

Confidence to Counsel . . .

Do people periodically ask you for advice? Do you sometimes lack confidence that your counsel is the best that it could be? How can you be prepared when God guides you to give help and hope to someone in need? Never go against the Word of God, even if it means going against the grain of public acceptance. Regardless of what the world says is right, you will never go wrong when you stay true to God's Word.

*"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night."
(Psalm 1:1-2)*

Q: "What is Christ-centered counseling?"

Christ-centered counseling draws from the benefits of Christ living within every authentic Christian.

- Each believer is a new creation.

*"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."
(2 Corinthians 5:17)*

- Each believer possesses all the power necessary for change.

*"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire."
(2 Peter 1:3-4)*

- Each believer is to live totally dependent on Christ.

*"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."
(Galatians 2:20)*

- Each believer has an assured hope of being conformed to the character of Christ.

*"This mystery . . . is Christ in you, the hope of glory."
(Colossians 1:27)*

What Fuels What We Do?

From infancy through adulthood, our needs are the driving force behind our attitudes and actions. As children, we develop patterns of behavior based on what we think will meet those needs. Over time, we come to believe that the power to get our needs met lies within us. We assume our task is to discover what behaviors work and then master those behaviors. At the heart of this process is pride . . . living out of our own resources . . . living life independent of God. This self-willed living is the fuel for sin.

“Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the LORD; be assured, he will not go unpunished.”
(Proverbs 16:5)

The Heart of Pride

Puffed Up

Rebellious

Independent

Double-minded

Excusing

“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the heart.”
(Proverbs 21:2)

Key Verse to Memorize

“Inquire first for the word of the LORD.”
(1 Kings 22:5)

Key Passage to Read and Reread

Proverbs 2:1–11

The Seven S's of Spiritual Wisdom

1. The *solutions* are not your solutions. (John 14:26)
2. The *self-sufficiency* you lean on should be replaced with Christ-sufficiency. (John 15:5)
3. The *Spirit of Christ* is your counselor, enabling you to counsel with truth. (John 16:13)
4. The *Scriptures* will light the way as you help others walk out of darkness. (Psalm 119:105)
5. The *success* of your counseling is not dependent on your knowing all the answers. (Proverbs 3:5–6)
6. The *sin* of another should never be confronted with a condemning spirit. (1 Peter 3:15–16)
7. The *secret* of victory over sin is relying on the power of the indwelling presence of Christ. (Philippians 4:13)

Practical Counseling: How Do I Do It?

Physical Preparation

- Provide a private, relaxing place to talk.
- Eliminate distractions.
- Prevent interruptions.
- Avoid physical barriers.
- Change lighting to reduce glare.
- Keep counseling aids handy.
- Place facial tissues and drinking water within reach.

Personal Nonverbal Nurturing

- Smile when greeting.
- Shake hands or use another appropriate greeting.
- Situate chairs in close proximity.
- Slant your body slightly forward.
- Sustain good eye contact.
- Stay open and approachable.
- Show a nod of head occasionally.

Practical Counseling: How Do I Do It? (continued)

Probe for the Real Problem

- Call the person by name.
- Don't engage in small talk or surface chitchat.
- Ask a direct question.
- Don't ask, "What's your problem?"
- Realize that the presenting problem is often not the real problem.
- Above all else, communicate hope.

Past Experiences

- Ask background questions regarding family, home, school, dating, and work.
- Encourage further talk.
- Ask open-ended questions that cannot be answered with yes or no.
- Listen to what feelings are being shared.
- Listen to what is not shared.
- Don't ask a question that contains the answer.
- Explore messages received during childhood and youth from significant people.

Pitfalls to Avoid

- Don't give false assurances.
- Don't minimize the experience.
- Don't fail to consult/refer to professionals.
- Don't take death threats lightly.
- Don't drop advice.
- Don't take over the role of "savior."

Plan to Address These Needs

- Love
- Significance
- Security

Present How to Be Set Free

*"You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."
(John 8:32)*

Related Topics . . .

- Communication:
The Heart of the Matter
- Decision Making:
Discerning the Will of God
- Forgiveness:
How to Forgive . . . When You Don't Feel Like It
- Premarital Counseling:
Are You Fit to Be Tied?
- Rejection:
Healing a Wounded Heart
- Salvation:
Sharing Christ with Confidence

HOPE FOR THE HEART's *Biblical Counseling Library Quick Reference* provides immediate, concise, biblical truths for today's problems.

For more comprehensive help, refer to our *Biblical Counseling Keys . . .*

Counseling:

Biblical Hope with Practical Help.

If you would like more information, call 1-800-488-HOPE (4673) or visit www.hopefortheheart.org.

For prayer encouragement and biblical counsel call 1-866-570-HOPE (4673).



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P.O. Box 7, Dallas, TX 75221

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