

Resources for Life Change

(Resources are available in the Grace Resource Center):

The Grace Resource Center has many new resources available for you. From Bibles, to parenting books, to marriage and family books, to books on issues in Biblical Counseling, to children's books, to books about Christian living and theology, the Resource Center provides a whole variety of very helpful resources for you.

Stop by the Resource Center today, before and after all church services.

- 1) 8/28: Unlocking God's Promise, by Pastor Bryan Hughes:** Have you ever wondered what God is doing in situations of life? Have you ever been confused about what He is accomplishing in your life? Why does God allow certain things to happen? Is there a passage of Scripture that addresses these questions specifically? These are just a few of the questions Pastor Bryan addresses in his first published book, *8/28: Unlocking God's Promise*. John MacArthur writes, "Romans 8:28 is one of the best-loved and most important promises in Scripture. Bryan Hughes does a wonderful job of unpacking the implications of that promise. This book—like the promise it expounds—is a real treasure." 
- 2) Help, I'm a Slave to Food, by Shannon McCoy:** Overeating is a silent, subtle, even respectable sin—but it hinders the spiritual growth and effectiveness of many, including Christians. Perhaps you struggle with it too. If so, this booklet can help you—not as a diet plan, but as a compass directing you to the heart of the problem and to the only solution: Jesus, the One who can bring you out of slavery into freedom.
- 3) Help, I Have Breast Cancer, by Brenda Fields:** The sense of shock at receiving a diagnosis of breast cancer is very real. Once the shock wears off, your mind seems to explode with questions. Am I going to need chemotherapy and radiation? Am I going to be disfigured by a surgical procedure? Who will take care of my family while I'm ill? Am I going to die? Is God punishing me? This honest account of a personal battle with breast cancer gently helps you to confront your fears, doubts, and worries, and points you toward the solid hope that is in Jesus Christ, who alone can provide peace and strength to face the future.
- 4) Help, My Marriage has Grown Cold, by Rick Thomas:** When two people choose to live in marriage for the rest of their lives, there will be challenges to work through. The transformation from two independent people to a one-flesh, other-centered union is not easy. Perhaps you are finding that your relationship that began so warmly has started to turn cold. Where can you turn for help? This booklet offers practical counsel from the Bible, helping you to work through marriage challenges in a God-honoring way.
- 5) Social Anxiety: Being Comfortable in Your Own Skin, by Amy Baker:** "I'm just shy." You've worn the label for so long that it has become your identity. A counselor recently described it as social anxiety, but the new label does nothing to ease the pain. You wish you could feel "comfortable in your own skin" but instead, in social situations, you feel anxious and out of place. Where can you go for help? Amy Baker explains that confidence in God, not self-confidence, is the answer to the problem of social anxiety. Trusting in God breaks the paralyzing grip of fear, freeing formerly "shy" people to enter fully into relationship with God and others.
- 6) FREE ARTICLE: The Christian Approach to Schizophrenia, by Jay Adams**

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: The Community of Grace Biblical Counseling Ministry and the editor of the monthly newsletter welcome letters from the readers. Letters may be edited if the editorial team deems it necessary to do so to fit the space allowed or due to unbiblical communication practices. We encourage the reader to write with edification in mind. Letters must be signed. Names can be withheld upon request. If you have a question about counseling that you would like to ask for future publications feel free to submit those questions to Pastor Blake Shaw.

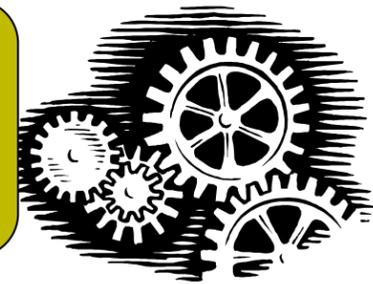


The Biblical Counseling Committee:
Chairman: Pastor Blake Shaw
Vice-Chair: Dr. Dan Gannon
Members: Ty Typolt, Pam Gannon,
Brad Wright, Pastor Kelly Jennaway,
and Jim Tesseneer



THE COG COMMUNITY OF GRACE Biblical Counseling Ministry

Edition #12— August 2012



Food for Thought

By Pastor Blake Shaw

(In May we began a series on the "One Anothers" of the New Testament, seeking to compel every person who claims to be a Christian to take serious the commands of Scripture related to ministry to one another. This month we welcome guest writer, Mrs. Ethel Gray as we focus on "Honor One Another.")

Honor One Another

What does that little, three-word command look like when it is put into practice in the believer's life? Let's read it from the latter part of Romans 12:10 in various translations:

"...in honour preferring one another." (KJV)
"...take delight in honoring each other." (TLB)
"Honor one another above yourselves." (NIV)
"Give preference to one another in honor." (NASB)
"Outdo one another in showing honor." (ESV)

When we see the command worded in these various translations, we see two common threads. One, it is an imperative—an act that we must be told to do because, left on our own, we would not naturally think of doing it. It requires us to put on humility and put off self-centeredness. Two, it focuses our attention on other believers in the body. We can certainly show honor to non-believers, but in this passage from Romans, we are commanded to honor one another within the body of believers.

An Imperative that Requires Humility

I think the last verse written above says it best: God wants us to "outdo" one another when it comes to showing honor. It means that God wants us to seek ways to *give* honor instead of finding ways to *get* honored.

That does not come naturally to us. Had Christ not saved us from ourselves, you and I would not automatically focus our thoughts on others. John MacArthur describes it simply: "[honor is] showing genuine appreciation and admiration for fellow believers by putting them first."¹ John Piper defines it like this: "Honoring someone is treating them with your deeds and your words as worthy of your service."² Daily messages from our 21st century American culture tell you and me that we must look out for "#1" and make sure we are always first in everything. Our culture screams to us that we actually *deserve* to be put first. But, God tells us to *put others first*. How do we do that?

Philippians 2:3 states, "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself." That verse tells us that humility or lowliness is the key to "counting others better than ourselves." How do we put on that kind of humility or lowliness? We need only to take a minute to recall our condition before Christ!

When you and I humbly remember the grace and the mercy that Christ shows us, we can easily see our position in regards to other believers. You and I need grace from God. And, you and I need grace from one another. As someone smarter than me once said, there is level ground at the foot of the cross!

We must put on humility and recognize that God has not finished "working on" us. We must give one another room to grow while seeking out opportunities to honor one another. I like how John Piper describes this:

"Every believer has evidences of grace. God is at work in every saint. Don't dishonor the work of God by only complaining about the works of the flesh. Look for the evidences of grace [in one another]. This is what God is going to do for you at the last judgment. He is going to gather up all the Ds and Fs in your life and burn them. Then he will spread out your Cs and Bs and rejoice over the evidences of grace in your life. (I don't think there will be many As and certainly no A+s). Do for others now what God will do for you then. Rejoice over every evidence of grace."²

When Piper says, "rejoice over every evidence of grace," he means that we ought to look for ways to honor one another. That requires us to be humble, put others above ourselves, and seek out ways we can *give* honor.

An Imperative that Refreshes Body Life

God gives you and me numerous opportunities to honor one another every day. Husbands are to honor their wives (1 Peter 3:7). Children are to honor their parents (Ephesians 6:2-3). We are to honor Jesus Christ our Savior just as we honor God the Father (John 5:23). God honored Jesus Christ the Son (2 Peter 1:17). And, if these commands do not provide us with enough homework, then we can go to 1 Peter 2:17 which says, "Honor *all* people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king." That should be enough to keep us busy!

We honor one another because it refreshes the body of believers. We do it because God tells us to do it, not simply because someone has earned it or deserves it. In fact, there are times when a believer may not be worthy of honor. Sometimes it means treating people better than they deserve, doesn't it. I submit that we all appreciate that type of treatment at times. We can refresh one another by honoring one another.

We proclaim the Gospel to non-believers who observing us from outside the church when we honor one another within the church. We are following the exhortation of Matthew 5:16 to "let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

By obeying the command to honor one another, we bring honor to the One who is transforming us.



¹ John MacArthur, "Brick by Brick, Part 2, Romans 12:10-12," November 18, 1984, website: gty.org

² John Piper, "Love One Another with Brotherly Affection," December 12, 2004/ by John Piper/ Scripture: Romans 12:10, ©2012 Desiring God Foundation. Website: desiringGod.org

The Counseling Zone By Pastor Blake Shaw

(A Look at the Basics of Biblical Counseling—Part 4)



This is our fourth installment on the “How To’s of Biblical Counseling.” We have seen thus far that we are called to be people of great compassion, to be like Jesus Christ, and one of our models for how we are to function, to serve, and to minister is the Good Samaritan. He got involved in a messy situation. It was costly to him, but he was a biblical neighbor. The process of Biblical Counseling always begins with Involvement—you taking a personal interest in other people, in this case, the one who needs counsel. Your care, compassion, and concern, moves you to want to help, to walk with, and to provide God’s care for the person in need. As we saw last time, when a person is in need and they turn to us for God’s counsel, where we begin is with a thing called “Gathering Data/Investigation.”

Though absolutely critical to the process, we dare not stop at Involvement. It is important but it isn’t all that is involved in Biblical Counseling. So where do we go once we have a relationship of trust built? The next critical element to our approach is called “Investigation.” Proverbs 18:13 is a key verse to consider. It says, “He who gives an answer before he hears, it is folly and shame to him.”

If you are asking great questions and listening closely you begin to gather a lot of very important data, thus making it easier for you to then take God’s Word and bring God’s solution for the problem to the counselee.

Gathering Data is hard work. It requires that you ask good questions and that you listen well. In my times of counseling, this is one area is one that I know that I fall woefully short in. You see, the temptation when gathering data and investigating is to often hear a little bit of the story and then want to run to God’s Word to give what one believes is the answer to the person’s problem. Many times when we do this, we miss the mark completely and the person leaves, possibly encouraged to be looking to the Lord, but they have no idea of what the true problem is and how to deal with it.

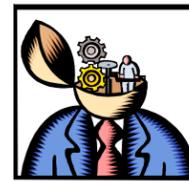
When gathering data, we have to ask a lot of questions. We can tell the person at the beginning that we are going to ask question after question because we must understand the story before we provide an answer. So we ask questions covering a lot of different areas. For example, with most individuals we would ask questions in the following areas: 1) The Physical (this would involve sleep, diet, exercise, medical background, etc. 2) Resources (this will relate to relationships, most important people, relationship with God, how the person deals with problems, their church involvement, etc.); 3) Emotions (we aren’t afraid to talk about emotions. So we ask about what current emotions they are feeling; how they feel about what is happening at the time; how others view them emotionally, etc.); 4) Actions (we ask about what things the person is do-

ing, things that he does with his free time, his behaviors both right and wrong, etc.); 5) Concepts (What the person sees as the most pressing problem; how he views the problem; how he thinks about how he has been dealing with the problem; We ask about motives, desires, cravings, reactions to being confronted and/or criticized, goals, intentions, what makes the person happy, sad, etc.); 6) Historical (We ask about things like upbringing, when the problem started, the person’s relationship with the Lord, the happiest and most sad times in life, the influences in his life, and things that he would change if he could.

As you can imagine, if one is a good question-asker, then there are literally dozens of questions that can be asked about these various areas. One begins with asking questions about a variety of areas of the person’s life, seeking always to understand the person’s story. As the questioning continues, the counselor makes note of key points and of areas that he would like to probe deeper. Gathering data is a long process. It involves asking good questions. It involves listening. It involves observation, as the counselor pays attention to both the verbal and non-verbal communication of the person receiving the counsel. Good data is really critical for the counseling process. What good data allows the counselor to do is to formulate an agenda for the counseling sessions ahead. That is where we will go next month.

Q:

Recently, someone brought to me a letter that was addressed to me but was stashed into the middle of a pile of the June edition of the COG. The letter would never have been seen by me except for the



fact that this person was walking by and noticed a white piece of paper in the middle of the pile. The letter was addressed to me and referred to the COG, so I figured I could address the letter in this edition of the Q&A. The letter didn’t contain a question but it prompted me to return to a question that I was asked back some time ago. Here’s the question: You often speak out against psychology and going to counselors — yes, even Christian counselors. Why would you not want to refer someone to a Christian counselor since the counselor is trained to get to the root issues of a person’s struggle?

A:

This question dove-tails nicely with the letter I received, so let me answer the question and respond to the letter. The letter stated this:

“Pastor Blake— There is nothing unbiblical about Christian counseling if it is Bible-centered. There are multiple controlling, manipulative, eating disordered (women) who are sowing evil seeds of slander, gossip, retaliation...all because they didn’t get their way. Comes from a broken childhood. Please stop encouraging brokenness to remain by discouraging Christian counseling that addresses the roots of controlling, manipulative, and scheming...always from homes with substance abuse, alcoholics, workaholics, etc. The sin is great in the GBC camp! This only keeps it here!”

I believe this person raises a couple of issues that are good things for all of us to consider and I definitely see this letter as a teaching opportunity for us. So let’s walk our way through the letter and perhaps that will give us an answer to the question that was posed above.

First, the person is right with this point: “There is nothing unbiblical about Christian counseling if it is Bible-centered...” That specific point is right on. I think it is incomplete but as far as it is stated, no biblical counselor would necessarily disagree with it. But I would want to add a couple of points to clarify this. First of all, I would like to add to the element of “Bible-centered” the phrase, “God-centered” or “Christ-centered.” “Why?” you may ask. Here’s why. I was trained in a theological institution which is a Bible-centered institution. The school is a solid Bible college and the training I received was very good. The Bible courses and the theology courses were extremely helpful. I would argue that the school was Bible-centered. Yet, in my training, I was also greatly tainted by psychological elements woven throughout the training. So, though I would say my education was Bible-centered, it was also man-centered, and some of the teachers, guest speakers to the college, and voices heard on the college’s radio stations, were man-centered. So to refer someone to a Christian counselor who is Bible-centered still might not be the most helpful thing to do because we know that the church has for decades taught the Bible from a man-centered perspective and it doesn’t do a person any good to go to a Bible-centered counselor who simply helps the person become more man-centered.

Secondly, I think the author of the letter is accurate when he/she writes that “...there are multiple controlling, manipulative, eating disordered (women) who are sowing evil seeds of slander, gossip, retaliation...” But again, the author comes up short because the issue of “controlling, manipulative...” people is not limited to eating disordered women. Those are the qualities of the human race—both men and women—due to the sin nature. The fruit in the life of such a person is “controlling, manipulating, eating disorders, slander, gossip, retaliation, etc.” So why limit it to women who struggle with an eating disorder. Let’s include all of us.

Thirdly, the author steps into the first area where perhaps we would disagree. I’m not certain on that because there are elements of his/her statement that need to be explained, but I’ll take it at face value. The author states, or at least seems to be making

the point that the person’s root problems come “...from a broken childhood.” Later he/she adds, “...always from homes with substance abuse, alcoholics, workaholics, etc...” Let’s examine this.

First of all, I would not deny that many individuals who are controlling, manipulative, and who battle an eating disorder do come from homes where sin is expressed through substance abuse, alcohol abuse, and an idolatrous approach to work. I don’t have hard, scientific data in front of me, but I would guess that studies have been done to show that many who battle eating disorders do, indeed, come from homes with huge problems. However, I have met with and know of women who come from very secure, godly homes where they were loved and accepted and they struggle with an eating disorder and/or are controlling, manipulative, and they slander, gossip, and are retaliatory. The reason why is because those issues are not because of a broken childhood or a home with substance abuse, but because of the effects of sin on the human heart and such fruit is merely an expression of an internal problem. Please hear me out on this. Certainly, broken homes or homes with any form of abuse, are greatly influential, but I refuse to accept a Freudian explanation for why a person would be controlling, manipulative, slanderous, gossiping, retaliating, eating disordered person, given that all of those issues come from the heart (see Matthew 15:19; Mark 7:21-23).

Certainly, when one comes in for counseling for an eating disorder and they talk about their upbringing, we can understand that the upbringing is influential, but it is never determinative. What I mean is that even though those influences can be powerful as the person develops habits of thinking and responding, but the influences don’t explain the root issues of why the eating disordered person, is controlling, manipulative, slanderous, etc. Ah, but God’s Word does explain it to us. So in the case of the person who grew up with a hard home-life, we can certainly move towards the person with great compassion and grieve with them over the fact that they grew up in a home that was so radically different than how God intends for the home to be. And we can definitely take the data that speaks of her home-life as being broken and very sinful and understand how habits of thinking and responding developed throughout the growing up years. But if we state that the root problem is because of the home life the person grew up in, we simply provide an opportunity for the person to blame shift and in the end offer no true hope for the person. Such a person could simply say that the reason they are manipulative, and slanderous, and battling an eating disorder is because of dad, mom, or a combination.

The last area that needs to be addressed is related to the statement, “Please stop encouraging brokenness to remain...” This is one of those statements that I really wish I had the opportunity to interact with the author over, mainly because of the word “brokenness.” How is this to be taken? What exactly is meant by “brokenness”? I have my ideas, but it lacks definition. Is this the same idea as that expressed in Scripture where God’s word says that God dwells with the broken and contrite? Or is this concept of “brokenness” likened to the person(s) throughout Scripture who are referred to as fainthearted or weak (I Thessalonians 5:14)? Or, is this concept of “brokenness” likened to the person who has been sinned against repeatedly to the point where they have lost hope. We want people to have true biblical hope, not a superficial, man-centered hope. And as long as one simply lives with the idea that their controlling, manipulation, eating disorder, slander, gossip, etc., is solely because of what kind of home they were raised in, there will never be any true hope for them to truly deal with those issues.

So if there are Christian counselors out there who are truly Bible centered, we would invite them to be God-centered and leave all elements of psychology behind. And while doing so, we would invite them to team up with us to help others live life in a sin-cursed world.

Counselor's Corner

Introduction to Biblical Counseling, taught by Pastor Blake Shaw: There are many misconceptions about Biblical Counseling in the church today. There are also many people in the church who wonder if they can actually counsel others. In this class Pastor Blake presents both the

philosophy of True Biblical Counseling and the How-To’s of Biblical Counseling. Homework includes reading a textbook and weekly verse quizzes. 9:00am-10:20am, Room 802

Counseling Observation, lead by Ty and Jeanie Typolt and Dan and Pam Gannon. For those who have taken the Introduction to Biblical Counseling class previously, we offer this class to give you the opportunity to see counseling at work. This class moves the student from studying the philosophy of Biblical Counseling, to seeing how it actually takes place. Homework includes reading a short textbook. 10:40am-12:00pm (noon), Fireside Room.

Medical Issues in Counseling, taught by Dr. Dan and Pam Gannon. This class, offered in the evenings as a part of Montana Bible College’s counseling curriculum, addresses physiological factors that influence areas in a person’s life that are critical to consider when counseling that individual. Topics include: good health, sleep, depression, ADD/ADHD, chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, headaches, obsessive/compulsive disorder, and addictions. Homework includes the reading of a textbook. Tuesday nights, 6:00pm-8:30pm, Room 604. Cost is \$125 for audit. Partial scholarships available for Grace Bible Church members upon request.

Q&A