

COUNSELLING IN THE CHURCH

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Many pastors are not officially trained counsellors, but **all pastors have to help their people** through their struggles and difficulties, *2Cor 1:3,4*.

I am not an officially trained counsellor, but I can help others **by sharing with them how I have found God's help** to get through difficult times, *2Cor 1:3,4*. Where I am not able to help others through their difficulties it is important **to refer them to a qualified, or a wise, experienced counsellor**.

All mature believers, who have discovered God's answers to some of the problems of life, are able to assist others with wise counsel, *2Cor 1:4, Prov 4:7,8*.

When a person comes to you for wise godly counsel, tell them whether or not you have had official training. Be open and honest. They may not wish to continue.

Listen carefully and patiently to what they say to you. Let them finish. If they do not mind, **make notes on key points**, as they explain their difficulties.

Pray before they arrive for the enabling, revelation and wisdom of the Holy Spirit, *Is 9:6, Jn 14:26, 1Cor 12:8,10, Jam 1:5,6, Jn 16:13, 1Jn 2:27*.

Pray with them on arrival for the same.

Resist all influences of the evil one. Cut them off, *Jam 4:7, 1Pet 5:8,9, Rev 12:11*.

Acknowledge and submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and God's Word and will, *Jn 7:17, Jn 13:13, Lk 6:46*.

Ask for and receive the cleansing blood of Jesus to wash away all and every sin, *Rev 1:5, 1Jn 1:7,9*.

Cry out to God for His answers to be made clear, *Jer 33:3, Jam 1:5*.

Make sure that they have been, and are, **obedient to Christ in the following five areas**:

- a. they have **forgiven others** for their sins and offences, *Mk 11:25,26, Mat 18:32-35*.
- b. they have **released others** from their judgment, *Mat 7:1,2, Rom 2:1-3, 14:4,10, Jam 4:11,12*.
- c. they have **cast their burdens upon God** to sort out and resolve, *Ps 55:22, Mat 11:28-30, 1Pet 5:7*.
- d. they have been **praying sincerely for the blessing of God** on those who have hurt, offended or abused them, *Lk 6:27,28,35-37*, praying as in *Col 1:9-11, Eph 1:17-20, or Ac 26:18*.
- e. they have **made restitution** where necessary, *Lk 19:8*.

Make sure that you ask them if they are **reading God's Word and praying each day in an effective way**. Are they seeking God, listening to Him, and making a sincere effort to be obedient to what He shows them? Ask them to write down in a notebook what they have read and what they have felt God has said to them. Read this through.

If they are not reading the Word and praying each day, then postpone the time of ministry for one month until the person is doing this. In many cases, the need of spiritual counsel will disappear, once the daily habit of seeking God in prayer, in the Word, and in the Holy Spirit has been established.

Teach people to seek God for themselves, for His answers to life, rather than rely on other people.

Caution: **Do not lay hands a person and pray God's blessing on them**, if they are in disobedience, rebellion, holding a grudge against God, into witchcraft, or are involved in any wickedness.

It is important that you, as a helper and counsellor of others:

- a. Keep close to God at all times, *Jam 4:8*.
- b. Keep being cleansed from all sins, *1Jn 1:7,9*.
- c. Keep being filled with the Holy Spirit, *Eph 5:18,19*.
- d. Keep reading and meditating in God's Word, *Ps 1:1-3, Prov 4:20-22*.
- e. Keep strong trust and faith in God to give you His wisdom, revelation, knowledge and understanding, *Col 1:9,10, Eph 1:17,18*.
- f. Keep declaring and believing that you have the fulness of the mind of Christ, *1Cor 2:16, Col 2:9,10*.

If you suspect that there is a need of deliverance from a demon(s), proceed with wisdom. Refer to Pastors' Notes No 5, page 4 for help. Web page: www.pastornotes.com You may need to ask for help.

Write to P.O. Box 18-137, Glen Innes, Auckland, New Zealand, for notes on A4 paper. There is no charge.

Some Scriptures which offer encouragement to those who are called upon for counselling help are: *2Cor 3:18, Mat 10:19,20, Lk 12:11,12, Ex 4:12, 1Cor 1:30, Pro 4:7-13, 1Pet 3:15, 2Cor 3:5,6, Jam 1:5,6.*

As the person reveals to you the situation of life that requires wise counsel, **rely strongly upon the Holy Spirit** to bring to your mind:

- a. relevant scriptures and truth that has helped you.
- b. past experiences of a similar nature where you have found help from God.
- c. revelations of the Holy Spirit by inspired thoughts, pictures, visions, prophecy and rhema Scriptures.

Caring for other people. *1Pet 5:7, Lk 10:34, Jn 21:16,NIV, 1Tim 3:5, 1Tim 6:20,NIV, 1Pet 5:2,NIV.*

This is something we can all do. In the struggles and difficulties of life, people are looking for **someone who cares and can encourage.** People are more interested in **how much you care** than in how much you know. Have a **caring heart for other people.** Be like Jesus in His compassion for others, *Mat 9:36, 14:14, 15:32.*

He commands us, **“Love one another as I have loved you.”** *Jn 15:12.*

The Word says, **“Do good unto all people,”** *Gal 6:10.*

The **fruit of the Spirit** is in compassion, caring, kindness, gentleness and love, *Gal 5:22,23, 1Cor 13:4-8.*

Caring is at three levels

- A. **Encouragement and comforting, which supports and upholds** the way we feel, *Heb 3:13, Heb 10:25, 1Thes 2:12, 3:2, 4:18, 5:11,14, all NIV, 2Cor 1:3,4,5,6,7.*
- B. **Exhortation,** which urges new direction and change of behaviour, *Rom 12:8, 1Thes 2:11* through the revelation of God’s Word and obedience to God’s Word.
- C. **Enlightenment** through the Scriptures, that offers transformation through changing the way we think, *Rom 12:2,* so that a strong basis of faith in God’s Word, for daily living, is established.

- A. **Encouragement.** Always begin with encouragement. You cannot exhort an unencouraged person. Troubles do not usually overcome people, but lack of encouragement does, *1Thes 2:12, 3:2, 4:18, 5:11,14,NIV.*

David was in a very discouraging situation, with his followers about to stone him. Everything looked black, so he practised his counselling technique on himself, and it worked, *1Sam 30:6 KJV.* Barnabus was known as an encourager of others and had a lot of friends for that reason, *Act 4:36,37.*

Encouragement is the expression we use, verbal or nonverbal, that helps a person to get through a difficult time.

Discouragement is often rooted in fears of failure, exposure, rejection, ridicule and non-acceptance or disapproval.

To encourage people, they need to receive care, acceptance, understanding and patience.

Fears of further hurt often cause people to produce protective layers of shyness, over talkativeness, blame shifting, feigned humility, anger stuffing or dumping, excuse making or role playing.

Encouragement starts with acceptance of the person as they are. This does not imply acceptance or approval of their behaviour. Avoid being judgmental or condemning. God loves sinners. He does not love sin but He loves sinners. Tell people, “God loves you”. See Jesus’ attitude in *Jn 8:1-11.* “Neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more”. You can say, “Yes, there are some things that need changing, but God loves you and is able to help you overcome them and live in victory”.

Focus on the person’s potential, worthwhile behaviour and intrinsic worth. Try and help them to remove, protective layers and be open and real. People need to find their identity in Christ, their selfworth, significance, and security in Him. See “Pastors Notes” for details. Web Site: www.pastornotes.com

Watch for signs in others that they need encouraging. They may say, “I’m not too bad!” They may look downcast. Their tone of voice, change of normal behaviour, or a lower standard of dress may show a need of encouragement.

Ask door opening, non threatening questions, and listen patiently to their response. Take time. Care. Reflect back to them what they are saying, “This is what I understand you have said” Listen to what they are saying without judging. Watch your words, expressions and body language. Be encouraging. **Share encouraging scriptures and offer to pray.** Pray with understanding, wisdom and for God’s help and mercy.

B. Exhortation. *Col 3:16*, (admonish), *Col 1:28*, (admonish), *Rom 12:8*, *1Thes 2:11*, *KJV*, *2Thes 3:12*, *1Tim 2:1*, *1Tim 6:2*, *2Tim 4:2*, *Tit 1:9*, *2:6*, *2:9*, *2:15*, *Heb 3:13*, *10:25*, *1Pet 5:1*. (Check KJV and NIV.)

After encouraging the person we can move onto exhortation. This is **motivating the person to respond to life by the Word of God.** The focus is towards **helping the person change** through faith in God’s Word and obedience to God’s Word. **The result** is behavioural change. Minister to the person more than the problem.

I recall a lady who had much fear after her husband passed on. The minister taking the service spoke on *Is 41:10* and the exhortation of the Word had a powerful effect in the lady’s life. She was able to move out of fear into faith and peace in God for the future.

Suggest to people to write out such Scripture verses on card, and place them up around the house, *Deut 6:9*, *Prov 4:20-22*, *Ps 1:1-3*, *Jer 15:16*, *Ps 119:162*, so that they can confess them aloud frequently.

God’s Word is His infallible guide to life, *2Tim 3:16* and it:

1. Teaches doctrine in guidelines for living.
2. Reproves where we are in error.
3. Corrects us to the right way
4. Instructs in the way ahead.

2Pet 1:20,21, *Heb 4:12*, *1Cor 2:14*, *Eph 6:17*, *Ps 138:2*.

When seeking to help someone, realise there are **surface problems and underlying problems.** **On the surface** there maybe lying, rebellion and anger. **Under the surface** there maybe fear, guilt, anger, resentment, unforgiveness, hostility, pride, *Is 11:3*.

When Adam sinned he became **afraid** and hid himself. Being a people pleaser may be caused by **fear** of rejection. Always striving may be caused by **fear** of failure. Being concerned about security may be caused by **fear** of loss.

Frantic activity may be caused by a **guilty** conscience. Self punishment may be caused by a **guilty** conscience. Hating others may be caused by a **guilty** conscience.

Underlying **unforgiveness**, resentment, bitterness **causes many surface problems**, *Heb 12:15,16*.

When helping a person through their problems, **create a basis of hope.** God sees and knows all about it. His grace is sufficient to meet this need. He prepares us for whatever comes. God is good and does good, *Ps 119:68*, *Ps 139*, *2Cor 12:9*, *Nah 1:7*, *Ps 107:1*.

Refuse attitudes of superiority, judging, being superficial – rather come as an equal, as a companion and give loving direction.

Before giving the Biblical answers, “walk” with the person through their problem. *Lk 24:15*. Ask questions carefully. Rather than say, “Did you feel upset?” say, “How did you feel when that happened?” Asking “How?” is a good way. Rather than, “Do you yell at your children?” Ask, “How do you handle problems with your children?”

Ask clear, appropriate questions. Questions need to be open-ended and require more than a “yes” or “no” answer. Go slowly. Use questions that release and are non-threatening. In *Mk 8,9,10* Jesus asks twenty questions. Seventeen of them are “what” or “how” questions rather than “why” questions. “Why” questions tend to be threatening.

Seek and depend on the fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit. Listen to His voice. He is the Counsellor. *Jn 16:13*, *1Jn 2:27*. Let Him guide you.

Share scriptures and scriptural truth in your own words. Share the concept. Read a scripture several times. Give time to think about it. Get them to read it several times and ask them to tell you what it means to them.

Share the Word of God. Let the Holy Spirit do the convicting. Be gentle, meek and patient. Do not apply too much pressure. *Gal 5:22,23*, *2Tim 2:24-26*.

Bible principles lead to Bible solutions.

Ask for a definite clear response to the Word. Do not try and force it. Refuse to control, dominate, manipulate or intimidate. Avoid wanting to be proved right, or prove the other wrong.

Some people resist God's solutions for their problems. There may be tears of resistance, regret, remorse, or genuine tears of repentance where God is working. Do not feel threatened by tears.

Resistance may be insincere agreement, excessive emotion, irrelevant arguments, sullen quiet response or open antagonism. **Identify it.** "I sense you are resisting this truth". Be loving and firm. Read the scripture again and let them explain why they are resisting it.

Confirm that God's grace and blessing is upon those who respond to His Word.

Do not be discouraged if your efforts are not immediately effective. Things take time. Be patient. You have sown the seed. Let it grow in its own time. One sows, another waters, another reaps. God gives the increase.

C. Enlightenment *Eph 1:18, Rom 12:1,2, Pro 23:7*, to establish strong faith.

Here the focus is on **the thought processes which bring transformation**. It is helping to bring renewal to someone's mind, so that their thinking will operate in line with God's Word, and they will be able to live by faith. *Gal 3:11, Heb 10:38, Hab 2:4*.

God is a Person who thinks, feels and chooses. We bear His image and also think, feel and choose, *Is 55:8,9*.

God's personality is motivated by love, *1Jn 4:8*. As a person receives God's love, they also operate in love, *1Jn 4:19*.

In Eden, *Gen 3*, the love line to God was broken. So man looks within himself and becomes selfish and self loving.

Satan sows lies into the mind of fallen man and causes him to think, feel, and choose contrary to God's Word and will. *2Cor 11:3, 2Cor 4:4, Eph 2:3*.

People's minds must be renewed to function properly in line with God's Word and will, *Rom 12:2*. One of satan's schemes is to get us thinking independently of God, *Ps 53:1*. The mind of the natural man is foolishness with God, *1Cor 2:14*.

The plan of God is to enable us to fill our minds with the thoughts of His Word and be strong in faith. This brings **renewal of our minds** and enables us to walk in His ways and be eternally successful, *Ps 1:1-3, Rom 12:2, Ps 43:3, Col 3:1-3, Jer 15:16, Ps 119:105,130, Pro 4:20-22, Eph 4:23*. Faith is the way we please God, *Heb 11:6*. God has ordained that the righteous shall live by faith, *Gal 3:11, Heb 10:38, Hab 2:4*.

Enlightenment ministry is assisting other people to **bring their thinking in line with God's thinking and Word**. Our objective is to see people living by the Word of God in all things, that is to live by faith.

Eph 1:18-20 God the Father gives us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ and God, *v17*, so that the eyes of our understanding will be **enlightened**, *v18*. This is **ENLIGHTENMENT**.

1. To know the **hope** of His calling, *v18*– **His plans for us**. This is **our significance in God**.
2. To know **the riches of the glory of His inheritance in us**, *v18*- This is **our self worth** in God. It is seeing ourselves as God sees us, seeing **how much He loves us**.
3. To know the **exceeding greatness of His power** toward us, *v19*- This is knowing our **limitless resources in God, and our full security in Him**.

Without these truths there is often hopelessness, worthlessness and insecurity, which lead to depression. **With these truths held in faith, there is confidence, boldness, security and very successful life and ministry.**

The Word "**enlightened**" occurs in *Eph 1:18, KJV, NKJV, NIV*.

We all face situations that threaten our well being, e.g. marriage difficulties, a broken friendship, a financial loss, criticism from one another, plans falling through.

What we think and what we believe determines how we will react and how the problem will affect us.

1. The problem	2. What we think What we believe	3. How we react How we are affected What emotions are produced
Example – <i>Num 13,14</i> Giants in the land God had promised to give the land to the children of Israel.	Ten spies said , “We are like grasshoppers and will be defeated.” Two spies said , “With God’s help we will destroy them and take the land. Those giants are bread for us.” <i>Num 14:9.</i>	Despair, fear, hopelessness, terror, panic, unbelief, wrong belief. Boldness, courage, hope, confidence, victory, faith in God’s Word.

When facing a problem do not:

1. Exaggerate the problem, *Num13:31-33.*
2. Make demands of what you want done, *Num 14:2-4.*
3. Sink into depression and despair, *Num14:1.*

You will do these things **if your belief system is not established in the Word of God.**

Faith is Knowing the Word of God, as the Holy Spirit relates it to your situation, by giving you “rhema” Scriptures.

Believing the Word of God, without doubt in your heart, and praising and thanking God for it.

Confessing the Word of God, and speaking it out aloud frequently, *Heb 10:23, Heb 3:1, Heb 4:14.*

Acting on the Word of God. Faith without action is dead, *Jam 2:17,20,26. Step out, do it, Mat 14:29.*

When your **belief system is established in the Word of God by faith**, you will:

1. Have a rational, true evaluation of the problem, *Num13:30.*
2. Exhort others to believe God and go forward in faith, *Num 14:6-9.*
3. Maintain strong, positive, confidence in God by praise, thanksgiving and rejoicing in God, *2Tim 1:7, Neh 8:10, Ps 24:7-10.* This establishes the throne of God in the circumstances, *Ps 22:3, Ps 89:14.*

Refuse fear and anxiety and **choose** faith, hope and trust in God.

Refuse anger and resentment and **choose to forgive** others, *Mk 11:25,26*, **release them from your judgment**, *Mat 7:1,2, Rom 2:1,2, Jam 4:11,12*, **hand the problems over to God**, *Ps 55:22, 1Pet 5:7, Mat 11:28-30*, **pray the blessings of God on them**, *Lk 6:27,28,35-37*, as in *Col 1:9-11* for believers, or *Ac 26:18* for unbelievers.

Refuse guilt and shame and **choose** God’s forgiveness, cleansing, acceptance, affirmation and the identity, significance, self worth and security which He has given to all who believe in Him.

Challenge wrong thoughts and refuse them. Identify them, recognise them and cast out all those thoughts that are contrary to God’s Word and truth. The lies of untruth and satan have to be refused before you can receive the truth.

Encourage people to repent themselves and take a definite stand against lies and untruth. **Urge them to know the truth**, confess it, and keep hold of it.

2Cor 10:3-5

God has given us mighty weapons of the truth of the Word of God, the power of the Holy Spirit, the redeeming Blood of Jesus and the authority of the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

With these weapons of God, we are able to pull down and destroy:

1. **the strongholds** which are untrue “imagination”, arguments and reasonings. These are lies of satan and the world. With the Word of God we are able to establish the **TRUTH**.
2. **the strongholds** of man’s pride, independence, rebellion, self reliance, self sufficiency and self centredness. **God’s grace enables us to humble ourselves** to obey Him and to serve other people in love.

As we do this, we are able to **bring every thought into captivity to God’s Word of truth and to the Holy Spirit.**

Caring for others through ENCOURAGEMENT, EXHORTATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT is open to all pastors and mature believers. We may not have professional training as a counsellor, but we are able to help others through their difficulties, by sharing with them, the answers God has given to us, *2Cor 1:3,4,10.*