it becomes a habitual lifestyle and almost second nature, a continuous action that controls your life.

Here are a few characteristics of the life-dominating sin of overeating.

1. **You Have Repeatedly Tried to Stop.** “You’ve tried every diet known to man, but failed to stop habitually overeating. The root of your problem is that you are not taking this sin seriously.”

2. **You Blame Others or Circumstances for Your Failure.** “The world may teach you to blame your mother for your sinful eating habits because, when you were a child, she forced you to ‘clean your plate’ at every meal. You may blame it on your genetic makeup…you may blame your diet plan. You say, ‘It did not work for me. It is too strict.’ You may even blame your sin on God because he will not change your circumstances, your cravings, and so on. You completely disregard what the apostle Paul says in Romans 14:12: ‘So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.’”

3. **You Deny that Overeating Is a Sin.** “You believe what the world tells you about your overeating problem. You believe that your problem is really low self-esteem, or that you actually have a disease. You refuse to accept that your actions are sinful and do not glorify God. You call it a weakness instead of a sin.”

4. **You Convince Yourself that You are not Enslaved to Overeating and ‘Can Stop at Any Time.’** “You must admit that you are in bondage to the sin of overeating. Jesus teaches, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin (John 8:34). You believe that you are in control of your eating habits every time you start a new diet plan or workout program. You are deceived into believing that this plan will deliver you. A life-dominating sin requires the work of the Holy Spirit in order for it to be put to death in the believer.”

5. **Any Pleasure from Overeating is Short-lived, while the Harm Is Considerable and Long-Term.** “You feel as though you have no control over your cravings. You give in to the temptation to eat repeatedly. You see your body weight increasing and feel your clothes tightening. You get depressed because you don’t like the way you look. Your blood pressure is getting dangerously high, and your knees hurt when you try to climb the stairs to your apartment. Nevertheless, you find yourself stuffing your face again with massive amounts of food and not receiving the relief you are seeking.”

6. **You Overeat when No One is Watching.** “When overeating controls you, you will seek to hide your outward behavior by doing it in secret….Hiding your sin will only lead you into deeper bondage. You must realize that there is power in confession. James 5:16 states, ‘Therefore, confess your sins to one

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6 Adapted from Paul Tautges
another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”

7. You Know that Overeating Obscures the Testimony of Jesus Christ in Your Life and Is a Stumbling Block to Others. “To commit sin and know that it is damaging the testimony of Jesus Christ can lead you more deeply into slavery. You must know that your sinful actions are affecting everyone around you: your husband, children, coworkers, unsaved relatives, and friends. You cannot admonish and encourage others in their walk with Christ when you are purposefully committing sin in their presence. They see your helpless struggle with overeating and may deny the power of Christ in their own lives.”

8. You Know that God’s Word Tells You to Stop Sinning, and that God Can Release You from this Bondage. “Pride and rebellion are at the heart of your problem. Perhaps you have been a Christian for a long time and you know that God is not pleased with your gluttonous behavior. But you continue to ignore God’s command to glorify him when you eat (1 Corinthians 10:31). You refuse to trust in God’s faithfulness and accept his way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13).”

9. You Realize that Your Deeds (thoughts, words, actions) do not Conform to the Character of Christ. “Your conscience accuses you of your sin. Your behavior doesn’t conform to the character of Christ. Without telling a bold-faced lie, you cannot say that your gluttonous behavior is Christlike. You know in your heart that your behavior is not pleasing to the Lord. You know that your desire is to please yourself.”

The Biblical Truth

Overeating Is Not an Addiction
Some overeaters label themselves “food addicts,” believing they are addicted to food. However, addiction is not a biblical term. The world uses this terminology to describe the behavior of someone who is controlled by a substance. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines addiction in this way: “To devote or surrender (oneself) to something habitually or obsessively.” But the danger in labeling overeating as “addiction” is that it undermines the personal conviction of sin. If the problem is not sin, then you will look for solutions in a system of theories, not in the person of Jesus Christ. [This is fundamental to biblical counseling!]

Overeating Is Idolatry
The biblical term for “addiction” is “idolatry.” The sin of overeating is idolatry. Idolatry is worship and devotion to creation rather than worship and devotion to the Creator God. You worship your stomach and appetites by indulging in food. You desire the created food more than your Creator. The problem is not necessarily the food you consume; it is the worship of your heart. Before you can be set free [from the sin of gluttony], you must acknowledge your idol, denounce it, repent, and give your heart and devotion to him. Your greatest hope is in turning from your false gods and surrendering your life to Jesus, who is able to forgive your sins and free you from the sin of overeating.

Romans 6:12-14 both exhorts us to repent of the sin of overeating and gives us hope on God’s power to change us. “Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to

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7 Adapted from Paul Tautges
God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”

**Pertinent Scriptures**
Ecclesiastes 2:1-11  
Proverbs 23:21  
Ephesians 5:18  
Titus 1:12-13*  
Philippians 3:18-19*  
1 Corinthians 6:13, 19-20  
2 Peter 1:5-6  
1 Corinthians 9.25 - self-control; self-discipline  
2 Tim 3.3 - those in the last days will live 'without self control'  
Proverbs 30:7-9**

**Proverbs 30:8** — Keep deception and lies far from me, Give me neither poverty nor riches; Feed me with the food that is my portion,

Looking at biblical examples and finding the concept of gluttony/overeating confirms our basic premise that gluttony is an out-of-control (or indulging) approach to food that makes what goes in the stomach to be of more value than God or his Word (Rob Green).

**Identifying a Glutton/an Overeater**
Looking at biblical examples and finding the concept of gluttony confirms our basic premise that gluttony is an out-of-control (or indulging) approach to food that makes what goes in the stomach to be of more value than God or his Word (Rob Green).

This definition of gluttony is very, very important. It demonstrates that gluttony is a matter of the heart. Since gluttony and drunkenness are connected so closely I tend to think that gluttony is the “solid food” companion to a how a drunk treats alcohol. Whatever standards we would use to move a person from a social drinker to a drunk would seem a reasonable approach to do with the matter of gluttony.

Questions like this seem to be important:
1. When life is hard, where do you find your joy and satisfaction?  
2. When you are hurting, where do you seek comfort?  
3. When you think of a “relaxing moment,” what elements are included?  
4. Do you take a good thing (food) and make it a bad thing (by indulging)?  
5. Do you feel as though you have to have another portion/serving? *Can* you stop?

For the glutton, the answers to the first three questions eventually find their way back to food. Food becomes the place where the glutton receives joy, where the glutton receives satisfaction, and where the glutton receives strength for his day.

*Note:*
It should be clear that this is a radical way of looking at gluttony. It implies the following:

- A skinny person could actually be a glutton because that is where he finds comfort, joy, and satisfaction even if his body is able to metabolize his intake efficiently.
- An overweight person might not be a glutton because that person is more inclined to gain weight even when eating reasonable portions.
- The scale, while being a possible indicator, does not tell the whole story because the scale cannot look at the heart.

As an aside I would use this same argument if I were discussing the relationship between riches and greed. Not all greedy persons are wealthy and not all wealthy persons are greedy.

**Providing Help for Those Battling These Sins**

**Helping a Glutton**

Here are three truths to help the gluttons in your life:

1. Gluttons must realize that gluttony is a sin. It is an offense to God to find joy, satisfaction, and comfort in food rather than in the one who provided it.
2. Gluttons must learn to worship the creator rather than the creation. Gluttons must learn to worship Jesus rather than worship the joys of food.
3. Gluttons must see God as the one who rescues (see Psalm 40, especially vv. 1-4) then from their pain, struggles, and difficulties rather than believe that food will rescue them.

The cross of the Lord Jesus and his sustaining grace can deliver the glutton from his addiction to food. The Lord Jesus can provide the joy, comfort, and satisfaction that the glutton is looking for. The Lord Jesus is the one who must be worshipped. At the same time, the glutton can learn to enjoy all that God has made available without worshipping the creation.

**Biblical Encouragement**

1. **Remember that your identity is in Jesus.** Your sin was so ugly that it would impossible for you to look worse, but now that your sin has been removed as far as the east is from the west, now that you have been washed, and now that you are clean you cannot possibly be more attractive than you already are. Isn’t that encouraging? Isn’t that hopeful? In the eyes of Jesus you are indeed attractive. You do not

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8 This section is largely adapted from Rob Green.
have to be bound by your attempts to be a supermodel or to be built like an NFL linebacker. You should not seek to find your worth in your appearance, but in who you are in Jesus.

2. Remember that the way you express your love for Jesus is not by your appearance, but by obedience. Jesus said, “if you love me, keep my commandments.” Instead of investing a lot of time and effort into your body image, invest it in the kingdom of God. Do the Lord’s commands. Forgive, be generous, be kind and tenderhearted, serve others, gather with other believers, and do everything to God’s glory. Remember the words of Proverbs 31:30 “Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, But a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised.” Men would do well to remember the same truth.

3. While health is important; remember that it is important because you are a steward. There is often a difference between health and “attractive.” For some, they use “stewardship” as a euphemism for “idolatry of themselves.” We are stewards, but we are stewards of more than our measurements. We are stewards of our money, our time, our thoughts, our focus, our goals – we are stewards of all that God has entrusted to us. So, you may need to exercise, lose weight, or get a medical check up, but you do those things so that you can steward your life to give glory to Jesus not so you can be the “eye candy” in your local gym.

### A Profitable Prayer: Proverbs 30:7-9

- Where can we grow in our enjoyment of God’s creation & yet our indulging with moderation?
- Are we mastered by anything? If so, let us strive with God’s help, by God’s Spirit, for Christ’s glory, for our gladness to enjoy God’s creation (all of it) with moderation & utilizing self-control!
- Can we not indulge in food for a meal, for a morning, for a day for the purpose of seeking God’s face, Bible-reading, prayer & fellowshipping with God? This can bring enormous encouragement!

### Conclusion

#### Learning from the Puritans:

The Puritans have no problem in deriving pleasure from the created order (including food). Remember 1 Timothy 4:4 — ‘For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude.’ God created all things, and declared all things to be good. This fact undermines the notion that the physical is inherently evil. Therefore, the way to holiness is not found in abstaining from God’s good gifts, but in carefully enjoying them.
SESSION 11
Fear, Anxiety, Worry

“There is no surer place to find godly counsel for yourself and others than the Word of God. The Word of God is the sword of the spirit, our weapon to wield in our spiritual wars (Ephesians 6: 17). It is also our soul-food. Meditate upon it. Talk to yourself with it. Pray it. Feed on it. “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).” (Paul Tautges)

“According to Scripture, fear that keeps us from living the kind of life that God wants us to live is unnecessary and extremely destructive.” (Wayne Mack)

Introduction
From her article, Therese Borchard, a therapist and columnist for the Huffington Post, provided 11 tips on a prominent psychology website to manage anxiety. Some of these tips include...

1. Exaggerate your greatest fear.
2. Distract yourself.
3. Sweat.
   I have found only one full-proof immediate solution to anxiety. And that is exercise.
   Bike. Walk. Swim. Run. I don’t care what you do, as long as you get that ticker of yours working hard. You don’t have to be training for an Ironman to feel the antidepressant effect of exercise.
4. Watch the movie (be distracted)
5. Use visual anchors (find a ‘happy place’ — clouds, water, etc)
6. Repeat a mantra
   My mantras are very simple: “I am okay” or “I am enough.” Other examples may include:
   May I be filled with loving kindness
   May I be happy, and healthy
   May I accept myself in the moment right as I am
   May all sentient beings be at peace, and free from suffering.
   Really? Is this the BEST we can offer people??

A biblical introduction & understanding
1. Anxiety is fear, which is the opposite of trusting God. I need the psalmist’s resolve (Psalm 56:3).
2. Anxiety is the desire to know what we cannot know and to control what we cannot control. This is why it is accurate to say that anxiety is the opposite of faith (Matt 6:34).
3. At the moment in which the emotion of anxiety seeks to take control of me I must rehearse trust-building truths about God. God has given me the ability to control my emotions.
4. When I let anxiety control me then it hinders my obedience to God in other areas, such as Romans 12:10.
5. God’s prescription for anxiety is thankful prayer (Phil 4:6-7). When I choose to be thankful to God—and look for, and name, specific reasons—my focus is directed to God and, therefore, away from myself.

DSM-5 Disorders
Anxiety Disorders
Separation Anxiety Disorder
Selective Mutism
Specific Phobia
Social Anxiety Disorder (Social Phobia)
Panic Disorder
Panic Attack (Specifier)
Agoraphobia
Generalized Anxiety Disorder
Substance/Medication-Induced Anxiety Disorder
Anxiety Disorder Due to Another Medical Condition
Other Specified Anxiety Disorder
Unspecified Anxiety Disorder

Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders
Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
Body Dysmorphic Disorder
Hoarding Disorder
Trichotillomania (Hair-Pulling Disorder)
Excoriation (Skin-Picking) Disorder
Substance/Medication-Induced Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorder
Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorder Due to Another Medical Condition
Other Specified Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorder
Unspecified Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorder

Trauma- and Stressor-Related Disorders
Reactive Attachment Disorder
Disinhibited Social Engagement Disorder
Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
Acute Stress Disorder
Adjustment Disorders
Other Specified Trauma- and Stressor-Related Disorder
Unspecified Trauma- and Stressor-Related Disorder

Depressive Disorders
Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder
Major Depressive Disorder, Single and Recurrent Episodes
Persistent Depressive Disorder (Dysthymia)
Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder
Substance/Medication-Induced Depressive Disorder
Depressive Disorder Due to Another Medical Condition
Other Specified Depressive Disorder
Unspecified Depressive Disorder

Somatic Symptom and Related Disorders
Illness Anxiety Disorder
(additional disorders not listed)
**The Secular (Unbiblical) Understanding**

Anxiety is an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes like increased blood pressure.

People with anxiety disorders usually have recurring intrusive thoughts or concerns. They may avoid certain situations out of worry. They may also have physical symptoms such as sweating, trembling, dizziness or a rapid heartbeat.

[Adapted from the *Encyclopedia of Psychology* (American Psychological Association)]

The DSM-5

**From the DSM, what are the symptoms?**

The anxiety and worry are associated with three (or more) of the following six symptoms (with at least some symptoms present for more days than not for the past 6 months). Note: Only one item is required in children.

1. restlessness or feeling keyed up or on edge
2. being easily fatigued
3. difficulty concentrating or mind going blank
4. irritability
5. muscle tension
6. sleep disturbance (difficulty falling or staying asleep, or restless unsatisfying sleep)

The Solutions?

A combination of psychotherapy and medication management is recommended in all of the anxiety disorders. Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) has the strongest support of all the psychotherapies, but it requires commitment to treatment on the part of the patient. Its efficacy is also contingent on the ability of the therapist and the length of therapy, with a 78% response rate in panic disorder patients who have committed to 12 to 15 weeks of therapy. Studies show that when compared with patients undergoing treatment as usual, patients treated with a combination of CBT and medication experience nearly twice the remission rate, even when the CBT was administered by someone with minimal to no CBT experience.

**The Root Causes**

Worry always carries with it the idea that you, or someone you care about, may be harmed by whatever it is you are worrying about (Wayne Mack).

**3 Causes of Anxiety**

1. **False cares** (Matthew 6:25; 31-32). False cares are problems or fears that we dream up that do not really exist. In other words, if God has told us He will meet our needs then worrying about them is a false care that does not really exist. God faithfully provides for our needs. Yes, He does this primarily through our work, and the wise, disciplined stewardship of our resources. But if we are working at being faithful with the responsibilities He has given, and we still have unmet needs, then we need to trust that He will provide for us. To worry over them is to create a false care since God clearly promised His care. We must be more like the birds that do not worry about the faithfulness of their Creator.

2. **Lack of faith** (Matthew 6:30). The lack of faith that Jesus confronted is caused by our tendency to look at our circumstances through mere earthly eyes and thereby fail to rest in the promises of God. He
was saying, “Look at what God has done; look at creation; look at the flowers; look at the trees; look at the grass. God takes care of His creation. You are more valuable than they are. God will meet your need. Have faith.” God really does care about our needs!

3) **Worldly values** (Matthew 6:32-33). In other words, Jesus says to us, “Adjust your priorities. Replace your worldly priorities with God-centered values which are eternal and all your other cares will fall into their proper place.” Much worry is caused by discontentment that comes from measuring our success by comparing ourselves and our material wealth to that of others. As a result, we end up worrying over stuff. That’s all it is. Stuff! Instead of measuring our worth by the things we possess, Jesus gently reminds us to live with a God-centered perspective.

When you become fearful, you need to ask the following questions & write-down the answers:
   a. What was my situation?
   b. What was I thinking at the time?
   c. What was I feeling on a 'fear' scale [scale of 1-5]: concern, worry, anxiety, fear, panic
   d. What did I want?
   e. What did I do? (escape, cope, etc.)

The ungodly response of choice for many of us in pressure situations (worry, fear, anxious moments) is irritability, annoyance, or impatience, which is expressed on our faces, words, and actions. When under pressure, we may be brusque, curt, insensitive and inconsiderate of the feelings of others (Wayne Mack).

**Some Scriptures To Remember:**
Proverbs 12:25  
Deuteronomy 20:3  
1 Samuel 23:16-17  
Psalm 56:4  
Proverbs 3:25  
Hebrews 13:5-6  
1 Peter 5:5-9 (especially verse 7)  
Isaiah 35:4  
1 John 4:18  
Philippians 4:6-9

**Biblical Solutions to Eradicate Fear, Worry, Anxiety**

1. **Psalm 27** - a sample homework assignment for those battling with this sin

   Read through Psalm 27 four times. Focus on one particular element each time by asking yourself a question:
   1. What truths about God did David talk to himself about?
   2. What renewed determinations/commitments did David make?
   3. What prayers of faith did his meditation on truth produce?

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9 This brief section on Psalm 27 is adapted from Paul Tautges.
4. What expressions of confidence resulted?

TRUTHS TO SPEAK TO YOURSELF (from Psalm 27)

- “The Lord is my light and salvation.” (v. 1)
- “The Lord is the defense of my life.” (v. 1)
- Because these two statements are true, “Whom shall I fear? Whom shall I dread?”
- “He will conceal me in His tabernacle,” i.e. He will hide me in His presence. (v. 5)
- “Wait for the LORD; be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the LORD” (v. 14).

RENEWED DETERMINATIONS/COMMITMENTS

In the midst of terrifying events, which are described in verses 2-3, David is determined to maintain his God-focus: “In spite this I shall be confident.” There are more expressions of renewed determination.

- I will seek the Lord. This will be my primary preoccupation (v. 4).
- Until I die, I will worship the Lord with God’s people (v. 4).
- I will behold the beauty of the Lord (v. 4).
- I will think deliberately (meditate) on Him, His works, and His truth (v. 4).

PRAYERS OF FAITH

Pray this as your own:

Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice, and be gracious to me and answer me. When You said, “Seek My face,” my heart said to You, “Your face, O LORD, I shall seek.” Do not hide Your face from me, do not turn Your servant away in anger; You have been my help; Do not abandon me nor forsake me, O God of my salvation! For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me up. Teach me Your way, O LORD, and lead me in a level path because of my foes. Do not deliver me over to the desire of my adversaries, for false witnesses have risen against me, and such as breathe out violence.

EXPRESSIONS OF CONFIDENCE

- “Though a host encamp against me, my heart will not fear; though war arise against me, in spite of this I shall be confident.” (v. 3)
- My head will be lifted up and I will again sing (v. 6).
- “You have been my help” (v. 9).
- Others have forsaken me, but the Lord will never do so. Instead, “He will take me up” (v. 10)
- “I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living” (v. 13).

There is no surer place to find godly counsel for yourself and others than the Word of God. The Word of God is the sword of the spirit, our weapon to wield in our spiritual wars (Ephesians 6:17). It is also our soul-food. Meditate upon it. Talk to yourself with it. Pray it. Feed on it. “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).


Understanding the futility of worrying & choosing to trust in God’s provision for His children.

3. Psalm 94:19

Meditate on God.
We must also learn to deliberately choose to give thanks to God in the midst of everything and for everything.

Cf. Ephesians 5:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:18

4. Learn to Meditate on God
To meditate on God is to deliberately choose to think about Him—His works, nature, and attributes. This can be done while observing nature (Ps 19:1-6), but is most fully accomplished—in a mind-transformative way—by thinking about specific biblical truths (Ps 19:7-13). As we meditate on God it will impact our thought patterns, words, and ultimately our life (Ps 19:14). It truly contributes to mental health (Paul Tautges)

1. God is light (Isa 60:19; James 1:17; 1 Jn 1:5). This means that He has the power to overcome the darkness of our depression
2. God is love (1 Jn 4:8, 16; Romans 8:38-39). This means whatever trial we may now be experiencing cannot change God’s affection for us.
3. God is wise and His ways are unsearchable (Rom 16:27; 1 Tim 1:17; Rom 11:33). This means He can be trusted to do us good, even when we cannot figure it out or see it.
4. God is incorruptible (Rom 1:23). This means our sin cannot change our God.
5. God is omniscient (Ps 139:1-6). This means He not only knows our past, which most of us are ashamed of, but He also knows our present needs and our future life.
6. God is omnipotent (Gen 17:1; Exod 6:3). This means He not only knows everything we need, but is infinitely able to do something about it.
7. God is omnipresent (Ps 139:7). This means we are never truly alone, even if our feelings say otherwise.
8. God is immutable (Ps 102:26). This means He is utterly dependable.
9. God is holy, just, and true (Ps 99:9; Isa 45:21; John 17:3). This means He can be fully trusted at all times.
10. God is good (Ps 25:8). This means He works for us.
11. God is great (Ps 86:10). This means He is always worthy of praise.
12. God is gracious (Ps 116:5). This means He lavishes us with goodness.
13. God is faithful (1 Cor 10:13). This means He will always provide a way through our trials and temptations.
14. God is merciful (Ps 86:5). This means He continues to withhold His wrath, which we deserve, because of Jesus’s propitiatory sacrifice.
15. God is long-suffering (Num 14:18; Mic 7:1). This means His patience toward us is truly long, very long.
16. God is compassionate (2 Kin 13:23). This means He feels our grief.

5. Stand Upon & Preach the Absolute Sovereignty of God to Your Soul
Psalm 93-100 - the Kingship of God psalms (Ps 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 98:6; 99:1)

“Absolute sovereignty is what I love to ascribe to God” (Jonathan Edwards)
“To win this battle over the stressors of life (including worry, anxiety, or any fear), you must deliberately choose to see everything that happens to you within the framework of the Sovereignty of God” (Wayne Mack).

10 adverbs describing 'HOW the Lord reigns...'
1. exclusively
2. eternally
3. actively
4. powerfully
5. triumphantly
6. globally
7. exhaustively
8. protectively
9. faithfully
10. gloriously

Now that it is established that He reigns (or, ‘since the LORD reigns)...
1. you can live in heavenly peace.
2. you can conquer all despair.
3. you can evangelize with confidence.
4. you can trust all God's promises.
5. you can see God's hand that worked in the past.
6. you can triumph 'in Christ'
7. you can thank God for everything that occurs.
8. you can know that God will destroy all evil.
9. you can rest in the Fatherly bosom of God.

Meditate on: Psalm 103:19; 115:3; 135:6; Isaiah 46; 1 Timothy 6:16; Ephesians 1:11

Conclusion
John Flavel’s sermon on the cross, specifically, Jesus’ declaration that “It is finished” (John 19:30) is a glorious help for those struggling with worry. After Flavel preached the doctrine derived from the text he offered these practical inferences drawn from the doctrine. There are six mentioned:
1. **Comfort**: believers need not fear condemnation for all the imperfections of our works for God
2. **Warning**: trusting anything besides Christ for our justification is dangerous to us and dishonoring to Christ;
3. **Hope**: if Christ finished His work for us, then He will finish His work in us;
4. **Exultation**: rejoice in this finished work and the way of justification by faith in Christ alone;
5. **Imitation**: if Christ worked, then all Christians must labor to glorify God by hard work; and
6. **Exhortation**: strive to finish the work God gives you before death closes your life.

When we intentionally focus on the finished work of Jesus on our behalf then we enter the realm of spiritual rest that God intended for us. Truly, Jesus is our Sabbath. Let us choose to enter His rest (Hebrews 4:1-11).

For Further Reading:
Wayne Mack, *Anger & Stress Management God’s Way*
SESSION 12
Homosexuality (& Same-Sex Attraction [SSA])

“The key to recovering from same-sex attraction is radical discipleship, the call that all Christians have in common. Jesus’ call to “follow Me” is the same for you as it is for every other believer” (Bob Deffinbaugh).

“We stand firmly committed to the position that Scripture teaches that homosexual and lesbian orientation and behavior are contrary to the order for human sexuality God placed in creation. Hence they are sinful” (John & Paul Feinberg).

“My conclusion is that if sexual orientation is one’s enduring pattern of sexual attraction, then the Bible teaches both same-sex behavior and same-sex orientation to be sinful” (Denny Burk).

Introduction
In 2009, the American Psychological Association adopted a resolution that mental health professionals should avoid telling clients that they can change their sexual orientation. Since then, California and New Jersey have passed laws banning conversion therapy for minors, and several other states have considered similar measures.

Earlier this year, the 50,000-member American Association of Christian Counselors amended its code of ethics to eliminate the promotion of reparative therapy, and encouraged celibacy instead.
“Counselors acknowledge the client’s fundamental right to self-determination and further understand that deeply held religious values and beliefs may conflict with same-sex attraction and/or behavior, resulting in anxiety, depression, stress, and inner turmoil,” the revised code says.

Josh Wolff, a gay 2009 graduate of Biola University’s Rosemead School of Psychology who is now a licensed clinical psychologist, said he went to reparative therapy for nearly two years before fully embracing his sexuality.

In fact, that’s the teaching of major religious traditions, including the Roman Catholic Church, the United Methodist Church and even the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons). Homosexuality only becomes sinful when a person chooses to act on it.

The Worldly/Unbiblical Understanding
In 2009, The American Psychological Association Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation “concluded that efforts to change sexual orientation are unlikely to be successful. . . Given the limited amount of methodologically sound research, claims that recent SOCE [sexual orientation change effort] is effective are not supported” (pp. v & 2).

Even the Majority ‘Christian’ Understanding of SSA
Wesley Hill, in his book Washed & Waiting: Christian Faithfulness & Homosexuality, he writes: “My homosexuality is a part of my makeup, a facet of my personality [emphasis mine]. One day, I believe, whether in this life or in the resurrection, it will fade away. But my identity as a Christian – someone incorporated into Christ’s body by his Spirit – will remain. I hope to send a subtle linguistic signal that being gay isn’t the most important thing about my or any other gay person’s identity. I am a ‘Christian’ before I am anything else. My homosexuality is a part of my makeup, a facet of my personality” (p.22, emphasis added).
A Seminary Student at a Conservative Evangelical Institution openly admits he battles with SSA. He writes this:
“In my last post, I shared my struggle to love myself as Jesus loves me…”

The Desiring God blog recently published a post entitled, "Is It a Sin to Experience Same-Sex Attraction?" The article was written by Nick Roen, who is a Master of Divinity student at Bethlehem College & Seminary [and] has a burden to help the church think through issues regarding sexuality, singleness, and celibacy. In his post, Roen argues that "it seems right to say that while homosexual practice is active sinning, the experience of same-sex attraction need not involve active sinning" (emphasis added).

The Root Issue
Richard Hays comments that “Homosexuality is probably singled out because it is such a clear rejection of something so obvious—God’s complementary design for the sexes and of sexual intercourse itself.”

Denny Burk comments:
I believe that this statement is essentially correct. Christians who recognize the sinfulness of same-sex behavior but not of same-sex attraction are in a moral and theological no-man’s land. Biblically speaking, our desires and attractions—no matter how innate they may seem—are not exempt from moral scrutiny. God holds us accountable not only for our deeds, but also for the desires that give rise to them (e.g., Matt. 5:27-28; James 1:14-15).

The Bible condemns sinful desires (1 Samuel 16:7; Exodus 20:17; Matthew 5:21-28)

God condemns promiscuity and sensuality. We make no provision for them. We must put off these desires and replace them with the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 13:14).

Sinful desires stem from sinful hearts (Matthew 7:21-23; James 4:1-2).

Don Green puts it like this:
Is it okay to be attracted to the same gender as long as you don't have sex? Short answer. No. The sin of homosexuality is more than the external behavior. The disposition toward homosexuality is also sinful.

He continues:
God forbids us to want things that are contrary to His will. Homosexual desires and behavior are sinful because they violate God’s created order. For a man to desire a man as a sexual companion is to sin from the heart against God’s order that a woman be the sole sexual companion of a man, and that in the context of a marriage relationship.

Why do some people feel same-sex attraction early in life? They were born with sinful hearts. When they act on their sinful desires, they develop sinful habits that gradually take control of them.
Sadly, homosexuals have misunderstood the spiritual significance of their experience. Their childhood desires were not innocent. They manifested a corrupt nature. When they act on that corrupt nature, sin subtly takes control of their lives.

Sin does not become righteous simply because it comes naturally to us. Homosexuality is sinful. Those who practice or desire it are guilty, even if they did not originally and consciously “choose” to go that route. God will still hold them accountable. I realize this sounds depressing. But sin is inherently enslaving. It’s shocking to realize that we can be slaves without even knowing it. Homosexuals are no different than the rest of us. They were born into a condition of slavery. Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.” (John 8:34)

What is the answer to that enslaved condition?

So, then, SSA feels ‘natural’ for the same reason that many other sins feel natural. Like greed, envy, gossip, it doesn’t need to be learned, nor doe it need to be consciously chosen. It is one of the natural capacities of the idolatrous heart of man that craves and seeks satisfaction in things other than God.

Ed Welch writes:
“Most sin works on a level where we do not feel that we self-consciously choose it. To use Old Testament language, our sin can be ‘unintentional,’ but that does not make us less responsible.”

What God Says About Homosexuality

Homosexual Activity (Behavior) Is Sinful

Relevant texts (Lev. 18:22)
1. Gen. 2:25 - “And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.”

2. Gen. 19:1–29 - This passage describes God sending two angels to destroy the city of Sodom for the people’s gross wickedness, and to rescue Lot and his family. One great sin of the men was their rampant practice of homosexuality, as illustrated in verses 5-9.

3. Lev. 20:13 - “‘If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them.’” (see also Lev 18:22; Deut 23:18).

4. Rom 1:24-28; see also 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Timothy 1:10.

Same-Sex Attraction Is Sinful

5 reasons why SSA is sinful.

1. SSA is diametrically opposed to God's creative order. It is opposite/contrary to nature. It thus is sinful since it runs in the opposite direction (willingly and determinatively) of God’s created, good, and blessed design. SSA/SSO perverts the greatest picture of the gospel in the Scriptures — heterosexual marriage.

2. God looks at the heart & not merely the externals.
3. The outward act of homosexual activity does not 'begin' the sin. It began long ago with sinful, unmortified, desires in the heart.

James 1:14-15;
Josh 7:20-21;
2 Sam 11:2-5;
1 John 2:15;
James 4:1ff

4. The desire on the part of men in the OT to have relations with other men is considered "wicked" and "evil" — they did not act out on the sin, but they had the desires.

Judges 19:22
Genesis 19:4, 7

5. The "strong desire" of Romans 1:27 is sinful just as the performance of the act is also sinful:
(Rom 1:27 — ἐξεκαύθησαν ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει αὐτῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους). They burned in their lust for one another.

The word for ‘lust’ (τῇ ὀρέξει) speaks of corrupt, strong DESIRES (it can, however be positive in meaning) -- but it is a strong desire.

See also: 2 Peter 2:8 - homosexuality (in Sodom) is lawless deeds

SSA [SSO: same-sex orientation] is sinful and believers must repent of and mortify homosexual desires. And the Spirit of God, using the Word of God, and the glorious gospel of God brings about change in sinners — that’s the glory & power of sanctification!

The Need for Biblical Counseling!!
“IT is through biblical, Christ-centered counseling that people can be able to be truly transformed within, freed from their internal slavery and idolatry, and become true worshipers of Jesus. And as counselors, it is our joy to be a part of people’s journeys of personal transformation into the image of Jesus Christ” (Ernie Baker & Jonathan Holmes).

Counseling Those Who Struggle with Same-Sex Attraction (SSA)

Most counselees struggling with SSA [Same-Sex Attraction] come fairly convinced of one or more of the following arguments or permutations of these arguments:

• God made me this way.
• I was born this way.
• Why would a loving God give me these desires if they were sinful?
• I cannot change how I feel or who I am attracted to, no more than you can change your ethnicity or race.
• I am committed to a monogamous same-sex relationship.

This does not suggest that these are unimportant questions to think through and have solid biblical answers for in counsel and conversation, but these are unbiblical thought-patterns.
Many claim that they can’t change or that they’ve tried to change and that they must learn to cope with this ‘condition’ until they reach glory. Others purport that they were ‘born’ this way or that God made them this way. To that, some theologians would say the following:

“As great-grandchildren of the enlightenment, we like to think of ourselves as free moral agents, choosing rationally among possible actions, but Scripture unmask that cheerful illusion…the Bible’s sober anthropology rejects the apparently commonsense assumption that only freely chosen acts are morally culpable. . . . The very nature of sin is that it is not freely chosen. . . . We are in bondage to sin but still accountable to God’s righteous judgment of our actions. . . . In light of this theological anthropology, it cannot be maintained that a homosexual orientation is morally neutral because it is involuntary” (Richard Hays and Ernst Kasemann).

A good question to ask:
Is it possible that you’ve allowed a sexual-orientation to become such a driving and orienting identity that you have missed out on the life-shaping and giving truths of the gospel?

DON’T fall into the crippling tragedy of thinking the gospel is only for use to introduce people to Christ. It must be our daily food, our constant song, our heartfelt meditation, our constant conversation & our supreme passion.

The counselee struggling with SSA and engaging in homosexual behavior is not just a sexual being, but they are also a spiritual being. In a rush to address and counsel the orientation and attraction, let us not forget the heart (Jonathan Holmes, biblical counselor).

Providing Counsel for Those With SSA Desires

REMEMBER! The gospel offers the transformative miracle of salvation that sinners desperately need. Even true believers who have repented of homosexual behavior (or, even if someone has never given into the ‘behavior’) yet still struggles with unwanted SSA, the gospel is the power of God that can produce change.

• Pray. Ask God for wisdom to know how to approach those struggling with SSA and those actually engaging in the behavior of homosexuality. What would wise pursuit look like?
• Ask good questions. Get to know who they are. Once again, do not frame your entire line of questioning about their sexual orientation, but rather seek to know who they are as a person.
• Pursue everyday interaction. If possible and circumstances allow, seek to find ways to do walk along this path of life together. Share meals, conversations, experiences and life together. Engage them.
• Point them to Christ and to His bride. Time and time again, I have found in personal interactions that the presentation of Christ and the gospel speaks to many of the core issues of people struggling with same-sex attraction. Here are some practical examples:
  • Is God a good God? Do the imperatives we find in the Bible come apart or disconnected from the rich and powerful promises we see given to us in Christ?
  • Is it worth the fight? Is the giving up of a personal desire, even a powerful desire, worth it in light of the sacrifice of Christ? Those battling with SSA must daily reorient their minds toward Christ, His sacrifice, the gospel, and their need for holiness and their ability to in fact be holy through the power of the Spirit.
It is the Spirit who works to drive the seed that is God’s Word deep into the heart, where it will take root and produce life (Justin Holcolmb and Mike Wilkerson).

- **What have you allowed to become your ‘identity’?** Is it possible that you’ve allowed a sexual-orientation to become such a driving and orienting identity that you have missed out on the life-shaping and giving truths of the gospel?

- **Put on the virtues of biblical manhood & biblical womanhood.** A friend/biblical counselor must lovingly help a man with SSA identify unbiblical mannerisms. That is, he must put off feminine mannerisms and the counselor must show him how to carry himself like a biblical, godly man.

Many men and women who battle SSA may feel (secretly fear!) that their sin puts them beyond the reach of God’s forgiveness and beyond God’s ability to change. Not so! The mercies of God cannot be measured (Daniel Kirk).

**The Descent to Giving In to Idolatrous Lust**

1. A change of mind-set (the false idea that God doesn’t see all that we do, or think, or desire)
2. A change of motivation (become motivated by self-interest rather than God’s will)
3. A change in our meditations (quickly consumed with worldly treasures which our hearts soon yearn for)
4. A change in our means (then we adopt whatever means necessary to acquire our desires: people, places, products, perspective, position, platform, or power)
5. A change in our master (living by the flesh, not by the Spirit and have lost all focus on pleasing God and this person only lives to please self; he is a slave to self-serving pursuits).

**The Steps to Overcoming Idolatrous Lust**

1. Identify your lusts (specifically).
   - Write them down: people, places, perspectives.
   - What do you desire in your heart at the moment of lust: approval, pleasure, security, own way
2. Confess your sin (specifically, individually, honestly, unreservedly).
   - Tell God everything.
   - Call it what it is — sin.
   - You’ve allowed things of this world to become your god: so address it honestly and humbly.
3. Cry out to God for mercy.
   - Cry out for God’s grace to empower you to live with Him, for Him, and through Him.
4. Commit yourself to change.
   - God calls believers to put off thoughts/desires/motives/behaviors and replace them with God-honoring desires/thoughts/behaviors RELATIONAL PATTERNS.
   - This is a lifestyle; not a one-time event.

*For every idolatrous lust you can identify in your life, you must identify the specific ways you can love God and love others in place of those idolatrous lusts* (cf. Ephesians 4:17-32).

**Conclusion**

“It is through biblical, Christ-centered counseling that people can be able to be truly transformed within, freed from their internal slavery and idolatry, and become true worshipers of Jesus. And as counselors, it is our joy to be a part of people’s journeys of personal transformation into the image of Jesus Christ” (Ernie Baker & Jonathan Holmes).
SESSION 13
Insomnia/Chronic Fatigue

“If no medical causes are found, then counseling should be directed at dealing with the problems of life that contribute to sleep disturbances. These can include fear, worry, anger, and guilt. More often, the cause will be poor stewardship of time that reduces sleep in favor of other activities. Counselees who make biblical corrections regarding their use of time will likely experience resolutions of problems that otherwise could be called diseases and might be treated medically.” (Charles Hodges, M.D.).

Sometimes the LORD withholds sleep that He may give us "songs in the night" (Job 35:10); at others, that we may "meditate on Him in the night watches" (Psalm 63:6); at others, to bring sin to remembrance, that it may be confessed unto Him. The next time the reader suffers from sleeplessness, let him call to mind that awful night when the Savior was hounded from court to court and denied any rest (AW Pink).

In peace I will both lie down and sleep, For You alone, O LORD, make me to dwell in safety (Psalm 4:8).
When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches, For You have been my help, And in the shadow of Your wings I sing for joy (Psalm 63:6-7).

Introduction
One-third of our lives, on average, is spent sleeping.

Sleep is just as important as balanced nutrition and exercise in maintaining good health.

If you are not getting good sleep it will have an affect upon your health and ability to think and concentrate.

Sleep Apnea
Sleep apnea is a common disorder in which you have one or more pauses in breathing or shallow breaths while you sleep (from the National Heart, Lung & Blood Institute).

- Breathing pauses can last from a few seconds to minutes. They may occur 30 times or more an hour.
  - Typically, normal breathing then starts again, sometimes with a loud snort or choking sound.
- Sleep apnea usually is a chronic (ongoing) condition that disrupts your sleep. When your breathing pauses or becomes shallow, you’ll often move out of deep sleep and into light sleep.
- As a result, the quality of your sleep is poor, which makes you tired during the day. Sleep apnea is a leading cause of excessive daytime sleepiness.

If left untreated, sleep apnea can have serious and life-shortening consequences: high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, automobile accidents caused by falling asleep at the wheel, diabetes, depression, and other ailments (American Sleep Apnea Association).

Obstructive sleep apnea [OSA: the most common] is caused by a blockage of the airway, usually when the soft tissue in the rear of the throat collapses and closes during sleep. In central sleep apnea, the airway is not blocked but the brain fails to signal the muscles to breathe. Mixed sleep apnea, as the name implies, is a combination of the two. With each apnea event, the brain rouses the sleeper, usually only partially, to signal breathing to resume. As a result, the patient's sleep is extremely fragmented and of poor quality.

Positive airway pressure machines, used with a variety of breathing masks, are the most widely used treatment for moderate and severe sleep apnea.
Insomnia

Toward a Definition:
A precise DEFINITION is difficult because the amount of sleep needed by each individual to function at peak performance varies. Some studies suggest: Newborns 16-18 hrs.; Children (to age 10) 9-10 hrs.; Age 10 to adult 7.5-8 hrs.; Elderly 6.5 hrs. But too many make exceptions to these hard and fast rules.

Insomnia involves a subjective complaint of problems initiating and/or maintaining sleep, or nonrestorative sleep. There are four main types of sleep problems that can occur in the context of insomnia: 1) Sleep Onset (difficulty falling asleep); 2) Sleep Maintenance (wakening during the night and having difficulty falling back to sleep); 3) Terminal Early Awakening (waking early in the morning and being unable to fall back to sleep); and 4) Mixed Sleep Problems (combination of difficulties initiating and sustaining sleep) (Lee M. Ritterband and Elise M. Clerkin, University of Virginia, Society of Clinical Psychology).

Insomnia is a subjective experience
- It can involve difficulty falling to sleep, staying asleep, or enjoying a restful night’s sleep
- Is usually considered a symptom that may be caused by many factors
- “Sleep deprivation” is associated with bizarre behavior
- After 3 to 5 days of sleep deprivation, chemicals similar to LSD appear in the blood
- Causes memory failure, impairs normal mental acuity, limits attention span
- Hallucinations are common (perhaps brought on by the LSD-like substances)
- After sleep deprivation, 10 days may be required for all body functions to return to normal
- There is a link between sleep and maintenance of the immune system
- Sleep changes over a person’s lifetime
- Several true organic problems may contribute to insomnia
- Stress and worry are the greatest reasons given.
- Thirty-one percent admitted to dozing off while driving a vehicle; 12% of those who did were involved in an accident

Secular Understanding of & Treatment for Insomnia
Chronic insomnia responds well to behavioral treatments aimed at eliminating anxiety and stopping the behaviors that wind up worsening and perpetuating the condition.

Some Causes of Insomnia
“Anxiety tends to prolong insomnia” (National Heart, Lung, & Blood Institute).

Once you figure out the root cause, you can tailor treatment accordingly.
- Are you under a lot of stress?
- Are you depressed or feel emotionally flat or hopeless?
- Do you struggle with chronic feelings of anxiety or worry?
- Have you recently gone through a traumatic experience?
• Are you taking any medications that might be affecting your sleep?
• Do you have any health problems that may be interfering with sleep?
• Is your sleep environment quiet and comfortable?
• Are you spending enough time in sunlight during the day and in darkness at night?
• Do you try to go to bed and get up around the same time every day?

Most people suffering from an anxiety disorder or depression have trouble sleeping. What’s more, the sleep deprivation can make the symptoms of anxiety or depression worse. Treating the underlying psychological issue is the key to curing insomnia.

All effective treatments for insomnia encourage good "sleep hygiene." All therapists affirm that good sleep hygiene includes:
• Sleeping and waking at the same time every day (including weekends)
• Learning simple meditation and practicing it before bedtime
• Getting adequate exercise during the day
• Limiting caffeine consumption and restricting it to mornings
• Avoiding alcohol, which is a great sleep disrupter
• Keeping the bedroom dark, especially as people get older
• Keeping the bedroom cool (and sleeping under blankets)

The National Sleep Foundation affirms that: “People with insomnia tend to have difficulty falling asleep (onset), staying asleep (maintenance), and/or they wake up too early in the morning. Treatment for insomnia can include behavioral, psychological, medical components or some combination thereof.”

Research has shown that cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is highly effective for insomnia (Margarita Tartakovsky, M.S. From Texas A&M, Clinical Psychology).

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) recommends a number of behavioral methods and prescription medications as the main treatments for insomnia (University of Maryland Medical Center).

CBT [Cognitive Behavioral Therapy] for insomnia targets the thoughts and actions that can disrupt sleep. This therapy encourages good sleep habits and uses several methods to relieve sleep anxiety. For example, relaxation techniques and biofeedback are used to reduce anxiety. These strategies help you better control your breathing, heart rate, muscles, and mood (National Heart, Lung & Blood Institute).

Some Biblical Examples of Insomnia

Illustrations of insomnia
• Esther 6:1 - King Ahasuerus [lit. ‘The king's sleep fled from him... ’]
• Daniel 2:1 - King Nebuchadnezzar
• Daniel 4:5, 10, 13 - King Nebuchadnezzar & his dreams
• Daniel 6:18 - King Darius [his sleep fled from him]
• Psalm 63:6-7 - meditate on your bed & remember God!
• Psalm 4 - an evening psalm of trust in your Covenant-Keeping God
Jewish Tradition informs us that this psalm was often sung privately at the very end of the day just before you went to bed.

From Psalm 4
How do you pray at the end of the day when others pursue you? How do you ‘sleep well’?
1. Call to God (1-2)
2. Counsel the Godless (3-5)
3. Be Confident in Trust (6-8)

**Mark this!** Psalm 4 makes clear that David’s situation did not change. David’s surroundings didn’t change but his attitude and Godward orientation did change.

**Biblical Counsel for a Restful Night’s Sleep**

1. **A Biblical Mindset** *(Prov. 3:13-26)*
   “seeing all of life from God’s point of view”
   “thinking God’s thoughts after Him”
   v. 24—no fear at night
   v. 26—confidence in God
   A change in thinking effects every area of my life.
   Phil. 4:8—So...saturate your mind with Scripture.

   See Psalm 3 (verses 5-8)

   AW Pink writes:
   When we lie down in the arms of a “faithful Creator” *(1 Peter 4:19)* and covenant God — fear is removed and sleep is sweet. "No pillow so soft as a divine promise, no coverlet so warm as an assured interest in Christ" said Charles H. Spurgeon!

2. **Fear of God** *(Prov. 19:23)* — A “God-consciousness”
   - Acknowledging His perfect sovereignty and His perfect goodness
   - An awe and respect for Him that produces an attitude of worship as a habit of life
   - Includes trusting God — when you truly understand who He is and are thus provoked to worship Him as a lifestyle, you grow in a trust of Him *(Prov. 3:5-8)*.
   - Consider Peter *(Acts 12.6)* when Peter was to be brought before the leaders, he slept, chained between two soldiers! What confident trust!

   When all is done, your trust must be in God's tender mercy, in forbearing grace, in pardoning love, in the atoning blood. There is no hope for man but in the work of Christ *(Henry Law)*

**Objection — What If I Can’t Sleep Well?**

Example: **WHAT DO I DO IF I JUST CAN’T GET TO SLEEP? OR IF I WAKE UP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT AND CAN’T GET BACK TO SLEEP?**

**Then** — You must see the inability to sleep in the light of the sovereignty of God. Believe that these times represent opportunities from God.
1. An Opportunity for Examination
Ps. 139:23-24 - search me, O God!

2. An Opportunity for Meditation
Ps. 119:148
Ps. 16:7
Ps. 77:6
Ps. 77:11-12
Ps. 4:4

3. An Opportunity for Communication
Ps. 4:1
Ps. 77:1-2
Phil. 4:6-7 (1 Thess 5:17-18; Ephesians 6:18)
Prayer for your own burdens
Prayer for others’ burdens – gets focus off of self

4. An Opportunity for Proclamation
Preach to your own soul the *utter sovereignty of God* — even over sleep!
If you can’t sleep...
- give thanks (Eph 5:19),
- pray for revival (Ps 85:6-7),
- fill yourself with God’s Word (Ps 119:148).

Testimony from James Smith, 1800’s:
Waking up from a good night's rest — I feel exceedingly grateful for so great a mercy. What a refreshing thing is sleep. How many nights of good sleep I have enjoyed, for which I never prayed, and for which I never praised God.

But now I cannot sleep as I once did. Hour after hour I lay sometimes, and get no rest. I feel with job, that "wearisome nights are appointed to me." Sleep is valued now as a great blessing, though it was once looked upon as a common thing. Now I pray for sleep, and when I get it, I praise God.

*A Word of Warning about Too Much Sleep!*
Heed this word of warning: “While sleep is both necessary and desirable — for without it we could neither go to our work nor enjoy the blessings of providence — yet it can be sinfully perverted. Therefore we are enjoined, "Do not love sleep, lest you come to poverty" (Pro 20:13). Alas, what creatures we are — liable to abuse every gift God bestows! May His grace preserve us from giving Him occasion to say, "How long will you sleep, O sluggard? When will you arise out of your sleep?" (Pro 6:9). Slothfulness must not be regarded as an infirmity, but as a sin which affects the whole body, and if not watched, grows upon us with unperceived power” (AW Pink).
**Summarizing Thoughts:**
Address the possible spiritual causes of **Insomnia**:
- A lifestyle of habitual worry and anxiety and not trusting God
- Guilt over disobedience
- A lack of hard work...doing all you know to do and can do to solve issues...but doing no more than that
- Not having a biblical mindset, a mind so saturated with Scripture that they think biblically as a lifestyle
- A lifestyle of discontent – with people, with circumstances, with God
- And then, when God “keeps your eyelids open,” they can see it as an opportunity for examination, meditation, and supplication.

**One Christian Doctor writes:**
“If no medical causes are found, then counseling should be directed at dealing with the problems of life that contribute to sleep disturbances. These can include fear, worry, anger, and guilt. More often, the cause will poor stewardship of time that reduces sleep in favor of other activities. Counselees who make biblical corrections regarding their use of time will likely experience resolutions of problems that otherwise could be called diseases and might be treated medically.”—Charles Hodges, M.D.

*In reverence wait, from sin depart,  
In meditation calm your heart;  
Hold fast the right, be true and just,  
And in Jehovah put your trust.  
— Anonymous*
SESSION 14
Life Dominating Sins

“There is no situation in which we [as men of God] are placed, no demand that arises for which Scripture as the deposit of the manifold wisdom of God is not adequate and sufficient” (John Murray).

Resolved, to live with all my might while I do live.
Resolved, never to lose one moment of time, to improve it in the most profitable way I possibly can.
Resolved, never to do anything which I should despise or think meanly of in another.
Resolved, never to do anything out of revenge.
Resolved, never to do anything which I should be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life. (Jonathan Edwards)

What we talk about as Christians is change that goes far beyond minimal or incidental modifications in a person’s behavior. The superficial change offered by secular counselors will not do. Substantial change requires the Holy Spirit’s alteration of the heart (one’s inner life known only to God and oneself). Outward changes of any significance must begin there. Anything less is an unbiblical and inadequate view of change (Jay Adams).

There are essentially 2 views regarding alcoholism & most other addictions: a medical one & a moral/religious one. The medical view says that alcoholism is a ‘disease’; the moral view says it is sin or disobedience against God. Which view you accept has implications for the way you live your entire life (Ed Welch).

Introduction
Much of what the world terms ‘addictions’ or ‘disorders’ or ‘diseases’ are problems that the Bible directly addresses. The Bible does not call them by these words, however. Tragically, this leads many away from the Bible in finding help to these maladies and so they turn to secular (or so-called ‘Christian’) counseling, psychological or therapeutic professionals where the advice/counsel is void of all biblical truth. The biblical phraseology for ‘addictions’ (life-dominating sins) is SLAVERY.

Our goal in counseling others who are enslaved to life-dominating sins is…
• To be used by God to help people see their blindness to the darkness of sin in their lives and turn to Christ in repentance and faith (2 Timothy 2:24-26; 1 John 5:4-5).
• To gather enough needed information to provide wise biblical counsel (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

The Secular/Worldly Understanding
“Scientists have been talking about addiction for a hundred years. Amazingly, they’re still trying to define just what the problem is” (columnist for Psychology Today).

Definition of Addiction
Addiction is a condition that results when a person ingests a substance (e.g., alcohol, cocaine, nicotine) or engages in an activity (e.g., gambling, sex, shopping) that can be pleasurable but the continued use/act of which becomes compulsive and interferes with ordinary life responsibilities, such as work, relationships, or health. Users may not be aware that their behavior is out of control and causing problems for themselves and others (Psychology Today).

Many clinicians and researchers prefer to use the term “dependence” as defined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition (DSM-IV) as it is more precise than [Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders; published by the American Psychiatric Association].
Substance dependence, or addiction, as defined by the *DSM-IV (4th edition)* is indicated by the presence of three or more of the criteria listed below in the last 12 months. Note that all but the first two criteria reflect some form of loss of control over the use of or effects of the drug.

- **Tolerance:** Does the patient tend to need more of the drug over time to get the same effect?
- **Withdrawal symptoms:** Does the patient experience withdrawal symptoms when he or she does not use the drug?
- **Continued use of drug despite harm:** Is the patient experiencing physical or psychological harm from the drug?
- **Loss of control:** Does the patient take the drug in larger amounts, or for longer than planned?
- **Attempts to cut down:** Has the patient made a conscious, but unsuccessful, effort to reduce his or her drug use?
- **Salience:** Does the patient spend significant time obtaining or thinking about the drug, or recovering from its effects?
- **Reduced involvement:** Has the patient given up or reduced his or her involvement in social, occupational or recreational activities due to the drug?

All the above comes from: *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Text Revision*, Fourth Edition (Copyright 2000, American Psychiatric Association).

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**Addiction is a biopsychosocial disease**

Abnormal biology - the aberrant neurochemistry in the addicted brain ...dictates aberrant neuro adaptive behavior ...which dictates social consequences

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*University of Pennsylvania Healthy System*

**Addiction** is a condition in which the body must have a drug to avoid physical and psychological withdrawal symptoms. Addiction’s first stage is **dependence**, during which the search for a drug dominates an individual’s life. An addict eventually develops **tolerance**, which forces the person to consume larger and larger doses of the drug to get the same effect (*The Encyclopedia of Psychology*).

**Recovery from addiction is best achieved through a combination of self-management, mutual support, and professional care provided by trained and certified professionals** (ASAM—*The American Society of Addiction Medicine*)

**Preparing for change: 5 key steps to addiction recovery**

1. Remind yourself of the reasons you want to change.
2. Think about your past attempts at quitting, if any. What worked? What didn’t?
3. Set specific, measurable goals, such as a quit date or limits on your drug use.
4. Remove reminders of your addiction from your home and workplace.
5. Tell friends and family that you’re quitting and ask for their support.

**Treatment and recovery points:**

1. Lean on close friends & family
2. Build a sober social network
3. Consider moving into a sober-living home
4. Make meetings a priority (get together with those who can relate; share experiences)

How to relieve stress without drugs/addictions
- Exercise releases endorphins, relieves stress, and promotes emotional well-being. Try running in place, jumping rope, or walking around the block.
- Step outside and savor the warm sun and fresh air. Enjoy a beautiful view or landscape.
- Yoga and meditation are excellent ways to bust stress and find balance.
- Play with your dog or cat, enjoying the relaxing touch of your pet’s fur.
- Put on some calming music.
- Light a scented candle.
- Breathe in the scent of fresh flowers or coffee beans, or savor a scent that reminds you of a favorite vacation, such as sunscreen or a seashell.
- Close your eyes and picture a peaceful place, such as a sandy beach. Or think of a fond memory, such as your child’s first steps or time spent with friends.
- Make yourself a steaming cup of tea.
- Look at favorite family photos.
- Give yourself a neck or shoulder massage.
- Soak in a hot bath or shower.

Protecting yourself from relapse/building a meaningful life
1. Pick up a new hobby
2. Adopt a pet
3. Get involved in your community
4. Set meaningful goals
5. Look after your health
(Melinda Smith, MA & Jeanne Segal, PhD, Overcoming Drug Addiction)

Self-Management And Recovery Training — S.M.A.R.T
Discover the Power of Choice!
SMART Recovery is the leading self-empowering addiction recovery support group.

The Approach
- Teaches self-empowerment and self-reliance.
- Provides meetings that are educational, supportive and include open discussions.
- Encourages individuals to recover from addiction and alcohol abuse and live satisfying lives.
- Teaches techniques for self-directed change.
- Supports the scientifically informed use of psychological treatments and legally prescribed psychiatric and addiction medication.
- Works on substance abuse, alcohol abuse, addiction and drug abuse as complex maladaptive behaviors with possible physiological factors.
- Evolves as scientific knowledge in addiction recovery evolves.
- Differs from Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and other 12-step programs.

What Is True Change -- Overcoming These ‘Addictions’?
1. Substantial change is brought about by the ministry of the reading & application of the Word of God.
2. Substantial change is blessed by the Spirit of God.
3. Substantial change comes through ongoing **discipleship** in the local church context.
4. Substantial change comes from fervent, ongoing, diligent, believing **prayer**.
5. Substantial change occurs when biblical **repentance** takes place.
6. Substantial change transforms the counselee/Christian closer to the **likeness of Jesus Christ**.

**Gathering Data**

**Questions**
- What happened to provoke me to anger/fear/worry?
- What did I say to myself (in my heart) when I became angry?
- What does the Bible say about what I said to myself when I became angry?
- What should I have said to myself when I became angry?
- What have I done about my thoughts, desires, and actions that were not pleasing to God?
- What will I do (practice) to implement my new thought into action (be specific and concrete)?

**Lists**
- ex. Give me a list of ways in which you desire to control things in your home.
- ex. List the thoughts you say to yourself when you are tempted in this area (e.g., “I can handle this.”)

**Interviews**
- Ask questions of those close to the person.

Why is this so vitally important? Because “All areas of their life need alteration.” Focus upon the sin or the problem alone is insufficient.”

**Examples of extensive data gathering:**
- How have relationships with others been affected by your drinking?
- How has your lack of self-control shown up in each area of your life?
- How has your pattern of deceit affected your finances?
- How has your desire to get versus your desire to give affected your view of church and ministry?

**The Root Issues of the Inner Man**

“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man” (Mark 7:21-23).

1. What or whom are they worshipping? What do they want more than to glorify God? (Exodus 34:14, Ezekiel 14:1-6, Matthew 4:10, Romans 1:25). “**It is a worship issue!**

2. Are they saved? What can you do to help remove doubt (on their part and on yours)?
   a. Clear cut salvation testimony - includes indications of a changed life, "desire to please God" (1 Corinthians 5:9)
   b. Commitment to live under the Lordship of Christ (John 3:36)
   c. Do you see fruit? (Matthew 7:18-20; Luke 13:6-9)

3. If unsaved, call them to repentance and warn them that the way of the treacherous is hard (Proverbs 13:15; Hebrews 9:27).

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This section is adapted from Dr. John Street, *Advanced Biblical Counseling Course Notes*, The Master’s Seminary.
There are root issues — essential features — found in every case of ‘addictions’:
1. Lying
2. No fear of the Lord
3. Blaming of others
4. Blinded to sin because they’ve been blinded by sin

For those who are saved... [REMEMBER — for the unsaved, all counseling is evangelism/pre-counseling till they’re converted]:

**INSTRUCT (2 Timothy 3:16–17)**

1. **Doctrine (teaches us what is right)**
   a. Examine the pertinent biblical doctrines regarding the particular problem and all its effects upon one’s life.
   b. Be aware of the deceptions surrounding the problem (When Scripture is not understood, there is deception. c.f. Hebrews 3:13).
   Christian—do not be deceived:
   (1) A life-dominated sin needs salvation — 1 Cor 6:9-10; Eph 5:1-5; Gal 5:18-23
   (2) A man is led away by his own lusts — James 1:16.
   (3) A man must stop sowing to the flesh and start sowing to the Spirit — Galatians 6:7.
   (4) A man must change his lifestyle (bad company) — 1 Corinthians 15:33.

2. **Reproof (teaches us what is wrong)**
   a. In the specific area: adultery, laziness, stealing, pornography, lying, deceit, pride

3. **Correction (teaches us how to make it right)**
   a. High view of God and accurate view of sin
   b. Confess to God and to the offended person(s) our sinful thoughts, desires, and actions.

Because the root problem of addictions is false worship, the answer is knowing the Lord, the One who deserves our worship. This is true theology, the study of God Himself (Ed Welch)!

4. **Disciplined training in righteousness (teaches us how to persevere – keep it right)**
   a. One’s goal must be to live all of their life to the glory of God by loving Him and others according to the Word of God.
   b. Help the person to renew their mind by meditating on God's Truth.
   Christian meditation is concentration (rational, intensive thought) on a specific content (the Word of God) that leads to reflective inner conversation with myself and positive biblical change in action [=speak truth to your own soul!]
   c. How long does the renewing of the mind in this particular area need to continue? (James 1:22-25)
      (1) Until what is studied is permanent – “not a forgetful hearer” (Jas. 1:25)
      (2) Until what you study is productive – “doer of the Word” (2 Peter 1:8)
d. Training in righteousness:
   (1) is a process, not an event
   (2) is not automatic but only through constant practice, a day by day **battle** against the flesh (the old life patterns of the old man)
   (3) means you must continually choose to please God
   (4) means you must continually choose to fight your fleshly feelings, desires – not to injure sin but to kill it (mortification).\(^{11}\)

e. At that point, it has become a habit.
   A habit is when one learns to think and or do something automatically and comfortably, rather than deliberately and awkwardly.\(^{12}\)

   1 Timothy 4:7 – “**discipline** (exercise) **yourself** for the purpose of godliness”
   Hebrews 5:13–14 – “**because of practice** have their senses trained to discern good and evil”

f. The result of disciplined training in righteousness is a person who consistently demonstrates Christ-like attitude and actions (Philippians 4:9).

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**HOW DO WE HELP PEOPLE OVERCOME LIFE-DOMINATING SINS?**
1. With biblical goals, **gather data**, asking both intensive and extensive questions.
2. **Interpret the data** to determine the idols of their heart and their spiritual condition.
3. For those who are unsaved, warn them. For those who are saved, **instruct** according to 2 Timothy 3:16-17 - with doctrine, reproof, correction, and disciplined training in righteousness.

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**Overcoming Life-Dominating Sins\(^{13}\)**
People with these problems need total re-structuring. Drunkenness, drug addiction, and homosexuality are life-dominating sins; they usually affect every area of life (Wayne Mack).

Romans 6:8-9  Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him (cf. vv.12-14).

Why does Paul make the case that a Christian (one who has died to sin) cannot continue to live in sin?
   1. A believer is baptized into Christ (Rom 6:3a)
   2. A believer is identified in Christ’s death & His resurrection (6:3b-5)
   3. A believer’s body of sin has been utterly destroyed (6:6-7)
   4. The one death of Christ was a complete & eternal death to sin (6:8-10)

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\(^{13}\) Much of this section is adapted from Wayne Mack’s *A Homework Manual for Biblical Living, Volume 1: Personal and Interpersonal Problems*. 79
1. These problems are sin (1 Cor 6.9, 10; Gal 5.19-21)

2. These problems are life-dominating sins (Eph 5.18; 1 Cor 6.12; Deut 21.21)

- They often affect a person’s eating habits, home relationships, sleep, job, friends, church attendance/service, emotions (self-pity/anger), economics (finances), health, character & practices (deceitfulness), marriage & family life.

NOTE: the drunkard, homosexual, drug addict are insecure, unhappy people who are looking for satisfaction. They often do not know how to cope with life and are riddled with guilt. They turn to the bottle or drugs for quick satisfaction (Wayne Mack).

3. Since these problems are sin (not disease), there is hope!

   - 1 John 1:7
   - 1 Cor 6:9-10; Rom 6:14; Eph 5:18

4. God’s solution to life-dominating sin is the filling/empowering/controlling of the Spirit (Eph 5.18)

   • **To be filled with the Spirit means to submit to the Spirit’s directions in every area of life.**
     - It means to be filled with the *right* things.
     - It means to put off the old man and put on Jesus Christ.
     - It means restructuring your life according to God’s Word.
     - It means submitting to God’s directives concerning work.
     - It means handling your problems in a biblical way.
     - It means handling money in a God-appointed way.
     - It means learning to relate to people according to the Scriptures.

   • **To be filled with the Spirit involves replacing the unbiblical behavior and attitude with biblical behavior and attitudes (Eph 4.17-22)**
     - It may involve probing into every area of your life to discover concrete ways you are failing God and others.
     - Then, having discovered the ways you are operating unbiblically, you must repent and adopt biblical patterns (certain friendships, avoiding certain contact with companions/places that lead you to temptation).

   • You will need to institute a meaningful program of Bible reading, prayer, Scripture memorization, and church attendance and fellowship.

   • You may also need to keep a daily journal of times when you are tempted
     - What do you do when you are tempted?
     - Where are you when you are tempted?
     - Who are you with when you are tempted?
     - What are you thinking about when you are tempted?
     - What did you do in response to what you were thinking in that moment of temptation?

   • **You will reestablish a regular schedule, making sure you have time for all your God-given responsibilities.**

   • You must devise a specific plan to use whenever you are tempted and put that plan into practice immediately and regularly when the temptation comes (Rom 12.17).
A Biblical Checklist for Helping Those Battling Life-Dominating Sins

“Not only is addiction a near-daily feature in a person’s life, it also becomes a treatment for everything. Whatever the emotion, the answer is found in the addictive behavior. It can vent anger, alleviate depression, temporarily quiet the emptiness of loss or failure, celebrate a happy occasion, dilute guilt, and so on. Everything is alcohol (drug, food, sex) soluble” (Ed Welch).

1. The goal is to restore a believer (Gal. 6:1-3), present every man complete in Christ (Col. 1:28-19), and glorify God (1 Cor. 10:31).
2. Correction takes place by us working dependently upon the Holy Spirit by the means of the Scriptures (Phil. 2:12-13; Eph. 4; Col. 3; Ps. 19; 2 Tim. 2:15-17).
3. Identify sin(s) by using observation and asking questions to confirm the facts (Prov. 18:13).
4. Verify the nature of sin by confirming it with Scripture (Rom. 7:7).
5. Check the person’s understanding of sin both generally and specifically (Rom. 1-3; Jas. 1:13-15; 1 Cor. 10:13).
6. Counselor/friend--watch the log in your own eye (Mt. 7:1-5).
7. Confront sin gently and lovingly (Eph. 4:15; 2 Tim. 2:24-25).
8. Check to see if the person knows how to deal with sin (1Jn. 1:7-9).
9. Define and illustrate true repentance (2 Cor. 7:10; Ps. 32, 51; Joes 2:13; 1 Thess. 1:9; etc.)
10. Emphasize that it is a heart/mind matter. A choice of the will needs to be made in conjunction with the work of the Holy Spirit. It is a dependent work.
12. Look for signs of a contrite heart, humility, meekness, brokenness, godly sorrow, and a turning from sin. Look for “God” in one’s talk.
13. Evaluate the nature of repentance by observing the person’s attitude and actions. On a habitual level, there may be sinful snapshots from time to time.
14. Use radical amputation wherever necessary (Mt. 5:29; Mk. 9:42-48).
15. Emphasize prayer and confession to God so that the person may walk right with God again (1 Jn. 1:7-9; Eph. 4-6).

A Final Word & Exhortation

By Dietrich Bonhoeffer (German pastor & theologian, executed just before the end of WWII):

[Cheap grace] amounts to the justification of sin without the justification of the repentant sinner who departs from sin and from whom sin departs. Cheap grace is not the kind of forgiveness of sin which frees us from the toils of sin. . . . Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ. . . .

Costly grace, on the other hand, is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows Him. . . . When Martin Luther spoke of grace, he always implied as a corollary that it cost him his own life, the life which was now subjected to the absolute obedience of Christ. . . . Happy are they who, knowing that grace, can live in the world without being of it, who by following Jesus Christ, are so assured of their heavenly citizenship that they are truly free to live their lives in this world (The Cost of Discipleship, pp.47, 53, 60)

For Additional Study:

SESSION 15
OCD — Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

"Faith battles are fought in the mind. In other words, what we say to ourselves controls much of what we do, whether right or wrong, true or false, which is the fruit of what we believe. Therefore, counseling ourselves with pithy statements rooted in biblical truth is an exceedingly important, but oft-neglected discipline of the Christian life" (Paul Tautges).

And Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David at Horesh, and encouraged him in God. Thus he said to him, "Do not be afraid, because the hand of Saul my father will not find you, and you will be king over Israel and I will be next to you; and Saul my father knows that also." (1 Samuel 23:16-17)

"The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous runs into it and is safe." (Proverbs 18:10)

"Obsessions are slavery, and those who have repeatedly given in to their compulsions only tighten their grips. Breaking those chains is not a quick process. Counselors must plan for the long-haul; they must focus on long-term discipleship not immediate repression of behavior" (Dave Dunham).

Introduction
Consider the following real scenarios:
• Katelynn was trapped in her apartment over a long weekend. She was convinced that there was blood outside her door which was going to contaminate her.
• Sasha was overcome with dread that she was going to yell out foul language during worship service, or while reading Scripture to her child.
• James was so consumed with the fear that he might be lying that he could never give a straight answer, only “maybe” would do.
These are real people. All of them have varying degrees of what is sometimes labeled obsessive-compulsive behavior (OCD). Caring for each of them requires incredible sensitivity, patience, and biblical counsel.

From the International OCD Foundation [IOCDF] as they help others think about what having OCD is like:
• Imagine that your mind got stuck on a certain thought or image...
• Then this thought or image got replayed in your mind over and over again no matter what you did...
• You don’t want these thoughts — it feels like an avalanche...
• Along with the thoughts come intense feelings of anxiety...
• Anxiety is your brain’s alarm system. When you feel anxious, it feels like you are in danger. Anxiety is an emotion that tells you to respond, react, protect yourself, DO SOMETHING!
• On the one hand, you might recognize that the fear doesn’t make sense, doesn’t seem reasonable, yet it still feels very real, intense, and true...
• Why would your brain lie?
• Why would you have these feelings if they weren’t true? Feelings don’t lie... Do they?
• Unfortunately, if you have OCD, they do lie.
• If you have OCD, the warning system in your brain is not working correctly. Your brain is telling you that you are in danger when you are not.
• When scientists compare pictures of the brains of groups of people with OCD, they can see that some areas of the brain are different than the brains of people who don’t have OCD.
• Those tortured with OCD are desperately trying to get away from paralyzing, unending anxiety...

Sound hopeless? Too complex? But what is the real root issue here? [Note some 'key-words']

**The Definition of OCD**

**Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)** is a disorder of the brain and behavior. OCD causes severe anxiety in those affected. OCD involves both obsessions and compulsions that take a lot of time and get in the way of important activities the person values (from the *International OCD Foundation*).

**Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)** is an anxiety disorder characterized by uncontrollable, unwanted thoughts and repetitive, ritualized behaviors you feel compelled to perform. If you have OCD, you probably recognize that your obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviors are irrational – but even so, you feel unable to resist them and break free (Source: Lawrence Robinson, Melinda Smith, M.A., and Jeanne Segal, Ph.D., from an online source to better mental & emotional health).

**PAUSE! Did you note the key words:**

* 'disorder' = that's a condition? Is it really? [Or, is it an assumption?]
  * 'uncontrollable' = is it really true for a believer? Is it ‘uncontrollable’?
  * 'unwanted' = can it be changed? Can you walk in the Spirit? Is it possible?
  * 'thoughts' = we must transform our minds/thoughts by Christ & Scripture.
  * 'irrational' = we must have wisdom, purity, self-control.
  * 'unable to resist' & break free = this is bondage/slavery/mastery/lordship

**Obsessions** are involuntary, seemingly uncontrollable thoughts, images, or impulses that occur over and over again in your mind. You don’t want to have these ideas but you can’t stop them. Unfortunately, these obsessive thoughts are often disturbing and distracting.

**Compulsions** are behaviors or rituals that you feel driven to act out again and again. Usually, compulsions are performed in an attempt to make obsessions go away. For example, if you’re afraid of contamination, you might develop elaborate cleaning rituals. However, the relief never lasts. In fact, the obsessive thoughts usually come back stronger. And the compulsive behaviors often end up causing anxiety themselves as they become more demanding and time-consuming.

**MOST** people with **OCD** fit into one of the following categories...

• **Washers** are afraid of contamination. They usually have cleaning or hand-washing compulsions. [fear]
• **Checkers** repeatedly check things (oven turned off, door locked, etc.) that they associate with harm or danger. [fear]
• **Doubters** and sinners are afraid that if everything isn’t perfect or done just right something terrible will happen or they will be punished. [fear]
• **Counters** and arrangers are obsessed with order and symmetry. They may have superstitions about certain numbers, colors, or arrangements. [superstition/unrest/lack of trust]
• **Hoarders** fear that something bad will happen if they throw anything away. They compulsively hoard things that they don’t need or use. [fear]
The Worldly Solution to OCD

Four Steps for Conquering Symptoms of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

Psychiatrist Jeffrey Schwartz (author of *Brain Lock: Free Yourself from Obsessive-Compulsive Behavior*) offers the following four steps for dealing with OCD:

- **RELABEL** – Recognize that the intrusive obsessive thoughts and urges are the result of OCD. For example, train yourself to say, "I don't think or feel that my hands are dirty. I'm having an obsession that my hands are dirty." Or, "I don't feel that I have the need to wash my hands. I'm having a compulsive urge to perform the compulsion of washing my hands."

- **REATTRIBUTE** – Realize that the intensity and intrusiveness of the thought or urge is caused by OCD; it is probably related to a biochemical imbalance in the brain. Tell yourself, "It's not me—it’s my OCD," to remind you that OCD thoughts and urges are not meaningful, but are false messages from the brain. [—this is so depressing; this means your ‘identity’ is OCD; it’s hopeless!]

- **REFOCUS** – Work around the OCD thoughts by focusing your attention on something else, at least for a few minutes. Do another behavior. Say to yourself, "I'm experiencing a symptom of OCD. I need to do another behavior."

- **REVALUE** – Do not take the OCD thought at face value. It is not significant in itself. Tell yourself, "That's just my stupid obsession. It has no meaning. That's just my brain. There's no need to pay attention to it." Remember: You can't make the thought go away, but neither do you need to pay attention to it. You can learn to go on to the next behavior.

**Source:** Westwood Institute for Anxiety Disorders.

Many suggest that, to cope with OCD, you could exercise, jog, walk, listen to music, read, surf the web, play a video game, make a phone call, or knit. The important thing is to do something you enjoy for at least 15 minutes, in order to delay your response to the obsessive thought or compulsion.

According to Lawrence Robinson, Melinda Smith, M.A., and Jeanne Segal, Ph.D., another way of coping with worry, fear, anxiety... = create a 'worry period'

1. Choose one or two 10 minute “worry periods” each day, time you can devote to obsessing. Choose a set time and place (e.g. in the living room from 8:00 to 8:10 a.m. and 5:00 to 5:10 p.m.) that’s early enough it won’t make you anxious before bedtime.
2. During your worry period, focus only on negative thoughts or urges. Don’t try to correct them. At the end of the worry period, take a few calming breaths, let the obsessive thoughts or urges go, and return to your normal activities. The rest of the day, however, is to be designated free of obsessions and compulsions.
3. When thoughts or urges come into your head during the day, write them down and “postpone” them to your worry period. Save it for later and continue to go about your day.
4. Go over your “worry list” during the worry period. Reflect on the thoughts or urges you wrote down during the day. If the thoughts are still bothering you, allow yourself to obsess about them, but only for the amount of time you’ve allotted for your worry period.

"Rather than trying to suppress obsessions or compulsions, develop the habit of rescheduling them."

**Treatments for OCD**

Two developments mark the beginning of the modern era in the treatment for OCD. First, the British psychologist Victor Meyer reported in 1966 that two cases of OCD had responded to a behavior therapy
technique later referred to as exposure and response prevention. Behavior therapy attempts to modify maladaptive behaviors by employing strategies that focus on the present. **Second**, several European psychiatrists reported in the late 1960s and early 1970s that a medication called clomipramine was effective in a series of cases of OCD. In a number of subsequent studies conducted around the globe, behavior therapy and serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SRIs), of which clomipramine is an early example, have each been established as effective treatments for OCD. The most broadly effective treatment for OCD appears to be a combination of a SRI and behavior therapy.


**The Real Root Issue**

Contemporary psychological medical labels include: panic disorders: phobias, generalized anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, etc.

When you call it a “disorder” – then the remedy is a “medical one” – according to psychologists.

Matthew 6:31 — Do not worry...
Matthew 6:34 — “So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

Because OCD is really an anxiety problem, it’s not surprising that the Bible has much to say about the spiritual roots of OCD. Remember, in the midst of your struggle with OCD, your desires, thoughts, and actions are revealing what you are really worshipping—what is most important to you and what you treasure above all else. Jesus says, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21, ESV). So what are the things that OCD strugglers typically value or “treasure?”

1. The need for certainty is perhaps most common.
   But this becomes a sinful struggle when the desire to be sure becomes a demanding tyrant that generates anxiety and leads to compulsive, controlling behaviors that make it impossible for you to focus on what God is calling you to do: love Him and love others (Luke 10:27).

2. An overactive sense of responsibility.
   When you have a thought that you might do something wrong, you feel the same weight of anxiety, responsibility, and guilt as if you actually did the deed. This often leads to compulsive behaviors that attempt to “pay for,” “neutralize,” or prevent the imagined sin.

Worry reveals a loss of sight of God and of His sovereignty. Really, it is idolatry.
To be obsessive reveals a lust and craving for control — and thus its the idolization of self.
Together these result in a lack of trusting God, a lust for power/control, and self-worship.

**Overcoming OCD & Its Root Sins**

**Overcoming this sin of worry, fear & anxiety:**
1. Philippians 4:6-9 - read it, memorize it, write out applications
2. Romans 12:1-2 - renew & control your mind
3. Isaiah 46 - review God's sovereignty & control over all things
4. Hebrews 4 - review God's power & ability to help in times of troubles
Right ways to Overcome OCD & Its Various Effects from Philippians 4:6–9 (cf. Matthew 6:33)

Giving biblical truth to reshape and reorient the counselee goes a long way towards bringing remission to their obsessive compulsive behavior (Dave Dunham).

Game plan from Philippians 4:6-9

1. Right praying—vv. 6, 7
   Recognize and confess worry as sin.
   Thank God for His goal in trials and problems.
   Specific request
   Right praying leads to right thinking

   Create a think-list of things to dwell on.

2. Right thinking—v. 8 (cf. Isa. 26:3)
   Remind yourself of God’s bounteous provision.
   Think list—Phil. 4:8
   Biblical planning—James 4:13–16
   Find solutions to problems

   Other Scriptures to meditate upon:
   Joshua == Joshua 11 (battle with northern coalition)
   Jonathan + David = 1 Samuel 23:16-17*
   Nehemiah 4:14 - don't be afraid (note the context of the whole chapter!)
   Psalm 3
   Psalm 56
   Psalm 70
   Psalm 91
   Isaiah 12 (= hope in future kingdom)
   Matthew 6:25-34
   Matthew 14:22-33
   John 14
   Hebrews 2:14-15

   Paradigm: Right praying leads to right thinking leads to right choices leads to right actions.

3. Right action—v. 9
   Redirect faith in self or other people to faith in God
   Rehearse 1 Cor. 10:13
   Putting on right praying, right thinking, right choices, and right acting puts off worry.
14 Daggers to Help you Kill Worry

Faith battles are fought in the mind. In other words, what we say to ourselves controls much of what we do, whether right or wrong, true or false, which is the fruit of what we believe. Therefore, counseling ourselves with pithy statements rooted in biblical truth is an exceedingly important, but oft-neglected discipline of the Christian life. If you and I are going to walk by faith, not by sight, then we must consistently put to death the lies that our depraved hearts both produce and believe. One key area in which this discipline is so consistently needed—at least for me—is in the battle against worry.

Knowing this about myself, I chose to again mediate on the comforting, faith-building words of the Lord Jesus concerning God’s faithful care for His children, those whom He has redeemed by the blood of His Son. But, this time, I took a different tactic. I looked for key truths that I need to constantly speak back to myself. “Self counsel” is what we sometimes call it. It basically means that we learn the discipline of speaking biblical truths to ourselves in order to kill the lies that we so naturally believe about God and about ourselves. So, here are 14 truths that jumped off the pages of Scripture this morning, from Matthew 6:25-34. These truths, in turn, become reasons not to worry. Read Jesus’ words and then think about these simple truths.

1. God commands me not to worry; worry is sin (vv. 25; 34).
2. The essence of life is something more significant than material provision (v. 25).
3. The birds don’t worry, fret, or hoard; yet their needs are met (v. 26).
4. God feeds the birds that are not made in His image (v. 26).
5. I am more valuable to God than all the birds combined, because I am made in His image (v. 26).
6. Worry does not lengthen life (v. 27).
7. The flowers are clothed by God (vv. 28-29).
8. God will clothe us (v. 30).
9. Worry is rooted in unbelief (v. 30).
10. Worldly people worry; it’s characteristic of unbelieving pagans (vv. 31-32).
11. Our heavenly Father knows our needs (v. 32).
12. All our material cares will be taken care of by God when we pursue Christ and His agenda, first, above all (v. 33).
13. Tomorrow will take care of itself (v. 34).
14. Today has enough trouble; I don’t need to create more by borrowing from tomorrow (v. 34).

So much of our battle with the world, the flesh, and the devil is fought in the realm of ideas—thought patterns (2 Cor 10:3-4; Eph 6:17). To defeat the lies that we so easily believe we must take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. What truths do you find in this passage that would help you kill worry?

To meditate on God is to deliberately choose to think about Him—His works, nature, and attributes. This can be done while observing nature (Ps 19:1-6), but is most fully accomplished—in a mind-transformative way—by thinking about specific biblical truths (Ps 19:7-13). As we meditate on God it

will impact our thought patterns, words, and ultimately our life (Ps 19:14). It truly contributes to mental health (Paul Tautges).

Consider this way of counseling oneself (as suggested by Mike Emlet):

“Just because I’m having this thought doesn’t mean that it’s a reliable indicator of true danger. While it feels like I must check the door to decrease my anxiety and persistent doubt, I will choose instead to rest in the care of my loving heavenly Father, who has pledged Himself to me for eternity through my trust in the life, sacrificial death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Even if my worst case scenario would happen—a thief entering my home and killing me or my loved ones—there is nothing that can separate me or them from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. Only in Him can I find true security. Lord, I trust you to do what is best; into your hands I commit my spirit…” (CCEF biblical counselor).

**WHAT YOU NEED TO DO TO OVERCOME OCD:**

There are a number of practical steps you can take to overcome obsessions and compulsions. Consider the following three pronged approach:

1. **Build confidence and trust in God's care and provision in a daily, proactive way.**

Think of this as training in “peace-time” that will give you a firm foundation for fighting your battle with obsessions and compulsions when they occur. How can you do this?

- Recognize that OCD is a trust issue. Do you realize that your trust in the person, character, and work of God is what will break the obsessive-compulsive connection.
- Grow in that trust by meditating on Psalms that center on God’s care for you. Read through Psalms 23, 46, 62, 91, 104, 121, and 139. Meditate on at least one every day. But make sure that your use of these psalms doesn’t become another ritual! Remember, your goal is to deepen your relationship with God, not to create another rule.
- Focus your thoughts on the finished, perfect work of Jesus Christ by reading through the book of Hebrews, particularly chapters 7-10.
- Meditate on the love of God. Nothing (not even your worst case scenario) can separate you from God’s love (Romans 8:28-39).
- Make a list of fifty things you are certain about. Then thank God for the many ways He is helping you to live without fear and doubt. Ask Him to extend the borders of your certainty and trust into your struggle with your obsessions and compulsions.
- Recognize the ways in which your obsessions and compulsions keep you from loving those closest to you. Focus on these real sins, instead of the potential sins you have imagined in your mind. Then turn to Jesus Christ in repentance and faith (1 John 1:9).
- Meditate on your status as a son or daughter of the living God, on whom His favor rests. (Galatians 4:4-7; 1 John 3:1) Remembering your identity as God’s favored child will bring freedom from the tyranny of over-responsibility and perfectionism.

2. **Address obsessive thoughts when they enter your mind.**

- Learn to "devalue" your obsessive thought. Just because you have a repeated thought doesn't mean you have to take it seriously and counteract it. The reality is that you take your thoughts too seriously (1 Corinthians 4:3-4).

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15 This section is adapted from Mike Emlet & his write-up on “Living with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD).”
• Recognize you are overestimating the threat of danger. If your door really is unlocked, how likely is it that harm will occur? How likely is it, really, that you will stab your child with a knife? This is part of the irrational way you are responding to your thoughts.
• Go to the Lord in prayer when a thought comes. Instead of trying to suppress the thought—which rarely works—ask your Father in heaven to pour out His grace and mercy in your time of need. Ask Him to fill you with trust and confidence regarding His love, His oversight of your life, His wise and good plan for your life (the very truths on which you have been meditating, as described above).
• Recognize that it’s not only possible, but normal, to live with a mixture of faith and doubt. Let the prayer of Mark 9:24 be your prayer as well: “I believe; help my unbelief.”

3. Take steps to weaken the temptation to engage in compulsive behavior.
• In the midst of rising doubt and anxiety, let go of your quest for certainty and choose instead to trust God’s oversight of your life. Freedom comes when you give up your right to control your world and rest in the One who holds all things—even you!—in His hands (Matthew 6:26-34).
• Each time you refrain from acting out a compulsion when faced with an obsessive thought, you will weaken the obsession-compulsion cycle. Research shows that if, instead of immediately trying to quiet the anxiety induced by your obsessive thought, you hold off on doing your typical compulsive behavior for 20 minutes or more, you will weaken the frequency and insistency of your obsessive thoughts.
• In addition to delaying your compulsive ritual, you can also shorten it (wash your hands for 20 seconds rather than 1 minute), or do it differently (to demonstrate that no harm comes from altering your typical compulsion).
• Focus on the fact that God gives you good works to do each day, and seek them out (Ephesians 2:10). Then your life will have an outward focus on God and others, instead of an inward focus on your struggle with OCD. As you choose to act in love toward others rather than act out your compulsion, you will find the power of the obsessive-compulsive cycle loosened.
• When you fail to refrain from your compulsive behavior, rather than hang out in a place of guilt, self-loathing, and condemnation, go to the One who understands the intensity of your struggle and who richly pours out grace, mercy, and forgiveness in your time of need (Hebrews 4:15-16).

Two final but very important thoughts: First, tell others about your struggle so that they may join you in prayer. Many people struggle with OCD in silence and shame. If you’re one of those people, share your burden with several mature believers. Second, if the obsessions and compulsions are severe enough to interfere with daily life and relationships, seek out a seasoned counselor with experience in ministry to those with OCD who will walk this difficult road of change with you.

Although overcoming obsessions and compulsions is not an easy task, God promises that the gospel-centered truths of the Bible (the Word) along with His presence (the Spirit) are the resources that will allow you to face your doubts, fears, and anxious thoughts head on.

**Conclusion:**
Remember the concluding encouragement from Dave Dunham *(Biblical Counseling Coalition):*
“The biblical counselor’s goal for a counselee is not that they would be totally temptation free, but rather that they would consistently increase in faithful responses. Victory is not the absence of struggle, but the growing response of faithfulness in the midst of the struggle.”
SESSION 16

Pornography

You worship your way into porn & you must worship your way out of it (DA Carson).

Jesus said: If you don't fight lust you won't go to heaven" (Matt 5): The stakes are much higher than whether the world is blown up by a thousand bombs. If you don't fight lust, you won't go to heaven (1 Peter 2:11; Colossians 3:6; Galatians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 6:10; Hebrews 12:14) (John Piper).

Habits are like stones rolling downhill--the further they roll, the faster and more ungovernable is their course. Habits, like trees, are strengthened by age...so it is with habits: the older and stronger--the longer they have held possession, the harder they will be to cast out (JC Ryle).

"Never before in the history of telecommunications media in the United States has so much indecent (and obscene) material been so easily accessible by so many minors in so many American homes with so few restrictions."
(U.S. Department of Justice)

In this area of sexual purity, understand the necessity of raw, honest accountability; lone rangers are DEAD rangers!

Introduction

God is not embarrassed by sex. Song of Songs is an entire book in the Bible dedicated to celebrating pure sex in marriage (Joshua Harris).

**Definition of LUST:** to want what you don't have and weren't meant to have. LUST goes beyond attraction, an appreciation of beauty, or even a healthy desire for sex -- it makes these desires MORE IMPORTANT THAN GOD. Lust wants to go outside God's guidelines to find satisfaction (Joshua Harris).

**The Epidemic**

- By 2015, mobile adult content and services are expected to reach $2.8 billion per year, mobile adult subscriptions will reach nearly $1 billion, and mobile adult video consumption on tablets will triple.
- 1 in 5 mobile searches are for pornography.
- 24% of smartphone owners admit to having pornographic material on their mobile handset.
- Pornography is prevalent everywhere today. In fact, one in eight online searches is for pornography. Because porn use thrives in secrecy, many church members are trapped in a cycle of sin and shame, thinking that they're the only ones facing this temptation.
- 51% of pastors say Internet pornography is a possible temptation.
- 50% of all Christian men and 20% of all christian women say they are addicted to pornography.
- 75% of pastors do not make themselves accountable to anyone for their Internet use.
• 9 out of 10 boys were exposed to pornography before the age of 18.
• The first exposure to pornography among men is 12 years old.
• 71% of teens hide online behavior from their parents.
• 83% of boys and 57% of girls have seen group sex online.
• 69% of boys and 55% of girls have seen same-sex intercourse online.
• Today, 68% of young adult men and 18% of women use porn at least once every week. Another 17% and another 30% of women use porn 1-2 times per month. This means for 85% of young men and nearly half of young women, watching porn is at least a monthly activity.
• It is also becoming more common for young adults to make their own pornography. Nearly 1 in 5 of 18-24-year-olds have sent a sext (sexually explicit text message). This has become a predictor of sexual behavior. Students who have had sexual intercourse are five times more likely than virgins to be involved in sexting.

— stats from CovenantEyes.com/PornStats (2014)

The Root Issue

In the most recent Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder - V (American Psychiatric Association, 5th Edition), pornography addiction was rejected as a mental disorder. In other words, the mental health profession does not acknowledge pornography as an addiction or illness!

From Jay Adams

The phone rings. On the other end of the line is someone who has just had to deal with a congregation that has been racked with a case of pornography-involving their own preacher! The preacher who is speaking tells me a sad story of how his friend in the ministry has just lost his congregation over the discovery of the fact that he has been engaging in pornographic activities for some years. How it came about is that his own teenage son found some materials that he had stashed away in a closet, and began indulging himself as well. Not content with that, he invited a couple of his friends to join him in this activity. One of them—an elder's son—told his parents, and then, well . . . you can imagine the outcome! Today the preacher is looking for a job outside of the church.

"What a deplorable situation," you say. "How could a preacher-of all people-become involved?" Be careful. There isn't a Christian anywhere who is immune to any sin in the Book. Just thank God for His grace if you haven't been tempted, or have had the strength to resist if you have. It could happen to you, to your husband or wife, to your child or to your preacher.

"But how do people become attracted to this sinful lifestyle and what can be done to prevent it?"

There are many reasons why pornography may get a hold on someone, but we must keep in mind none of these reasons is a valid excuse. There is never an occasion for becoming a part of the porn scene. A believer may always resist sin if he is only willing to do so. So, in the end, to indulge in pornography is a choice that is made where one might have made the opposite one. Pornography is not an addiction, it is not something that overwhelms one so that he is helpless to resist, it is not a legitimate way in which to release sexual tensions or anything else. It is sin. And it can be construed as nothing else.

RESOLVED, never to do anything that I should be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life. —Jonathan Edwards

When did Jesus ever heal the “illness” of sexual immorality? Rather, He called for repentance and turning from sin. He told the woman caught in adultery, “From now on sin no more” (John 8:11) Regarding lust of the heart, the Lord said: “… but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matt 5:28).
The **HEART** is always the problem. Behavior can never be managed or controlled as long as the heart is held captive. External stimulants (like pornography) only reveal what *already exists* in the heart of man.

Remember, if sin is the problem, there is no human remedy; the only remedy for sin is Jesus Christ. (Ab Abercrombie, *Biblical Counseling Institute*).

**THEREFORE, porn at its root is a heart issue.**

While pornography is a problem, it is visible symptom of a self-centered and idolatrous **heart**. What the person truly needs is change of heart, for what guides and motivates the heart is what will change the actions. Heart change is the only real hope for transformation.

“The Bible is always about behavior, but it is never only about behavior. God’s indictment of human nature always gets below the surface into the **“heart.”** His gaze and Word expose the thoughts, intentions, desires, and fears that shape the entire way that we approach life. An immoral act—or fantasy behavior—is a sin in itself. But such behavior always arises from desires and beliefs that dethrone God. Whenever I do wrong, I am loving something besides God with all my **heart**, soul, mind, and might” (David Powlison).

1. Porn wrecks your view of sex.
2. Porn wrecks your view of women.
3. Porn wrecks women’s view of themselves.
4. The porn industry abuses women.
5. Porn is a sin against your wife. If you’re not yet married, porn is a sin against your future wife.
6. Porn wrecks families.
7. Porn is enslaving.
8. Porn erodes your character.
9. Porn wastes your time, energy, and money.
10. Porn Weakens your relationship with God.
11. Porn weakens your service.
12. God’s wrath is against people who use porn.

Those who indulge in pornography…

1. Dishonor the glory of God (1 Corinthians 6:12-20)
2. Distort the beauty of sex (Genesis 2:18-25; Proverbs 5)
3. Defile the exclusivity of marriage (Ephesians 5:25-32)
4. Disobey the commands of Scripture (1 Corinthians 6:18; 2 Timothy 2:22; 1 Thessalonians 4:3)

**Guard from PORNOLESCENCE —**

So many young Christians have stunted their spiritual growth through what I call **pornolescence**. Pornolescence is that period when a person is old enough and mature enough to know that pornography is wrong and that it exacts a heavy price, but too immature or too apathetic to do anything about it. Pornolescence is that period where he feels the guilt of his sin, but still enjoys it too much to give it up. He may make the occasional plea for help, or install Covenant Eyes (but keep a workaround for when he’s really burning up), or ask for an accountability partner. But he doesn’t really want to stop. Not yet. She may phone a friend on occasion or plan to speak to one of the older women in the church, but in the end her internal shame weighs heavier than her desire for holiness. So she continues on, night after night (Tim Challies).
“The perversion of the sexual relationship is not accidental it is intentional. Our enemy the devil has taken this beautiful picture, this one flesh relationship and warped it in the most grotesque and sinful ways. In our western culture, sex sells everything—hamburgers, tires, beer, and hot wings only to name a few things.

When a [person] indulges in sexual immorality and impurity, [he] participates in destroying the image and picture of what God intends for the intimate act of sex. There is nothing righteous about pornography; it leads to perversions of mind and body. A desire for pornography reveals a heart that is not set upon glorifying God, but is instead set upon feeding the sinful lusts of the flesh, something Scripture commands us to abandon” (Julie Ganschow).

The final & excellent exhortation comes from David Powlison:

Sexual sin is one expression of a deeper war for the heart's loyalty and primary love. Learning to see more clearly is a crucial part of your sanctification journey. Teaching others to have eyes open to the deeper battles is a crucial part of wise pastoral ministry. Jesus Christ looks better and better the more we see what He is about. He is not simply in the business of cleaning up a few embarrassing moral blots. Deepening the battle deepens the significance of the Savior. He alone sees your heart accurately. He alone loves you well enough to make you love Him.

**Overcoming Porn**

If porn is a worship issue and if false worship is the problem, then I would propose that true worship is the solution (Ernie Baker).

You do need more than Covenant Eyes and a weekly accountability time with men to be different. You need a change in your heart. You can try and remove porn’s availability and eliminate your time alone, but for the rest of your life you’ll seek immoral images as long as you desire it. The good news—the gospel—is that Jesus will change your desires as you trust him to forgive you and change you by his grace (Heath Lambert, Association of Biblical Counselors)

Therefore, here is help to those who are interested in giving up the sinful lifestyle of pornographic adultery understand that the basic biblical dynamic is available to them. It is simply this: one must replace old sinful ways with new biblical ones. Paul put it in terms of "putting off the old person" that one used to be before coming to faith in Christ and "putting on the new person" that he is now that he has done do (see Ephesians 4:22-24 and Colossians 3:4,9-10) (Jay Adams).

**SOME SCRIPTURES**

Psalm 119:9;
Prov 4:23; Prov 23:19
Proverbs 15:14**
Psalm 101:3
1 Cor 10:12
1 Cor 15:33 — guard your friends! To see what you’ll become, examine who you hang with.
Eccl 9:9 --- ENJOY your spouse !!! God wants us to enjoy our spouse, not just endure them.

The longer you’re a believer, the more Satan is going to throw at you because he wants to get you defeated.

Key texts to work through and memorize!
1. Matthew 5:28
As a believer, you can break free from the ‘bondage’ of porn! It is possible!
This wonderful and progressive change is given to you by Jesus in His forgiving and changing grace. As you continue to walk the grace-filled path away from pornography, you need to seek God’s forgiveness and power to be different. Cry out to Jesus. Remember His death on the cross that purchases your forgiveness and your obedience. Believe in the blood of Jesus to pay for your sin, and then get busy fighting with the spiritual strength found only in the gospel (Heath Lambert).

7 Good Reasons to Stop Looking at Porn Right Now (by Tim Challies)
1. The cost to your soul
2. The cost to your neighbor
3. The cost to your church
4. The cost to your family
5. The cost to your mission
6. The cost to your witness
7. The cost to your Savior

“Sin has been pardoned at such a price that we cannot henceforth trifle with it.” —Charles Spurgeon

A Christian’s growth in holiness and his development in Christian maturity is directly and inextricably tied to sexual purity (Tim Challies)

Start a journal, and keep track of what’s happening in your life when you struggle with pornography. Answer these questions:

- When does it happen? What is going on? What happened that day?
- What were you thinking about? What was the nature of the temptation? What did you feel?
- What did you do about it? Did you act on it?
- If you didn’t act on it, how did that happen?
- If you did what did you do after you fell?
- How did you recover? What was the after-effect?

Jesus says you need to take a radical step:

“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. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell” (Matt 5:29-30).

I’ve read this text with a lot of strugglers, and I usually ask: “What is Jesus’ approach to your sin?” It’s certainly not passive. He doesn’t negotiate. He suggests one thing—aggressively get rid of it. “Tear it out and throw it away.” “Cut it off and throw it away.” Take a radical step in dealing with your sin.

What is a radical step for you?
Friend, don’t be passive with your sin. Don’t underestimate how much power sin has over your heart and your life. Be aggressive with your sin. Cut it out and throw it away (Deepak Reju).

Ways to overcome pornography!
1. Adore God!
2. Abhor Porn!
3. Accept Assurance!
4. Avoid Temptation!
5. Accelerate Accountability!

Helpful accountability reminders
1. Model sexual purity
2. Talk about sexual purity
3. Encourage sexual purity
4. Pray for sexual purity

Think of hot coal. If you had a piece of burning coal in your pocket, it would burn a hole through your pants, and sear the skin all the way done your leg. Not a pretty picture, right? Mobile technology that gives us access to the Internet anywhere and at anytime is like sticking hot coal in our pockets. If you don’t have the self-control it takes to fight off temptation, you’re going to get burned (Deepak Reju).

The apostle Peter writes that we can become more like God Himself through His “precious and very great promises” (2 Peter 1:3). This is what a porn-filled mind needs the most (from Luke Gilkerson):

1. If you are pure in heart, God promises you will see Him (Matthew 5:8).
2. If you are sexually pure, your mind will no longer be foggy, your heart will be teachable, and you will be filled with the life of God (Ephesians 4:17-19).
3. If you fill your mind with that which is honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, and praiseworthy, then God’s peaceful presence will be with you (Philippians 4:8-9).
4. If you are sexually pure, your heart will not be enslaved to the worship sex, which means you can wholeheartedly devote yourself to the true and living God (1 Kings 11:4).
5. If you are sexually pure, you will see and treat men as brothers and women as sisters, not as objects to be used for lust (1 Timothy 5:1-2).
6. If you are not enslaved to your lusts, you will be freer to serve others in love (Galatians 5:13).
7. If you are sexually pure, you will be more prepared to be a great lover and to enjoy sexual intimacy with your spouse or future spouse (Proverbs 5:18-19).
8. If you are sexually pure, you will keep your marriage bed undefiled (Hebrews 13:4).
9. If you are sexually pure, you will no longer waste time but instead make the most of it (Ephesians 5:16).
10. If you are sexually pure, your life will be fruitful, and that fruit will be full of goodness, rightness, and truth (Ephesians 5:8-9).
11. If you are sexually pure, you will be an honorable person (1 Thessalonians 4:4).
12. If you are a sexually pure person, you will not be enslaved to your passions (1 Corinthians 6:12).
13. If you are pure, you will be more like the glorious, risen Christ (1 John 3:1-3).
14. If you are sexually pure, you will be living in the will of God for your life (1 Thessalonians 4:3).

**Fight! Fight! Fight! — The Battle Plan Is Here & You Must Exert All Effort to Slay It!**

**PUT OFF SIN: Common Lies Men Believe in Times of Temptation**

- “I will be the only one affected by this action. It doesn’t directly affect anyone else.”
- “I will only do it this one time.”
- “Since my wife doesn’t satisfy me in this way, I need to satisfy myself.”
- “I’ll just browse on the computer and see what happens.”
- “No one will ever find out.”
- “I’m going to do it anyway, so let me just get it over with.”
- “It’s really not that big a deal.”
- “God is going to forgive me anyway.”
- “I can use a little break or relief.”
- “There might be something new I’ll be missing out on or haven’t seen yet.”

**PUT ON CHRIST: Truths Men Must Believe in Times of Temptation**

- “My sin is against a holy God and it took the death of Christ to pay for it.” Ps. 51: 4; Rom. 5: 8–10
- “Christ died so that I may live a life free from all sin and pursue holiness.” Rom. 6: 1; Eph. 5: 3; James 2: 10.
- “Sexual pleasure must come through my wife only.” Prov. 5: 19.
- “My marriage is not about me; it is about loving my wife as Christ loves the church.” 1 Cor. 7; Eph. 5: 25.
- “Singleness is not about me; it is about glorifying God in my body.” 1 Thes. 4: 3–5.
- “Sin cannot bring lasting pleasure; Christ brings true and lasting pleasure.” Heb 11: 24–26
- “Flirting with sin leads to destruction; following Christ leads to life.” Prov. 5: 8; Prov. 7: 21–23; 1 Cor. 6: 18
- “It is more satisfying to please my all-knowing Father than to secretly indulge my sin.” Num. 32: 23; Ps. 90: 8; Prov. 5: 21; Heb. 13: 4; Heb. 4: 12–13.
- “Christ died and has given me his Spirit to resist all temptation.” Ezek. 36: 24–32; 1 Cor. 10: 13; 1 Tim. 6: 11–12; 2 Tim. 2: 22.
- “It took the death of the Son of God to free me of this sin.” Rom. 5: 8–10.

**The Cost to the Local Church?** “What will be the cost to the church if young men continue to give themselves to pornography? The church will be weakened by young men who give so many of their best days to the worst purpose. The church will be weakened by future leaders who set themselves back by years or even decades by deliberately pursuing an addiction that consumes them. The church will be weakened by men who could be leaders, but who pursue pornography and never escape its clutches. The church will be weakened as an entire generation of young men burden their pastors with constant counseling to escape a sin they wanted to pursue and an addiction they chose for themselves. The church will be weakened by families that are unstable because the husband has brought his love of pornography into his marriage. How many men could be serving in ministries, could be pastoring churches, could be training to preach, could be planting churches, except that they have given their strength to another? The cost is high. The consequences are fearsome” (Tim Challies).

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16 Adapted from Brian Croft, Help! He's Struggling with Pornography.
Recovering from Sexual Sin
It is not falling into water that drowns, but lying in it. It is not falling into sin that damns, but lying in it without repentance (Thomas Watson).

AFTER YOU’VE FALLEN, WHAT’S THE WAY BACK TO PURITY?
1. Repent (Ps 51:1)
2. Receive Forgiveness (Ps 32:1; 1 John 1:9)
3. Refocus & Replace (Eph 4.22-24)
4. Request Help Daily (Eph 6:18-20)

A personal testimony from a pastor: “if you think it stops when you get a little older, guess again. I stood by the deathbed of a man who was 78 years old and he was weeping. And I said, "Why are you weeping?" And he said, "Because I just want to tell you how tragic my life has been. I've been a Christian for I don't know, several decades and I've never been able to get a victory over pornography.” 78 years old! Guard!

1. Porn is bad because it cheapens what God calls good.
   The “badness” of porn can only be explained when the goodness of sex is first celebrated.
2. Porn is selfish; real sex is giving.
3. Porn bonds you to an image; sex bonds you to a person.
4. Porn is abusive; marital sex is nourishing.
5. Porn dishonors God; marital sex honors Him.

Conclusion

Remember the power of grace!
“God’s powerful grace forgives and it also gives. God’s powerful grace also gives us strength to live in new says. Forgiving grace is wonderful and essential, but sinners need more than forgiveness. It’s not enough that our record of debt is paid; we also need grace to live like Jesus; we need grace that changes us so we can be like him in his holiness and love” (Heath Lambert).

“You are never in a pit so deep that the grace of Jesus cannot lift you out. [And] there is no porn user so enslaved that Jesus cannot set him or her free. There is no struggle for purity so intense that Jesus’ grace cannot win the battle. Jesus’ grace to change you is stronger than pornography’s power to destroy you” (Heath Lambert).

For Further Study:
SESSION 17

Schizophrenia

“The wicked flee when no man pursues” (Proverbs 28:1).

“Christian [integrationist] counselors, believing that Scripture is ultimately insufficient for counseling, argue that secular approaches to counseling address more issues and deal more profoundly with them than the biblical authors do. They fail to understand, however, that ALL problems in living — emotional, mental, relational, behavioral — have a spiritual core! This is a powerful argument for the adequacy of Scripture’s counseling resources...When problems are understood in the light of Christ's light, it is psychology — not Scripture — that is truly insufficient to help people” (Heath Lambert & Stuart Scott).

Schizophrenia, for the distinctively Christian counselor, provides no more or no less of a challenge than any other problem involving original sin, personal sin, and the consequences of both. He believes that the resources provided in the Scriptures, coupled with the power of God through His Spirit, are more than adequate. As the Scriptures themselves put it: "Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" (Romans 5:20b, NASV) (Jay Adams).

A Case Study

When Barbara received the unpleasant news that her son, George, had gotten his girlfriend pregnant, she was unprepared for it. This news came in the wake of other unsolved problems that had been piling up in the family, some of which were due to Barbara's own sin. John, Barbara's husband, phoned a nouthetic counselor and described the scene: upon hearing the bad news, Barbara had gone to their bedroom, sat down on the bed, and had frozen-stiff as a stone. This would classically be called a catatonic state (=a type of schizophrenia). She had been in the position, staring ahead at the wall, totally uncommunicative, acting as if she were "out of touch with reality," for seven hours.

The counselor arrived and did three things:

1. From the data gathering he did with others in the home, he surmised that there was no organic cause for this behavior.
2. He assumed that Barbara was not out of touch with reality and could hear, understand, and act upon what he was about to say.
3. He then spoke to Barbara in a firm, loving manner, stressing hope and issuing a warning. Greatly summarized, here is what he said:

   Barbara, I know that you can understand everything that I am saying, and I want you to listen carefully. First, you are running away from your problems this way. That is wrong; it is not God's way of handling life's disappointments and dilemmas and will create only larger difficulties for you and your loved ones if you persist in it. Not to respond is sin. I recognize that your problems are serious and that you don't know what to do about them. I do not want you to think that I minimize them one bit. They are probably worse than I now could realize. Yet, your Lord Jesus Christ is greater, and if you will let me I shall help you to work out the answers to them from His Word. The sooner that you begin to talk, the sooner we can begin to lay out a biblical plan to solve these problems. But apart from your willingness to face the situation God's way, there is no hope.

Barbara stirred a bit, but did not respond. The counselor went on to describe the alternatives:

   If you will not face your problems, you will force John to take the only other and far more unpleasant course of action that lies before him. First, it will be necessary for him to let you sit here for a day as you are. You will find that lack of food and toilet needs will make the situation exceedingly uncomfortable. If, even under those circumstances you still do not budge, John can do only one more thing—he must send you to a mental institution. Do you have any idea of what it is like to live in a mental institution? Let me describe...

It was not too far into that description that Barbara broke down. She wept in relief, then poured out the story of her disappointments, anger, and fears.

Or, consider this real scenario:
When Philip smashed a chair on the floor, attacked his counselor, wept uncontrollably, whined in self-pity, and spoke of hearing voices and taking trips on a flying saucer, what was the real cause of all of this bizarre behavior, thinking and emotions?

[More than one problem lay behind these difficulties. Sleep loss, possible chemical malfunction, twelve years of frustration with an inexplicable problem, resentments (and suspicion) toward physicians, psychiatrists, and ministers, bitterness over scores of shock treatments, a severely distorted reality construct, sinful patterns of living and institutionalization, all influenced and motivated by a sinful nature, combined to produce the bizarre behavior.]

**Defining the Issue**

**Defining Schizophrenia:**

Schizophrenia is a chronic, severe, and disabling brain disorder that has affected people throughout history (The National Institute of Mental Health).

People with the disorder may hear voices other people don't hear. They may believe other people are reading their minds, controlling their thoughts, or plotting to harm them. This can terrify people with the illness and make them withdrawn or extremely agitated.

People with schizophrenia may not make sense when they talk. They may sit for hours without moving or talking. Sometimes people with schizophrenia seem perfectly fine until they talk about what they are really thinking.

Medical sources say that schizophrenia is a chronic condition, requiring lifelong treatment.

**The Medical/‘Scientific’ Understanding**

Someone with schizophrenia may act in an extremely paranoid manner -- purchasing multiple locks for their doors, always checking behind them as they walk in public, refusing to talk on the phone. Without context, these behaviors may seem irrational or illogical. But to someone with schizophrenia, these behaviors may reflect a reasonable reaction their false beliefs that others are out to get them or lock them up (John M. Grohol, Psy.D.).

**CHARACTERISTICS**

Schizophrenia is characterized by a broad range of unusual behaviors that cause profound disruption in the lives of people suffering from the condition, as well as in the lives of the people around them. Schizophrenia strikes without regard to gender, race, social class or culture.

One of the most obvious kinds of impairment caused by schizophrenia involves how a person thinks. The individual can lose much of the ability to rationally evaluate his or her surroundings and interactions with others. They often believe things that are untrue, and may have difficulty accepting what they see as "true" reality.

--> *is this a lack of trust, a lack of wisdom, a lack of faith in God, NOT looking into Scripture?*

**INITIAL SIGNS**

**Warning signs that may indicate someone is heading toward an episode of schizophrenia include:**

- Social isolation and withdrawal
- Irrational, bizarre or odd statements or beliefs
• Increased paranoia or questioning others' motivations
• Becoming more emotionless
• Hostility or suspiciousness
• Increasing reliance on drugs or alcohol (in an attempt to self-medicate)
• Lack of motivation
• Speaking in a strange manner unlike themselves
• Inappropriate laughter
• Insomnia or oversleeping
• Deterioration in their personal appearance and hygiene
---> so do we really believe ALL of these are functions of MENTAL/BRAIN disorders??
---> self control, wisdom, trust, belief, confidence in God.

CAUSES
The causes of schizophrenia, like all mental disorders, are not completely understood or known at this time (Brian Smith, MS).

There is no known single cause of schizophrenia. Many diseases, such as heart disease, result from an interplay of genetic, behavioral and other factors, and this may be the case for schizophrenia as well. Scientists do not yet understand all of the factors necessary to produce, but all the tools of modern biomedical research are being used to search for genes, critical moments in brain development, and other factors that may lead to the illness.

Basic knowledge about brain chemistry and its link to schizophrenia is expanding rapidly. Neurotransmitters, substances that allow communication between nerve cells, have long been thought to be involved in the development of schizophrenia. It is likely, although not yet certain, that the disorder is associated with some imbalance of the complex, interrelated chemical systems of the brain, perhaps involving the neurotransmitters dopamine and glutamate.

** that's a whole lot of uncertain language; lots of pontificating on uncertainties.

TREATMENTS
Most people who have schizophrenia do not experience a complete remission of symptoms. However, this disorder can be managed by a combination of psychosocial therapies and medications (Michael Bengston, M.D.).

** that's NOT hopeful. You can't fully treat it (it's chronic). But you can manage the disorder w/ therapies & meds.

Successful treatment of schizophrenia, therefore, depends upon a life-long regimen of both drug and psychosocial, support therapies. While the medication helps control the psychosis associated with schizophrenia (e.g., the delusions and hallucinations), it cannot help the person find a job, learn to be effective in social relationships, increase the individual's coping skills, and help them learn to communicate and work well with others. . . . Poverty, homelessness, and unemployment are often associated with this disorder, but they don't have to be (John M. Grohol, Psy.D.).

1. MEDICATION
2. PSYCHOSOCIAL TREATMENTS/ThERAPY
A combination of treatments is best for individuals with schizophrenia. **Medication** is the mainstay of
treatment, “used to minimize hallucinations, help the individual think more clearly, focus on reality and
sleep better… Also, decades of research have shown that **psychosocial treatments** are also important in
improving symptoms and quality of life (Dawn Velligan, Ph.D., professor at University of Texas Health
Science Center at San Antonio).

Schizophrenia appears to be a combination of a thought disorder, mood disorder, and anxiety disorder
(John M. Grohol, Psy.D.).

So...

--> it's a **THOUGHT** issue

--> it's a **MOOD/attitude** issue

--> it's an **ANXIETY/worry/fear**

= all of these are unquestionably spiritual issues (not chemical issues!)

The medical management of schizophrenia often requires a combination of antipsychotic, antidepressant,
and antianxiety medication.

**can it really be proven that this is a chemical disorder? Or, is it at its root, spiritual?**

“While no cure for schizophrenia exists, many people with this illness can lead productive and fulfilling lives with the
proper treatment” (Mental Health America).

**The Biblical Truth**

**SCRIPTURES**

• Proverbs 28:1 - the wicked flee when no one is pursuing
• Psalm 53:5 - they were in great fear where no fear had been…
• Leviticus 26:17, 36
  Lev 26:17 - I will set my face against you so that you will be struck down before your enemies and
  those who hate you will rule over you and you will **FLEE WHEN NO ONE IS PURSUING YOU**.

  Lev 26:36 - As for those of you who may be left, I will also bring weakness into their hearts in the
  lands of their enemies. And the sound of a **DRIVEN LEAF WILL CHASE THEM, AND EVEN
  WHEN NO ONE IS PURSUING THEY WILL FLEE AS THOUGH FROM THE SWORD, AND
  THEY WILL FALL**.

• Hebrews 2.15 - Christ’s cross-work frees those who through the fear of death were subject to this
  slavery.
• Revelation 2:10 - Christ's command to His people to be faithful UNTIL DEATH & SUFFER WELL.
• Romans 7:22-25 - Guard your mind & look to Christ!

**Overcoming Schizophrenia: Is There Hope?**
We must make the case that the Bible is indeed sufficient for all counseling needs. We must simultaneously urge all Christians toward the battlefield of love — the task of walking with broken people in the work of counseling (Heath Lambert & Stuart Scott).

The case of what many call ‘Schizophrenia’ may seem hopeless, terminal, chronic, and unconquerable.

Many persons with problems serious enough to be labeled schizophrenic are persons who (if their behavior is autogenic [self-generating]) are desperate and who already have reached a point where they are willing to take radical measures to solve their problems. Their behavior itself is evidence of this fact. Herein lies hope for the counselor. A person in despair may be ideally suited for dramatic change. The seemingly most difficult cases often afford the most unique opportunities. Sweeping life changes frequently are recorded. This should not be thought strange: a person with a scratch will settle for a Band-Aid; someone with cancer will submit to radical surgery. In the providence of God, often persons who have reached the end of their rope are ready at last to take hold of His (Jay Adams).

A GAME PLAN FOR OVERCOMING THIS (Galatians 6:1-2; Romans 15:14)!

1. There is hope (Rom 15:4; 2 Cor 5:17).

2. God is absolutely sovereign, utterly powerful & gloriously wise (Rom 11:33-36).

3. Man is made in God’s image and is, therefore, a spiritual person (physical & spiritual) (Gen 1:26-27).

4. Sin, the violation of God’s laws, has both direct and indirect consequences that account for all of the bizarre behavior of schizophrenics. That is why Christians must refuse to ignore the biblical data. You cannot ignore the Bible when it comes to this ‘mental disorder’. You must go first to the Scriptures! (Ps 19)

**THE IMPORTANCE OF A CORRECT BIBLICAL ANTHROPOLOGY [the study of man]

All humans inherit the fallen nature of Adam together with its organic and moral defects that lead to all faulty (including all bizarre) behavior. No aspect of a human being, no function has escaped the distorting effects of sin.

This does not excuse man for his behavior. It explains it. It indictst him. He’s guilty. He has sinned. Ephesians 2:1-3 - note that behavior is included desires of the mind (v.3) = depravity!

5. If this is the fundamental assessment (numbers 1-4 above), then the identification of the problem of schizophrenia as a theological difficulty points toward a fundamentally theological solution. That is, change can happen. God’s power is capable. The gospel is sufficient. The Word & the Spirit can effect true, lasting — and radical! — change!

A non-theological diagnosis ("mental illness," etc.) leads to a non-theological solution. Wrong labels point in wrong directions which, in turn, end only in more frustration. Schizophrenia is a psychological or psychiatric label which leads toward psychological or psychiatric solutions. If, on the other hand, investigation shows that a particular kind of bizarre behavior should be labeled as a chemical malfunction (stemming not from personal sin such as sleep loss, but is rather solely the result of the fall), that conclusion leads toward a medical solution. If it indicates that the problem comes from sinful living, the term "sin" points in the direction of a theological solution. It is a
serious fault thus to suggest that anything less than God Himself can solve a problem that fundamentally has to do with one's relationship to Him (Jay Adams).

6. Seek a medical exam to find any physical malfunctions, brain damage, etc. that may contribute to this person’s way of life.

7. Then, the Christian will begin with an attempt to discover whether the behavior of any given counselee [or, Christian friend] stems fundamentally from (1) organic defects or from (2) sinful behavior on his part. In the case of bizarre behavior, whenever indicated, he will insist upon careful medical examinations to detect any glandular or other chemical malfunction, brain damage, toxic problems, etc. But when he is reasonably assured that (at base) the problem is not organic (or that it is not only organic), he will counsel on the supposition that such behavior must stem from sinful life patterns. That is to say: if the person’s life patterns include the following, then they are fundamentally spiritual.

- Thoughts
- Moods
- Anxieties
- Depression

8. Radical change is sought by looking constantly, regularly and diligently into the Word of God for real, full, total life-transformation. Nothing less will suffice. People at this ‘schizophrenic low’ will usually be willing to make ‘any/all changes’ to bring about change!

9. Begin with the mind and the heart (Ephesians 4:22-24; 2 Corinthians 10:4-5; Mark 12:30; Romans 7:22-25; Romans 12:1-2; Colossians 3:2).

Schizophrenia, for the distinctively Christian counselor, provides no more or no less of a challenge than any other problem involving original sin, personal sin, and the consequences of both. He believes that the resources provided in the Scriptures, coupled with the power of God through His Spirit, are more than adequate. As the Scriptures themselves put it: "Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" (Rom 5:20) (Jay Adams).

**Conclusion**

Thoughts from Ed Welch in his book, *Blame It on the Brain? Distinguishing Chemical Imbalances, Brain Disorders, and Disobedience*: “Any behavior that does not conform to biblical commands or any behavior that transgresses biblical prohibitions proceeds from the heart and is sin” (p.43).

Sadly, in our day and in the minds of many professing Christians, when the problem is an ‘alleged brain problem, we often excuse sin’ (Ed Welch).

To show how many excuse behavior today because of so-called mental/chemical disorders, consider this concluding (true) story about John Hinkley, Jr. (noted by Heath Lambert, director of Association of Certified Biblical Counselors; ACBC):
Hinkley attempted to assassinate President Ronald Reagan on March 30, 1981. Hinkley had become obsessed with actress Jodie Foster, and believed that if he could kill a president, he would be her equal and be able to get her attention. Hinkley opened fire on President Reagan at the conclusion of a speech and injured four people including the president, two law enforcement officers, and Reagan’s press secretary.

In a very controversial verdict, Hinkley was found not guilty by reason of insanity. Over the years many different psychiatrists have debated what is wrong with Hinkley. He has had numerous diagnoses including depression, dysthymia, borderline personality disorder, schizophrenia, and schizoid personality disorder. Even more psychiatrists have debated whether Hinkley even has a mental illness. During the last three decades expert psychiatric testimony has conflicted over whether Hinkley should be institutionalized in a hospital or a penitentiary, and whether he should have increasing freedom.

Such debates demonstrate that psychiatry doesn’t provide the clarity of diagnosis and treatment we expect from many other scientific disciplines. The point I want to make here, however, is that even if we did conclude that Hinkley had something we might refer to as a “mental illness,” wouldn’t we also have to say that there is something fundamentally different from Hinkley and, say, a cancer patient? People with cancer, diabetes, and heart disease don’t stalk women and open fire on a crowd in an attempt to murder a president. All disease exists in a world tainted by the sin of Adam, but there is something about “mental illness” that is moral in a way that other diseases are not.

The myth is that psychiatric problems are strictly medical. Remember! “Psychiatric problems are always spiritual problems and sometimes physical problems” (Ed Welch).

“You will never find a psychiatric problem where biblical counsel -- counsel directed to the heart -- is anything less than essential. At the very least, psychiatric problems usually indicate that the diagnosed person (and the family) is suffering in some way. And on the problem of suffering, Scripture is the expert! Through it, God offers hope, compassion, and the power to grow in faith and obedience in the midst of the suffering. For families, it provides practical guidelines on how to love and serve the person who is struggling.

But Scripture offers even more than a way to deal with suffering. Most psychiatric problems are hybrids--a combination of spiritual problems and physical ones. For example, while the hallucinations of schizophrenia may be physical, the guilt that is part of almost all schizophrenia (and the related and responsive behavior) is clearly spiritual. In these cases, not only will Scripture teach people how to live godly lives in the midst of possible ongoing hallucinations, it will deal directly with the person’s guilt” (Ed Welch).

**For Further Study:**

Ed Welch, *Blame It on the Brain? Distinguishing Chemical Imbalances, Brain Disorders, & Disobedience.*
Stuart Scott & Health Lambert, *Counseling the Hard Cases: True Stories Illustrating the Sufficiency of God’s Resources in Scripture.*
SESSION 18
Sexual Abuse

Sexual assault is a sin against God because the blessing of sexuality is used to destroy instead of build intimacy and because it is an attack against his image in his image-bearers. The ability of sexual assault to obscure internal and external relationships makes it a cosmic affront to the Creator and the order of his creation (Genesis 6:1-3). Sexual assault is a sin against God because it violates his most sacred creation—human beings made in his image (Justin Holcomb).

Does Christianity, the gospel, God’s Word offer hope for those who have experienced the horrors of sexual abuse? When the church remains in denial about sexual abuse and assault, then it is easy to assume that we must look elsewhere for answers. However, the Bible faces sexual abuse honestly and openly (Bob Kellem).

“My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death assail me. Fear and trembling have beset me; horror has overwhelmed me.” (Psalm 55:4–5)

“We want to obtain wise counsel from the divine Counselor through His Word which teaches us that grace is God’s prescription for the disgrace of sexual abuse.” (Bob Kellem)

Introduction

• As of 2013, 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men have been or will be assaulted during their lifetime.
• It is devastating to note that many of the victims of this epidemic are children: 15% of those assaulted are under age 12, and 29% are between ages 12 to 17. Girls between the ages of 16 and 19 are four times more likely than the general population to be victims of sexual assault.
• Researchers found that the sexual assaults of males are severely under-reported, perhaps even more so than sexual assaults of women. Male sexual assault victims are much less likely to disclose information regarding their experience than are females. Very few men will report being sexually assaulted because they don’t want to feel like they are less of a man or don’t want to be regarded as homosexual. Therefore, they constitute an extremely under-identified, under-served, and frequently misunderstood population.

A Real Case Study (from the words of a biblical counselor):
“I recently learned that a missionary whom I have known and trusted for twenty years has, for his entire adult life, been a sexual predator. He was respected, even revered, both by churches in the US and by thousands of people in the field. He used his position of power, influence, and trust to take advantage of women sexually.

My wife and I recently returned from an emergency trip to Asia where we sought to minister to those who have been devastated by this man’s sin, including women who were victims and churches who had looked to this man as an example. While we have read of such situations, we never imagined that we would be in the middle of one. As we have gone through these deep waters we have been reminded of many truths which need to be reinforced.”

How would you offer help? Where would you go in the Bible? How do you give hope, comfort & the gospel?

Far from being a peripheral issue in the Bible, sexual assault is (Justin Holcomb, Biblical Counselor):
• Clearly depicted as a sin against the victim and God
• Mentioned frequently throughout the Bible
• Referred to as a symbol of how badly sin has corrupted God’s good creation
• Understood as a severe distortion of God’s plan for sex.

Sexual abuse/assault is assuredly condemned in the Bible:
There are explicit passages calling sexual assault sin—a violation of God’s law. Deuteronomy 22:25-29 addresses non-consensual sexual acts and show concern for the welfare of the violated woman. The perpetrator is put to death by stoning, and it is stressed in the text the woman is innocent of any wrongdoing and no harm should come to her.

In fact, there are also depictions of sexual acts that the Bible characterizes as sexual assault resulting in emotional trauma. Passages such as 2 Samuel 13, Hosea 2:1-13, Jeremiah 13:20-27 and Ezekiel 16 and 23 demonstrate an understanding that such acts of sexual assault result not only in emotional trauma for the victim, but also in humiliation and a debilitating loss of sense of self.

All the previous passages “These passages depict sexual assault as deeply traumatizing and resulting in devastating emotional and psychological consequences for the victim” (Justin Holcomb).

**DEFINITION of ABUSE**— Abuse is an improper treatment towards another when one abuses his natural powers, privileges, or advantages.

**The Real Issue**

**James 4:1-2** - the root
**Proverbs 15:32-33; 16:32; 25:28** - control your spirit/body/actions
**2 Samuel 13** - the story of sexual abuse
**1 Thessalonians 4:3-8** - the plan & design for sexual purity
**Hebrews 10:32-39 (cf. Chap.11)** - endure even amidst severe hardship

The Bible teaches us that sexual abuse is ultimately spiritual abuse—it attacks us body and soul….Satan loves to feed our distrust of God by having those who ought to be trustworthy, betray us. He wants faith to look foolish.” (Bob Kelleman)

**Sexual Abuse Distorts the Beauty of Sex.**

God intended humankind to “be fruitful and multiply” (Gen 1:28) spreading divine image-bearers throughout his good world. This multiplying of offspring and exercising of dominion was to happen through the God-ordained sexual union between husband and wife (Gen 2:24-25).

God meant for sexual feelings, thoughts, and activity to be pleasurable and intimacy-building in marriage. In the Bible, sexual intimacy is also a reflection of unity and peace between man and woman. It is a picture of two becoming one. To be sure, this sexual union is to picture the intimacy we have with Christ.

How devastating that sinners take what God created as a beautiful act and distorted that beautiful act into selfish and violent acts of terror. But sin inverts mutual love and harmony into domination of and violence against each other. Sex, the very expression of human union and peace, becomes a weapon of power and control against others after the Fall.

*Sexual assault is uniquely devastating precisely because it distorts the foundational realities of what it means to be human: sexual expression is perverted and used for violence, intra-personal trust is shattered, and disgrace and shame are heaped on the victim. Sexual assault creates in the victim’s mind a tragic and perverse linkage between sex, intimacy, and shame (Justin Holcomb).*
Counseling The Hurting

Christians need to understand the specific pain and suffering that comes from sexual assault so they can respond in ways that are biblical, compassionate, and informed.

“We want to obtain wise counsel from the divine Counselor through His Word which teaches us that grace is God’s prescription for the disgrace of sexual abuse.” (Bob Kelleman)

The devastation of sexual abuse: the downward spiral

- The Loss of Faith: The door of the heart bolted shut—fearing to ever trust anyone again.
- The Loss of Hope: The death of dreams—life seems to be killing our hopes and dreams.
- The Loss of Peace: The downcast eyes—portraying unrelenting shame.
- The Loss of Love: The torn robes of the king’s child—feeling unlovable and unable to love.

We see this fourfold pattern from Tamar in 2 Samuel 13. This captures something of the ‘black hole of the emptiness’ that often result from sexual abuse. Satan loves to feed our distrust of God by having those who ought to be trustworthy, betray us. He wants faith to look foolish (Bob Kelleman).

Can you picture it? God is wooing us back to Himself, drawing us home to His holy and loving heart, to Christ our faithful Savior. All the while Satan is whispering, “You can’t trust Him. You can’t trust anyone. You can’t even trust family! Don’t be foolish. Trust only yourself!” Evil wins the battle for our soul to the extent that we experience trust in others and view God as dangerous and foolish (Kelleman).

If Since sexual assault is a sin, then God opposes it passionately. And if it is sin, then God’s redemption can overcome the effects and devastating hurt that result from such sins.

Seeking help and hope from the past sexual abuse:

- Journey One: Sustaining Faith—Developing trust in the midst of doubt by learning to trust again.
- Journey Two: Healing Hope—Clinging to the goodness of God in the midst of the badness of life.
- Journey Three: Reconciling Peace—Receiving Christ’s grace in the midst of our disgrace.
- Journey Four: Guiding Love—Offering beauty in the midst of ashes.

Specific Guidelines for Counseling the Abused

1. Offer biblical comfort and hope (Rom 15:4; Heb 4:15)
2. Form a biblical theology of suffering (‘sufferology’) (2 Cor 4:16-17)
   a. God is sovereign (Job 1-2; Eph 1:11; Rom 8:28-29; Gen 50:20)
   b. Why does God allow abuse?
      (1) To bring deliverance to others. Gen. 50:20
      (2) To build character in us. Rom. 5:3-5 James 1:2-5 I Pet. 1:6-9
      (3) To equip us to comfort others. II Co. 1:3-11
      (4) To display the works of God. John 9:1-3

17 Much of this particular section is adapted from the biblical counseling notes from Jim Newheiser, Caring for the Abused.
3. Teach what forgiveness is and how to forgive biblically (Matt 6:12; 18:21-35; Eph 4:32)
   (1) When should a victim forgive an abuser?
   (2) He needs to recognize the characteristics of true repentance. II Co. 7:10-11
   (3) Does forgiveness require that charges not be pressed?
   (4) Forgiveness is only possible because Christ has forgiven us. Eph. 4:32
   (5) Forgiveness is freeing.
   (6) Can he/she forgive if the abuser is not repentant?

4. Believers have all the spiritual resources necessary to overcome the effects of abuse (Rom 6)

5. Diligently and zealously fight so as to NOT fall into the following sins:
   (1) Being angry and abusing herself/himself. Rom. 12:17-21
   (2) Having a “dysfunctional” family of his own.
   (3) Lifelong bitterness. Heb. 12:15
   (4) Being angry with God.
   (5) Fear and worry. Mt. 6:25ff Phil. 4:6-9
   (6) Self pity.
   (7) Self-righteousness.

6. Carefully instruct to rid one’s life of ‘idols’ common to ‘victims of abuse’
   (1) Desire for safety/security.
   (2) Desire for control.
   (3) Man pleasing/fear of man. Pr. 29:25
   (4) Self indulgence. Ga. 5:19-22

7. Counsel and remind the Christian to always give thanks to God for all the blessings that He has brought into his life (1 Thess 5:18; Ps 136)

8. Teach the importance of living by faith, not living by feelings (2 Cor 5:7)

9. Meditate on biblical truths that focus on unchanging (immutable) character of God (Isa 40, Ps 90, Ps 145, Col 1, Rev 4-5, Job 38, Prov 30, Ex 34).

“All the evil you have ever suffered, God in Christ has been weaving together for good—for beauty, for splendor” (Bob Kelleman).

**Remind the Counselee of the “New Identity In Christ”**

1. The person who has been sexually abused needs the gospel.
2. Avoid the term “victim. (2 Cor. 5:17-18; 2 Cor. 12:9-10; 2 Cor. 11:30)
3. The Christian counselee must receive the love of God. (Rom. 8:28-39)
4. The counselee must see the grace of God. (Rom. 6:23)
5. The Christian counselee must receive the honor Christ gives. (1 Pet. 2:9-10)
6. The Christian counselee must cultivate the mind of Christ. (Phil. 3:8-11)
7. The Christian counselee can “put the past in its place.” (Phil. 3:13-14; Rev. 21:5)
8. The Christian counselee can be victorious. (2 Cor. 4:7-10)

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18 Adapted from Caroline Newheiser, *Counseling Sexually Abused Women and Children* notes.
9. The formerly abused person can become a servant to others. (Gen. 50:20; 1 Cor. 1:4-9; 1 Pet. 4:10)

**Protecting Your Children from Sexual Abuse**

1. **Explain to your child that God made their body.**
   An explanation can look something like, “Every part of your body is good, and some parts of your body are private.”

2. **Teach proper names of private body parts.**
   It might be uncomfortable at first, but use the proper names of body parts. Children need to know the proper names for their genitals. This knowledge gives children correct language for understanding their bodies, for asking questions that need to be asked, and for telling about any behavior that could lead to sexual abuse. Clearly identify for your child which parts of their anatomy are private. Explain to your child that “some places on your body should never be touched by other people.”

3. **Invite your child’s communication.**
   Let your child know they can tell you if anyone touches them in the private areas or in any way that makes them feel uncomfortable (even areas not covered by the bathing suit)—no matter who the person is, or what the person says to them. Assure your child they will not be in trouble if they tell you they’ve been touched inappropriately—rather, you will be proud of them for telling you and will help them through the situation.

4. **Differentiate between good touch and bad touch.**
   Be clear with adults and children about the difference between appropriate touch and inappropriate touch. Most of the time you like to be hugged, snuggled, tickled, and kissed, but sometimes you don’t and that’s ok. Let me know if anyone—family member, friend, or anyone else—touches you or talks to you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable. Teach little ones how to say “stop,” “all done,” and “no more.”

5. **Don’t ask your child to maintain your emotions.**
   Without thinking, we sometimes ask a child something along the lines of, “I’m sad, can I have a hug?” While this may be innocent in intent, it sets the child up to feel responsible for your emotions and state of being: “Mom is sad . . . I need to cheer her up.” If someone wanted to abuse a child they might use similar language to have the child “help” them feel better and the child might rationalize it as acceptable if this is something they do innocently with you.

6. **Throw out the word “secret.”**
   Explain the difference between a secret and a surprise. Surprises are joyful and generate excitement, because in just a little while something will be unveiled that will bring great delight. Secrets, in contrast, cause isolation and exclusion. When it becomes customary to keep secrets with just one individual, children are more susceptible to abuse. Perpetrators frequently ask their victims to keep things “secret” just between them. Teach boys and girls to “cry out.” Deut. 22:23-24

7. **Identify whom to trust.**
   Sit down with your kids and talk about whom you and they can trust. Then give them permission to talk with these trustworthy adults whenever they feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused about someone’s behavior toward them.

8. **Report suspected abuse immediately.**
   You’ve read these steps, now consider yourself an advocate against childhood sexual abuse. Report anything you know or suspect might be sexual abuse. If you don’t, it’s possible no one else will.

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19 This section is adapted from Lindsey Holcomb (biblical Counselor) <http://biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/blogs/2013/01/07/8-ways-to-protect-your-children-from-sexual-abuse/> accessed December 15, 2014.

20 One good place to go to for help is: www.stopitnow.org/dont_wait_everyday_prevention
**Some Do’s and Don’ts of Awareness**

**DO**
- Be aware . . . children are usually abused by people they know.
- Be aware . . . children seldom lie about abuse.
- Be aware . . . most often, physical abuse is violent, but sexual abuse may not be.
- Be aware . . . children may deny or change their stories because of fear.
- Be aware . . . sexual abuse is progressive and will get worse, if not stopped.
- Be aware . . . child abuse is illegal, a crime, and must be reported.

**DON’T**
- Be in denial, no matter how difficult it is to believe
- Assume that if it happened only once, it is not serious
- Minimize the abuse
- Let the offender go without confrontation
- Blame other family members
- Keep abuse a “family secret”

**Some Homework Assignments**

1. **Learn from Joseph. Read about Joseph’s life in Genesis 37–50.**
   What parallels exist between what happened to Joseph and what has happened to you? How did Joseph overcome the temptation to vengeance & bitterness? How was Joseph able to forgive his brothers? In what specific ways can you follow Joseph’s example in your life? How can you bless those who have hurt you?

2. **Read Psalm 10.**
   How does the knowledge of God’s omniscience (knowing everything) and justice comfort you? Write out your own paraphrase of Psalm 10 in light of your own situation.

3. **Read Hebrews 4:14–16.**
   Why is Christ fully able to sympathize with you? How was his suffering greater than your suffering? How is Jesus able to help you in your suffering?

4. **Read 1 Peter 2:23–25; 3:18.**
   What kinds of abuse did Jesus suffer? How did he respond to those who abused him? Why did he suffer? Have you been reconciled (brought back) to God through repentant faith in Christ?

The one who has been abused, or is still being abused, has many needs. Protection, safety, and defense are some of the practical needs that must be met as a result of God’s command to love our neighbor as we already love ourselves. However there is a need—the need—that is greatest of all. The deepest need of all is a soul-need, a need that can only be met by the one who is the Lover of our Souls. The need of the soul is to find rest and security in the One who knows all of their sufferings and cares deeply for them. They need to know the One who is working out His larger, redemptive purposes while at the same time deeply caring about them as individual sufferers living in a sinful world. . . . Is there someone who understands all of the trouble and the pain of abuse? Yes. Is there someone who will come to the aid of those who suffer? Yes. “Consider Jesus,” the Bible says. For He is a merciful High Priest who delights to intercede for broken sinners (Paul Tautges)!

**For Further Study:**

Steve Viars, *Putting your Past in its Place*
Jay Adams, *From Forgiven to Forgiving*
Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker*
Bob Kelleman, *Sexual Abuse: Beauty for Ashes*
Jim Newheiser, *Counseling the Abused* (pdf notes online)
SESSION 19
Resisting Gossip

“The problem of gossip isn’t going to go away any time soon. Gossip is a perennial problem that people deal with nearly every day. Gossip is notoriously hard to define and even harder to resist. It’s alluring and addictive, but also dangerous and painful. Gossip causes heartache and division between people and leaves the gossiping person full of shame and regret” (Matt Mitchell).

“Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions [σχίσμα; schisma] among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Corinthians 1:10).

He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, Therefore do not associate with a gossip (Proverbs 26:21).

Believers can apply the Gospel to uproot the weeds of gossip (Bob Kelleman).

Introduction
Gossip is a serious problem. It is a problem in the home, in the workplace, in the local church and in broader evangelicalism. It is a problem in the blogosphere, in social media, and beyond (Tim Challies)

It is a ‘respectable sin’, and it is a pervasive sin. Every church has it. We’ve all done it. And every pastor knows the devastating effects it has on a local church.

“The untruthfulness of gossip...operates behind its victim’s back, concealing all sign of its activity. Should the victim bump into the gossip, forced, hypocritical smiles of friendliness hide the deed.
Furthermore, gossips often feign a reluctance to speak about their victim, and make the untrue claim that they do so only out of concern for the ‘offender’. The gossip thus becomes an actor or actress, but the whole performance is an appalling lie, and God sees. In every way, gossip is the enemy of truth” (Peter Masters).

Some Definitions
Gossip is “the spreading of unfavorable information about someone else, even if that information is true” (Jerry Bridges).

What is gossip? It is not necessarily false information. Slander is false. Gossip might include true information, and maybe that’s why gossip doesn’t always feel sinful. What makes it sin is, first and foremost, that God says it’s sin. But gossip spreads what can include accurate information to diminish another person (Ray Ortlund).

Gossip involves saying behind a person’s back what you would never say to his or her face (Kent Hughes).

“Gossip has been defined as idle talk or compulsive chattering and news-mongering, including the spreading of groundless rumor. It is not always hostile or malevolent” (Peter Masters).

Slander is “making a false statement or misrepresentation about another person that defames or damages the person’s reputation. We slander when we ascribe wrong motives to people, even though we cannot see their hearts or know their particular circumstances” (Jerry Bridges).
“As always, the heart is the heart of the matter” (Tim Challies).

Ray Ortlund compellingly defines gossip and shows why it is so sinfully enticing...

- **Gossip** is our dark moral fervor eagerly seeking gratification.
- **Gossip** makes us feel important and needed as we declare our judgments.
- **Gossip** makes us feel included to know the inside scoop.
- **Gossip** makes us feel powerful to cut someone else down to size, especially someone we are jealous of.
- **Gossip** makes us feel righteous, even responsible, to pronounce someone else guilty.
- **Gossip** can feel good in multiple ways. But it is of the flesh, not of the Spirit.
- **Gossip** is a sin rarely disciplined but often more socially destructive than the sensational sins.
- **Gossip** leaves a wide trail of devastation wherever and however it goes – word of mouth, email, blogging, YouTube.
- **Gossip** erodes trust and destroys morale.
- **Gossip** creates a social environment of suspicion where everyone must wonder what is being said behind their backs and whether appearances of friendship are sincere.
- **Gossip** ruins hard-won reputations with cowardly but effective weapons of misrepresentation.
- **Gossip** manipulates people into taking sides when no such action is necessary or beneficial.
- **Gossip** unleashes the dark powers of psychological transference, doing violence to the gossiper, to the one receiving the gossip and to the person being spoken against.
- **Gossip** makes the Body of Christ look like the Body of Antichrist – destroyers rather than healers.
- **Gossip** exhausts the energies we would otherwise devote to positive witness.
- **Gossip** robs our Lord of the Church he deserves.
- **Gossip** exposes the hostility in our hearts and discredits the gospel in the eyes of the world. Then we wonder why we don’t see more conversions, why “the ground is so hard.”

The Westminster Larger Catechism:

*Question*: What are the duties required in the 9th commandment?

*Answer*: The duties required in the ninth commandment are the preserving and promoting of truth between man and man and the good name of our neighbor, . . . loving, desiring and rejoicing in their good name; . . . a ready receiving of a good report and unwillingness to admit of an evil report concerning them.

Gossip is a ‘work of the flesh’ (2 Cor 12:20).

**Why Do People Gossip?**

Here are some introductory thoughts.

1. Remember at the outset that the devil is the instigator of gossip.

2. Gossips may be motivated by envy, jealousy and pride.

3. Gossips may be motivated by a general discontent with their lot, or may be suffering the result of personal failure, or under threat of loss. Instead of looking to God for help, and drawing on spiritual -

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21 This section is adapted from Dr. Peter Masters, *The Sword & Trowel*, 2012, issue 1.
comforts, some people develop a complaining, bitter spirit, hitting out at others through malicious gossip.

4. Gossip may be stirred by resentment. Perhaps at some time other Christians have brought necessary and kind words of reproof, but they rankle. To resentful people vengeance is sweet, and gossip is a 'knife shaped for the back'.

5. Gossips are often motivated by a longing to be listened to. Sad and pathetic as it sounds, some people feel that they can attract attention only by having something startling or discrediting to say about others.

6. Gossips are sometimes motivated by the absence of anything better to say. These gossips (unpleasant as it sounds) have empty heads. They cannot think of anything worthwhile to say.

7. People so often become gossips because they are worldly in their tastes and outlook. After all, gossip is the stuff of worldliness.

8. Gossips are produced by the old disease of self-righteousness. By tearing down others, self-righteous people build up themselves. If others can be denigrated, they feel so much better. And by slandering people in the church, the self-righteous gossip succeeds in promoting himself above them.

9. Gossips may be motivated by sheer vindictiveness and malice. Some people do not need a reason for hating others, they just do. There is within them some primitive hostility which they do not attempt to control. They never seem to be challenged by the command of Christ that believers should love one another. They simply do not care if nastiness of character pours out of them. They allow it full rein and feel no shame.

10. Gossips will be encouraged in their sin by the abandonment of regular self-examination and repentance. If there is no self-review at the close of the day, and no pang of conscience and painful shame, there will be nothing to check the outflow of gossip. To curb the old nature and its sins requires conscientious concern. Complacency in this leads to a low view of the seriousness of gossip, and even to its justification. (The devil will convince gossips that it is right and necessary to bring to light the 'misdemeanors' of others.)

*Be deaf, be blind, be dead to gossip, and it will grow disgusted with you and select a more sensitive victim*  
(Charles H. Spurgeon).

**The Gallery of Gossips: 5 Kinds of Gossiping People You’ll Meet**

**Gossip #1: The Spy**
The first kind of gossip, and I know you’ve run across this person before, is The Spy. Solomon describes him in Proverbs 11:13: “A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret.” The Spy is an informer, a person who gathers secrets so he can use them to his personal advantage. This is the person who is always listening for rumors and who always seems to know everyone else’s business. His ear is always to the ground. The Spy’s main motivation is power. It may be the thrill of knowing something before everyone else, or it may be the power that comes when threatening others by revealing their secrets. He uses information to elevate himself and to destroy others.
Gossip #2: The Grumbler
The second gossip is The Grumbler and we find him in Proverbs 16:28: “A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends.” The Grumbler complains and criticizes. She criticizes other people and complains about them behind their backs. She spreads all their secrets, describes exactly how she feels about them, and then excuses it all by saying, “I just needed to vent for a while.” Because she is miserable, and because misery loves company, she drags other people into her grumbling. Her motive is often jealously or envy. She wants what another person has and grumbles because she does not have it herself.

Gossip #3: The Backstabber
We all know The Backstabber, don’t we? The Backstabber is a complainer, but he is more than that. He is also angry and malicious and is out destroy others. He may bring full-out lies in order to bring down another person, or he may engage in a smear campaign. He looks for something, anything, everything wrong with his enemies and makes sure everyone knows about those things; if he can’t find them, he makes them up. The Backstabber is often motivated by revenge for some deep offense, some opportunity lost, or some hardship gained. This offense or perceived offense has led to bitterness which has taken root and motivated this desire for revenge. Today, many of these people begin web sites and do their work as loudly and publicly as possible.

Gossip #4: The Chameleon
The Chameleon is the person who uses gossip to fit in with the crowd at work or school or church or even in the family. She is desperate to blend in and to be accepted. Since everyone else gossips, she gossips too, so that she can join in the conversation. Since respect comes through sharing juicy facts about others, she finds and then shares that kind of information. Her motivation is fear—the fear of man. She is afraid of what others will think of her, and especially afraid of being excluded from the crowd. Prov 29:25 describes her well: “Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.”

Gossip #5: The Busybody
The final kind of gossip is The Busybody. The Busybody is the person who is idle, and his idleness leads to meddling and gossip. Proverbs 26:17 speaks to him: “Like one who seizes a dog by the ears is a passer-by who meddles in a quarrel not his own.” We meet The Busybody man in both of Paul’s letters to the Thessalonians and we meet The Busybody woman in his first letter to Timothy. The Busybody loves the titillation that comes through gossip and loves living vicariously through other people’s stories. The Busybody loves to be online where he can troll celebrity gossip sites in the name of amusement and Christian celebrity gossip sites in the name of discernment.

Keeping Gossip Out of ‘The Prayer Meeting’ in the Local Church
It’s complicated. We want to encourage much intercessory prayer, so we create and maintain phone chains and email prayer lists and we take requests for others at small groups and prayer meetings. However, prayer requests come from sinners, are about sinners, and are passed on to other sinners, so there are plenty of opportunities for sinful gossip to make an entrance in the process (Prov 10:19).

When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, But he who restrains his lips is wise (Proverbs 10:19).
Be warned!!

Gossip is an act of hatred not only toward those criticized, but toward the whole fellowship of God's people. It lays an axe to the root of brotherly love and union. Once its fever spreads, the words of James become true. 'And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; so is the tongue among our members, that it defiles the whole body; and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell' (Dr. Peter Masters).

Guard!

- “We need to pray for Olivia and Liam. I heard that they might be getting a divorce!”
- “I’m calling to ask for prayer for the church board. Something big is happening tonight. The chairman might resign!”
- “Let us pray for Sam and Barb’s college son. He just got his girlfriend pregnant and now they plan to move in together!”

Guard against the gossip of ‘innocent prayer requests’ (adapted from Matt Mitchell).

1. Check Your Facts (Prov 18:17)
2. Check Your Role (Matt 7:12)
   Are you the right person to pass on this request? Do the people being talked about want this request to be made known? Would they want it repeated if they knew about it? Is the prayer request confidential? (If so, keep it that way!) Is this your place? Should you shoulder this prayer burden alone, not shrug it off onto others?
3. Check Your Audience (Prov 11:13)
   Think about the person you are talking with. Are they tempted to be a gossip? Do they seem over-eager to hear bad news? Do they have a reputation for being safe or unsafe with confidences (Prov 11:13)
4. Check Your Heart (Matt 12:35-36)
   Sinful gossip is bearing bad news behind someone’s back out of a bad heart. What is your motivation for sharing this prayer request? Is it loving? Is it for the glory of God?

Putting an End to Gossip & Slander Immediately

One of the fall outs from not dealing with gossip and slander is that it breeds more gossip and slander and includes more and more people (Bruce Roeder).

Gossip kills churches (Dan Phillips).

Proverbs 26:20-21 — For lack of wood the fire goes out, And where there is no whisperer, contention quiets down. Like charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, So is a contentious man to kindle strife.

Good Questions to Ask…

Do you actually want to be seen as someone “in the know” with an inside scoop?
Do you want to impress your friend?
Do you get a surreptitious thrill from sharing the juicy secret?
Are you passing it on for entertainment purposes?
Are you asking for prayer about a situation so that you can stealthily complain?
Would you say it differently if the person you’re talking about was present?
Would you say it if you consciously remembered that you will stand before God and give an account for every word you’re about to speak?
Will this help them grow in Christlikeness?

Check out the superb resource from Matt Mitchell. Ten 10-minute teaching videos on: “Resisting Gossip”
http://videos.resistinggossip.com/

When someone shares a juicy bit of info about another person, you should ask (from Dan Phillips)...

1) Ask, “Now that you’ve told me about that, what are you going to do about it?” While the previous two are subjective, this is not. If neither of the previous two questions succeeded in identifying gossip/whispering/sowing-dissension for what they are, the answer to this question will do so. Tip: if the answer is “Pray,” a good response might be “Then why didn’t you do that and leave it there in the first place?”

2) Say, “Now that you’ve told me about that, you’ve morally obligated me to make sure you talk to ________ about it. How long do you think you need, so I can know when this becomes a sin that I will need to confront in you?” The least that this will accomplish is that you’ll fall off the list of gossips’/whisperers’ favorite venting-spots. The most is that you may head off a church split, division, harmed souls, sidelined Gospel ministry, and waylaid discipleship. Isn’t that worth it?

Charles Spurgeon gave valuable counsel on how to subdue gossip. When someone comes to you with a string of complaints about another, Spurgeon advises that we ask that person to put it all in writing. The perpetrator of gossip will not usually do this because it signals openness and truthfulness.

Now, supposing we know that serious gossip is circulating, injuring its victims and damaging the church fellowship. And supposing we cannot ourselves confront the gossips, for some reason.

Should we tell a church officer, perhaps the pastor? Should we 'report' the matter? Would this be a case of gossiping about the gossip?

The answer is, that it would be our duty to God and the church. When there were troubles in the church at Corinth, members of Chloe's family told Paul, and he challenged the church.

We know even the Church at Corinth was plagued by gossip and slander (reviling).

1 Corinthians 3:3 — for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?

Note Paul’s clear instructions:

1 Corinthians 5:11 — I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler [λοίδορος; loidoros], or a drunkard, or a swindler-- not even to eat with such a one.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 — Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers [λοίδορος; loidoros], nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.
The word λοίδορος [loidoros] refers to “one who intentionally abuses another with speech reviler, slanderer, abusive person.” It means: “to slander” (Louw & Nida). It denotes “railing, abusive speech” (Liddell-Scott).

**Proverbs 26:21** Like charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, So is a contentious man [λοίδορος] to kindle strife.

Even church leaders can be guilty of this. See Diotrephes (3 John 10 - ‘unjustly accusing with wicked words’).

Stopping gossip can be quite straightforward: DON’T GIVE IN TO IT! (= don’t add wood to the fire!)

But you’re ‘in the moment’ in a conversation & it dawns on you that this conversation has veered to the realm of ‘gossip’, what should thou dois? We should immediately challenge the sin: “Hey friend, sorry to interrupt, but this is gossip. So here’s the deal. This conversation is now on hold until you go get ____________, and then you can start over and say whatever you feel you must say right to his face. I am willing to be a witness to that conversation, but I will not participate in gossip. What do you choose to do?” Amy Carmichael established this rule at her mission station: “Never about, always to.”

Paul very clearly affirms that women [either (1) elder/deacons’ wives or (2) deaconesses] must not be malicious gossips (=slanderers/gossips) (1 Tim 3:11). Paul demands that older women must not be gossips (Titus 2:3; 1 Tim 5:13). Even in the latter times, people will increase in gossiping (2 Tim 3:3). If people are given to gossip, they dishonor the word of God (Titus 2:5).

**It should be very instructive for us that in all three of the commonly called ‘Pastoral Epistles’ [Pauline letters on local church ministry], all three of them make reference to the evil nature of gossiping! BEWARE OF THIS EVIL!**

**Matthew 18:15-18 & Confronting the Sinning Brother…**

Out of love, a Christian who sees a brother gossiping must go to him privately, show him his sin from the Scriptures, and compassionately and urgently call him to repent and forsake this sin!

D. E. Hoste, the successor to Hudson Taylor who founded the China Inland Mission, was a student of human behavior. An extraordinarily skilled people manager, Hoste was responsible for more than a thousand missionaries across China. Reflecting on one of the most troubling problems the mission had faced in China, he wrote

“Looking back over these 50 years, I really think that if I were asked to mention one thing which has done more harm and occasioned more sorrow and division in God’s work than anything else, I should say tale-bearing (=gossiping)” (adapted from Alexander Strauch).

**Ephesians 4:29-30** — Know it. Memorize it. Apply it. Implement it. Repeat it. Speak of it. Repeat. Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Then Paul immediately continues & sums it up...
Ephesians 4:31-32 — Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

**Cultivating a Gossip-Resistant Church!**

God hates dissension. The Bible says that God hates those who sinfully divide His church. How good & pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity (Psalm 133.1).

10 biblical principles to keep in mind to ‘gossip-proof’ our church…
1. Pray Hard!
2. Set a Godly Example!
3. Teach Against the Sin of Gossip!
4. Encourage Loving Small Talk! [intentional chit-chat for the ‘upbuilding’ of everyone who hears!]
5. Agree to Bear With, Not Bite, One Another!
6. Be Extra Careful with Reputations!
7. Watch What You Say to Outsiders!
8. Open Channels for Airing Concerns!
9. Call Each Other Out!
10. Remember the Gospel!

“Would it not be a great degradation of your office if you were to keep an army of spies in your pay to collect information as to all that your people said of you? And yet it amounts to this if you allow certain busybodies to bring you all the gossip of the place. Drive the creatures away. Abhor those mischief-making, tattling handmaidens to strife. Those who will fetch will carry, and no doubt the gossips go from your house and report every observation which falls from your lips, with plenty of garnishing of their own. Remember that, as the receiver is as bad as the thief, so the hearer of scandal is a sharer in the guilt of it. If there were no listening ears there would be no talebearing tongues. While you are a buyer of ill wares the demand will create the supply, and the factories of falsehood will be working full time. No one wishes to become a creator of lies, and yet he who hears slanders with pleasure and believes them with readiness will hatch many a brood into active life”

Gossip is a serious problem for churches, but it doesn’t have to be. If, as James says, the tongue can light a great fire, then we might think of the church as a tree. On the one hand, we can neglect to water the tree, and stand by with a hose to put out fires that threaten its dry and brittle branches. But the much better course is to continually keep the tree watered and moist with the truth of the Gospel and the Bible’s teaching on godly speech. A tree like that, even when it encounters the flame, will not easily catch fire. A tree like that will grow and bear much fruit! — Chris Bruce

**For Further Reading:**
Chris Bruce, What to Do About ‘He Said’ ‘She Said’ in the Church (blog at 9Marks) [spendid!]
Dan Phillips, How to Shut Down Gossip & Its Nasty Kin (blog at Pyromaniacs)
Matt Mitchell: *Resisting Gossip: Winning the War of the Wagging Tongue.*
Sam Crabtree, *Practicing Affirmation.*
Alexander Strauch, *If You Bite and Devour One Another: Biblical Principles for Handling Conflict.*
Ray Ortlund, “Gossip” (blog at The Gospel Coalition)

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