



Countryside Bible Church

Discipleship Counseling Notes – Level 1, Class 10 Biblical Counseling Methodology: Inventory, Interpretation

INTRODUCTION:

The 8 I's of Biblical Counseling Methodology

Crucial Ongoing Elements (Eight Basic Principles):

- Involvement (Loving Care)
- Inspiration (Hope)
- Inventory (Gathering of Personal Information)
- Interpretation (Understanding Biblically)
- Instruction (Scripture/Instruction)
- Inducement (Resolve/Diligence)
- Implementation (Application/Homework)
- Integration (Transfer/Disciple)

I. Involvement (Loving Care)

II. Inspiration – (Giving Hope)

III. Inventory (Gathering Data)

A. Why Gather Data

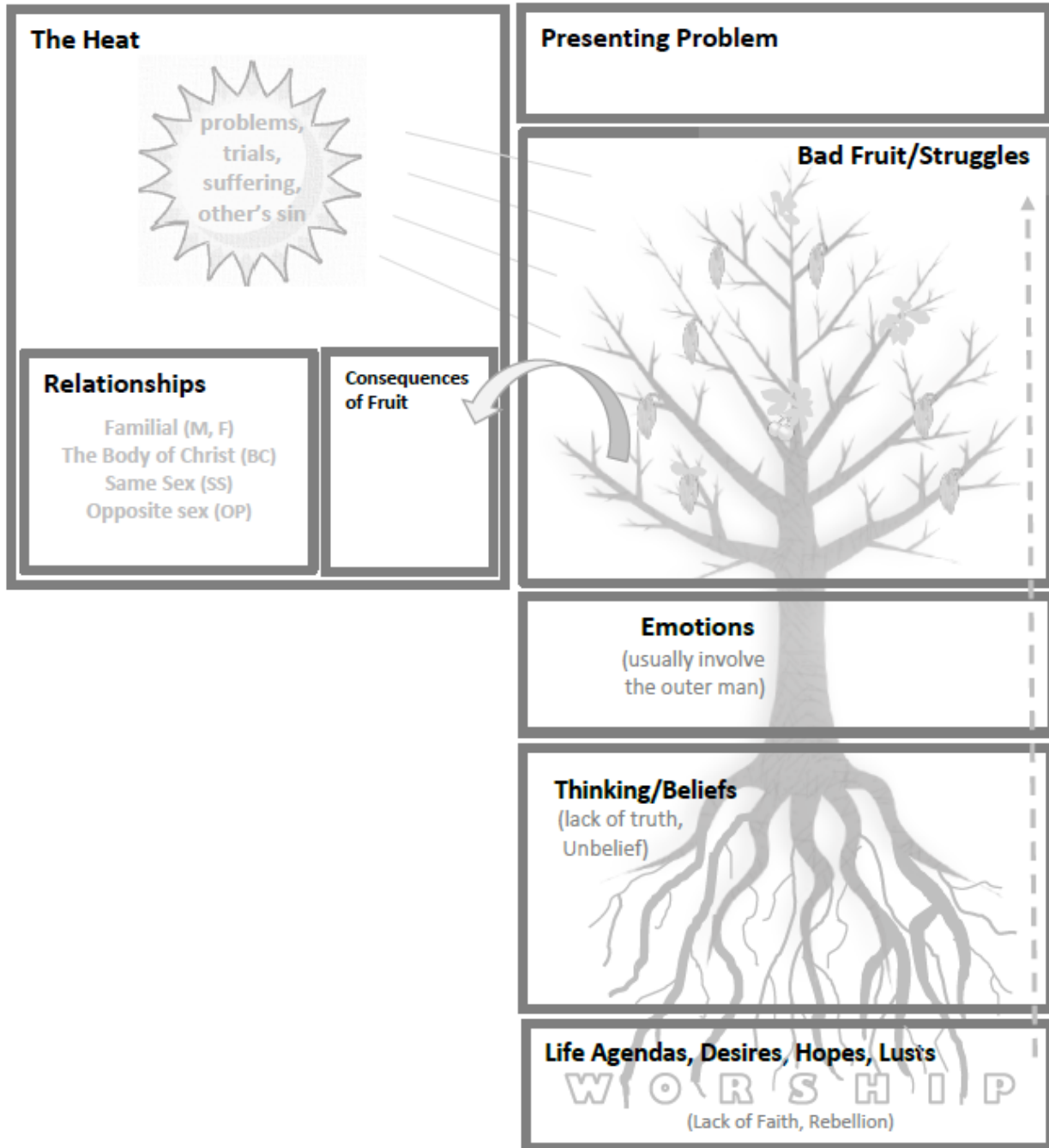
1. Which one? (I Thessalonians 5:14)
2. Which approach? (John 3, 4)

3. What is the true issue? (Jeremiah 6:14)

B. What Kind of Data to Gather

1. **P** – Physical - sleep patterns; medications (side effects...online); diet; activity level; illness
2. **R** - Resources and Relationships - job situation; school; intellectual; social; spiritual (relationship with God)
3. **E** – Emotions (feelings) - extremes; “feelings oriented” (want them to be facts centered/principle centered, but emotions often reveal how a person is responding)
4. **A** – Actions - behavior; sins of commission and omission; fruit
5. **C** - Conceptual (thinking) - goals; values; desires; motives (heart issues). What do they think about people, God, and their circumstances? Biblical counselors need to know more than how a person is feeling, but how they are thinking.
6. **H** – Historical - good and bad in past context; present context; failures; school/job problems

THE BIG PICTURE



C. How to Gather Data

1. P.D.I. (Personal Data Inventory)
2. Asking proper questions
 - a) Extensive and intensive
 - 1) Extensive
 - 2) Intensive
 - b) Relevant questions
 - c) Questions that find facts
 - 1) What?
 - 2) How?
 - 3) Where?
 - 4) When?
 - 5) What for?
 - 6) How often?
 - d) Open ended - Be careful about using “yes or no” questions.
 - 1) Provides flexibility for the response
 - 2) Determines what is important to the counselee
 - 3) Helps you to better understand
 - 4) Example
 - Closed: “Do you want to get married?”
 - Open: “What are your thoughts about marriage?”
 - e) Specific - Avoid “fuzzy” questions. Also, don’t settle for vague or general answers.
 - f) Withhold judgment (Proverbs 18:13, 17).
 - g) Mark important areas for further questioning - record patterns, significant statements, habits.

- h) Observe “countenance.”
 - 1) Non-verbal communication; “halo data”
 - 2) Be careful - can be misread.

- 3. Other Methods
 - a) Information from others
 - b) Giving counselee your perspective and inviting feedback
 - c) Observation of counselee outside session
 - d) Record conversations at home
 - e) Listen to their prayers
 - f) Data gathering homework

D. Importance of Listening

- 1. Necessary (Proverbs 20:25)
- 2. Requires self-control
- 3. Listen for:
 - a) Blame shifting
 - b) “Can’t”, “unable”, “too much”
 - c) Victim mentality
 - d) Calling sin sickness, a mental illness
 - e) “Rabbit trails”
 - f) What counselee doesn’t say
 - g) Hopelessness
 - h) Evasiveness

- i) Exaggerations
- j) Defensiveness
- k) Judging another's motives
- l) Willingness to accept responsibility

4. Listening habits to avoid:

- a) Don't interrupt.
- b) Don't jump to conclusions.
- c) Don't let your mind wander.
- d) Don't do distracting things.
- e) Don't allow the person to waste time.
- f) Don't hesitate to ask if you don't understand.

IV. Interpretation (Understanding Biblically)

Biblical interpretation in the counseling room is accurately analyzing sufficiently gathered data about the problem and its cause and explaining it to the counselee so they understand.

A. Biblical Illustrations of Interpretation (PRAY)

1. 1 Samuel 1:12-18 — Eli & Hannah
2. Mark 6:45-52 — Disciples fearful yet heart is hard
3. Mark 10:17-23 — Rich young ruler, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?”
4. Luke 10:38-41 — Mary & Martha – priorities
5. 2 Timothy 4:10 — Demas – “deserted,” loved this present world (age)
6. 3 John 9, 10 — Diotrophes – “Protector of the Church”

B. The Process of Interpretation

1. Compare all data and responses to God’s Word and example of Christ — Isaiah 8:19-20; Romans 4:3; Galatians 4:30
2. Take data and look for themes and patterns (Proverbs 20:5).
 - a) Are there typical behavioral responses in certain situations?
 - b) Are there typical thoughts, attitudes, or interpretations?
 - c) Are there typical expectations, desires, longings, or demands that the person has in certain situations?
3. Take data and make sure you are labeling and describing the problems in a biblical way.
 - a) Use biblical words and categories. (e.g. Gal.5:19-21; Mk.7:21-22; Eph.5:3-5; Col.3:4-11; 1 Cor.6:9-11; 2 Cor.2:12-16)
 - b) Avoid psychological labels. (1 Cor.2:12-13)
 - 1) Personality disorder
 - 2) Codependency
 - 3) Dysfunctional family
 - 4) Schizophrenia
 - 5) Damaged emotions

- 6) Low self-esteem
- 7) Unmet needs
- 8) Perfectionism
- 9) Workaholism
- 10) Mental illness
- 11) Addictions (gambling, sex, etc.)
- 12) Multiple personalities
- 13) Eating disorders

4. Take data and put it on the witness stand.
 - a) What biblical categories could be used to describe the person I'm counseling? (1 Corinthians 2:14,15; 1 Thessalonians 5:14)
 - b) What does the person understand about biblical change?
 - c) What does the person think about God in relation to their struggle? (angry, absent)
 - d) What are the person's thoughts in relation to the truth of the gospel in their lives? (both the proclamation and obligations)
 - e) What about complicating factors? (Cain, marriages, depression)
 - f) What is the best way to approach the counselee? (Jesus with Nicodemus--John 3 vs. Jesus with Samaritan woman--John 4)
 - g) What is the counselee's greatest need? (friend, father, encourager, comforter, teacher, confronter?) 1 Thessalonians 5:14, evangelism/edification.
 - h) What does the data indicate about why the counselee has not resolved the problem? (lack of inclination, inspiration, or information?)
 - i) What is the reason the counselee has come for help at this time? (Luke 15:14-21) (threat of divorce, pastor requiring it, etc.)
 - j) What does the counselee expect out of counseling? (help, sympathy, etc.)
 - k) What does the data indicate about possible organic factors?

5. Take the data and prayerfully study it to identify what may be going on in the person's heart (1 John 2:15-17).
 - a) Remember that the **heart** of the problem is usually the **heart**. What are his ruling motives and beliefs and choices? Functional gods? Who or what does he worship? By whom or what is he controlled? (Idolatry)

- b) 1 John 2:15-17: lust of the flesh--pleasure, comfort, satisfaction, ease; lust of the eyes--possessions, desire to have, greed, desire for more things; pride of life--control, power, approval, success, recognition, respect, acceptance = All of these are self-focused.
6. If a medical diagnosis is made (especially if it's not a proven disease, e.g., chemical imbalance):
- a) What tests were run to prove the particular problem exists?
 - b) What proof do you have that what you discovered is the cause of the problem and not the result of the problem?
 - c) What proof do you have that the medicine you are prescribing truly corrects the problem?
7. Begin formulating interpretations of the nature and causes of the person's problems.
- a) Use Scripture to identify the different possibilities.
 - 1) Lying (Abraham? Jacob? Ananias?)
 - 2) Being critical (Diotrephes)
 - 3) Depression; Cain in Genesis 4:6-7; Elijah in I Kings 19)
 - 4) Anxiety (Martha in Luke 10:38-42; Matthew 6--trust in wrong place)
 - 5) Difficulty handling trials (2 Corinthians 12:7-10; Romans 8:28-29; pride; wrong expectations)
 - 6) Bizarre behavior (1 Samuel 21:10-15; Daniel 4:28-33; Deuteronomy 28:28; Proverbs 28:1; Ecclesiastes 9:3 – examples of non-organic type); 1 Kings 18 (prophets of Baal)
 - 7) Conflicts (James 4:1-3)
 - b) Use your own experience. (Be careful.)
 - 1) Proverbs 14:10 –
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 10:13 –
8. Test the validity of your tentative interpretations.
- a) Review the data to see which possibilities have the least/most support.
 - b) Pray again.
 - c) Continue to seek more information.
 - d) Seek input from another counselor.
 - e) Explain your interpretation to the counselee and ask for feedback.

9. Use the Big Picture diagram to help see the various connections (three-trees diagram).

10. Having tested and proven the validity of your interpretation, go on to formulate a strategy for helping the person overcome his problems.
 - a) Includes prioritizing the order in which you will deal with the issues (communicate clearly).

 - b) Includes deciding the manner and method you will use in providing help to this person (be solution oriented).