

Resources for Life Change

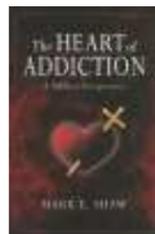
(Resources are available in the Grace Resource Center):

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.

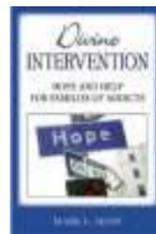
Stop by the Resource Center today, before and after all church services.

Resources on Battling Addictions

Many solid resources address the issue of spiritual slavery, i.e. addictions. Here are just a few to consider for personal study, one-to-one discipleship counseling, and your small group.



The Heart of Addiction by Mark Shaw (and workbook)



Divine Intervention By Mark Shaw



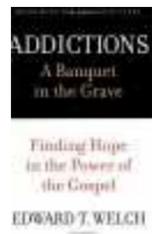
Help! I Want to Change by Jim Newheiser



Just One More by Ed Welch



Help! I'm a Slave to Food by Shannon Kay McCoy



Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave by Ed Welch

FREE ARTICLE: A Letter To An Alcoholic, by Ed Welch

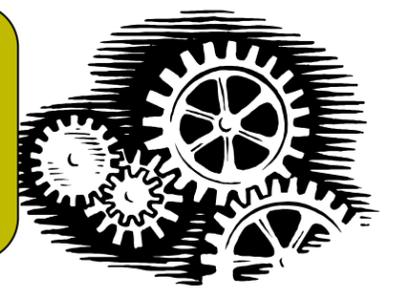
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: The Community of Grace Biblical Counseling Ministry and the editor of the monthly newsletter welcome letters from the readers. Letters may be edited if the editorial team deems it necessary to do so to fit the space allowed or due to unbiblical communication practices. We encourage 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
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Food for Thought

By Julie Gossack

(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. Julie Gossack as we focus on "Honor One Another").

Honor One Another

For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, **but through love serve one another**. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Galatians 5:13 (emphasis added)

I learned a lot about serving this last year. This learning didn't come by attending a teaching seminar on serving, nor did I learn through reading biographies of the great servants of God. I didn't even learn about serving by being served. No, through God's gracious sovereignty, I learned about serving by being served. You see, this last year an illness rendered me unable to carry out normal activities like caring for my family and our home. I was unable to continue in my job and even caring for myself was challenging at one point. My illness provided many opportunities for the body of Christ to serve our family. I couldn't possibly recount the myriad of ways people served us, but here are a few: The body served by making meals for our family for several months. A dear sister cleaned our home (toilets and all!) week after week. Countless people offered to pick up groceries and run errands. Two sweet older women came to visit each week to encourage me, play games, and take me for short walks. One gal came to our home each week to counsel me in the Word and pray. At my weakest point a couple different gals came to our home to fix breakfast for me and help me get the nourishment I needed for the day. Another huge blessing was when one of our sisters cooked weekly meals for me, inventing new recipes for my special dietary needs. Innumerable cards, phone calls, and emails of encouragement poured from the body of Christ into our hearts to lift us up in time of need. And people prayed. The body faithfully prayed for our family through that very difficult time. We were served by the body of Jesus Christ and are so very thankful for the precious gift of being part of His body.

One day someone asked if it was hard for me to accept being served. "No," I replied, "for two reasons. One, we are the body and are called to serve one another. Two, I know what a joy and blessing it is to serve others; I don't want to deny my brothers and sisters that same joy and blessing."

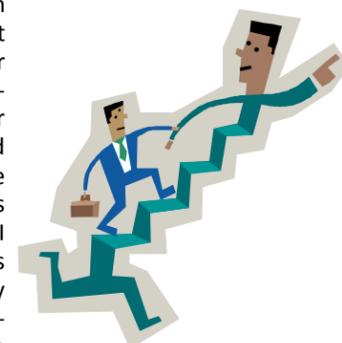
Scripture tells us that the body of Christ is one. We belong to each other. We are a unit, joined and knit together. We do not belong to ourselves. *For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ* (I Corinthians 12:12). Sadly our thinking is often more con-

formed to our culture than to the Word. Our American culture is an independent one. We pride ourselves in making our own way, doing it ourselves, and needing no one. We don't like to ask for help, directions, or even to borrow something. We forge our own way and do our own thing, us proud Americans. This independent mindset can filter into the church person by person, and soon the church, the body of Christ, forgets that we belong to each other. Consequently, when we don't remember that we belong to each other we fail to care for one another. Scripture teaches that the members [of the body] should have the same care for one another. *And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it* (I Corinthians 12:25b-26).

When the body functions as it should, every part doing its share, it causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love (Ephesians 4:16). The growth of the body brings glory to its Head, Jesus Christ. Our Savior is exalted and magnified as the body is sanctified and most certainly the world takes notice. Our unsaved neighbors took notice of the body's care for our family. They told us that our church "took good care of us" and that we should be glad we "have our church to fall back on." I am reminded of Matthew 5:16: *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*

Not too long ago a dear sister was in an accident. When I visited her in the hospital she was already struggling with the many offers from people to help her family. Knowing how the body had served our family, she asked me, somewhat desperately, "How do I accept people's help?" I told her the same two things I told the person who asked if it was hard for me to accept being served: 1) we are the body and are called to serve one another, and 2) we shouldn't deny others the opportunity to serve. I also reminded her of Ephesians 2:10- *for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.* I reminded her that God has designed good works for each of His children. Those works are for His glory and have been prepared for each of us individually, specialized to our gifts and talents. We are to obey Him by using those gifts and talents and by walking in those prepared works (cf. Romans 12:6; I Peter 4:10-11). If we do not allow others to serve us, we resist God's prepared plan and deny others the blessing and the potential for eternal rewards (cf. I Corinthians 3:11-13; II Corinthians 5:10). This sister got the message. What a joy to see her immediately accept the kindness of the body as they began to serve her family, for His glory.

Oh Father, may we be like Your Son Who came to serve and to give His life for others. May we love and serve as a body to the glory of our exalted Head, Jesus. Remind us that you have prepared good works for us to walk in. May we be zealous for those works and bear much fruit for You. Amen.



The Counseling Zone By Pastor Blake Shaw

(A Look at the Basics of Biblical Counseling—Part 5)

So far, in our examination of the basics of Biblical Counseling, we have established the need to be actively involved in peoples' lives. When people come to us for counseling, one of the first things we ought to do is establish involvement. Involvement is being like the Good Samaritan who was willing to "get dirty" and pay the price to serve and help an injured person. The essence of "Involvement" is building relationship with the person seeking counsel. It is a clear demonstration of compassion to the person whereby the "counselee" understands that you, as a counselor, truly care about them. This is the beginning point, but not the end. The next step in good biblical counseling is gathering data, doing an investigation into the person's story. This is making sure you, as the counselor, have heard all that is needed in order to bring God's answer for the person's problem. If you answer before you hear the entirety of what is happening, it could well be folly and shame to you (see Prov. 18:13).

So what do we do when we have gathered data, the person has shared the precious information with us, and we have asked question after question seeking to understand the real issues? We have to do something with that information. That brings us to our next element of biblical counseling, which is Interpretation. Let's take a moment to unpack this concept of Interpretation. As the biblical counselor you want to bring God's truth to the situation. You want to provide the person with the hope that is rooted and grounded in Christ and His Word. Far too often Christians will hear a person's story and then provide either shallow, unbiblical, or inadequate answers to the person and his problem. Oftentimes in counseling the counselor will take notes while he listens to the person's story. He asks questions and takes more notes. At the end of the first meeting together the counselor then has a whole list of notes. Now he must begin the process of interpreting the notes to figure out the real issues and to develop an agenda for future counseling. One of several things the counselor does at this point is to ask a number of questions such as: 1) Does this person appear to be saved or unsaved? 2) Based upon 1 Thessalonians 5:14, is this person unruly, fainthearted, or weak? 3) From the data, what does this person need at this moment: encouragement, admonishment, help? (We definitely don't want to mix those up. I've failed in this area before where I tried to encourage the unruly or admonish the fainthearted and it didn't go well). 4) Am I deal-

ing with a wise person or a foolish person? 5) What was the person's Presentation Problem (the problem they came to get help for)? 6) What emotions do I need to address? 7) What practices/behaviors need to be addressed? 8) What thoughts and beliefs do I need to address? 9) From the data, can I determine what the person might desire, crave, lust after, or worship? 10) Are there any patterns or habits in the person's life that need to be addressed?

The answers to these questions will help the biblical counselor develop an agenda for the counseling process. But one might ask if there is really any basis for this idea of interpretation. I would say yes. In fact, I would say that repeatedly Christ gave an interpretation for what was really going on in a person's life. For example, in Luke 10:38-42, Jesus went to the house of Mary and Martha, two sisters who were His good friends. Upon His arrival, Martha scrambled around the house trying to prepare the meal while Mary sat listening to Jesus, simply getting to know her Lord and Savior. Martha confronted Jesus saying, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone?" Think about that one for a while. Asking the Lord Jesus, "Do you not care?" But Jesus gave a very simple interpretation of the real issue: "Martha you are anxious and bothered about so many things..." (v. 41). That's interpretation. Mary wasn't the problem. The real problem landed in Martha's lap. The real problem from Jesus' interpretation was that Martha was worried and bothered about things that ultimately didn't matter.

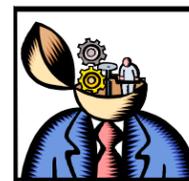
When counseling, the counselor has to develop an agenda for where he wants to take the counseling. That agenda comes from the data that has been collected. If I as the counselor spend 1 to 2 hours gathering data, I must do something with the data. I haven't asked all of those questions just to satisfy my curiosity, nor have I asked those questions, simply to give the counselee an opportunity to vent. I have to sort through all of the information, pick out the core issues, and then go to God's Word to provide the counselee with God's answer. I have mentioned setting an agenda and this is critical, but one important thing we keep in mind with our agenda that we set: We hold the agenda with an open hand because what frequently happens is that at the second or third or even at a later counseling session, more data comes out that can potentially redirect the whole counseling agenda. Sometimes in counseling the counselee will "unload"

and share everything that is going on, but not always. Sometimes they come to the counseling with a self-protectionism that keeps some critical data out of the picture, at least until a later time in the counseling process. So as a counselor we set the agenda, based upon the data we have but we know that the agenda could change in the future. Great wisdom is needed in these situations because sometimes a counselee may withhold information and bring it out at selected times simply to derail the agenda when they don't like the direction the counseling is going. I learned this the hard way when I was meeting with a man and began to counsel him about a certain issue in his life. I had worked hard to build involvement and it seemed that as I gathered data that he was sharing a lot of information that would allow me to provide God's counsel to a specific issue in his life. As we got to week two and three of the counseling process, I noticed that he was struggling to get the homework done, even though he was unemployed at the time and had unscheduled time to do the work. As I began to work on the one issue that stood out from the data gathered in the first and second session, and I sensed that he didn't want to truly work on that issue. He said, "Blake, I have another issue that I need to tell you about. I've never shared this with anyone...." And so, I found myself at a point where I was revamping my agenda. Twenty-twenty hindsight is golden, huh? Looking back, I can see how this exact thing happened at least four times. Wisdom would say that possibly I should have continued with my original agenda. As it turned out, the person had no desire to truly change. He wanted a little slice of Jesus-just enough to allow them to slide into heaven, but he also wanted a lot of the world. At some point, this counseling was doomed to fail, and it did. Nevertheless, we must develop an agenda, holding it with an open hand, and realize that it may change in the course of time.

So, in counseling, we build involvement, we gather data, and we interpret the data. Where do we go from here? The answer to that question is for next time, so in the meantime let me ask a question that points us to the next newsletter: "What does every counselee (and counselor) need every time they leave the counseling room?" We'll consider that in our next newsletter.



Q: Counseling ministry is appealing to me because I love people, I care deeply about people, and I believe God's Word provides the answers to all of the problems people face, but the one hurdle that stands in the way is, "How do people who do counseling keep from getting so discouraged and overwhelmed from hearing all of the heart-breaking stories out there? How do you not end up needing counseling after you hear about others' problems all the time?"



A: I have been asked this question quite a few times over the years and I think it is a critical one to address. Let's be honest: Counseling can be hard work. That is why so few Christians want to really be a part of it. Actually, that is why many pastors simply want to refer people to a professional counselor or contact a pastor at some other church to do the counseling for them. It is hard work. In previous editions of this newsletter we established the fact that all Christians are to be involved in the counseling process and in restoring a brother or sister who is caught in a trespass. Counseling is a hard and often neglected work. It is also heartbreaking at times. Years ago, I read various articles that noted that one of the professions that had the highest suicide rates was psychiatrists/psychotherapists. That should not catch anyone by surprise. Imagine listening to peoples' problems all day without having a true hope or any true answer to the deepest problems that people, including your self as the psychotherapist, face. Counseling can be heartbreaking work. Let me explain. There are no normal days in the life of a pastor but let me give you a glimpse into what one day brought to me.

The day began with an early morning phone call from a friend about a marriage problem. No one likes phone calls in the middle of the night as that usually means bad news. Upon arriving at work, the red light on the phone indicated that I had messages. I had already scheduled several appointments for the day so as time allowed, I listened to the voice mail messages and returned the eight or nine phone calls, all of which were from people seeking counseling. Those who know me know that I use the social media, Facebook, to not only enjoy interacting with people, but to also do ministry. On this particular day I was involved in several Facebook message conversations related to counseling issues. One issue was related to a marriage problem. Another was related to a person who was struggling with homosexual thoughts, while still another was asking some hard questions about in-laws. Throughout the course of the day I found myself dealing with five marriages that were falling apart or already had fallen apart, one person struggling with a sexual sin, one person wanting to break all ties with her parents, one person struggling with finances, one person hurting because they were falsely accused and had lost their job, and another person grieving over the terminal sickness of a parent and the pending fall-out with the siblings because the parents hadn't put together a will. Add to that an hour of working with a person who had been labeled OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) and was wanting some hope that he could overcome what seemed like a problem he would have all of his life. I'm also a father of three kids, all teenagers. I was wrong to think I was done for the day when I climbed into my car. I arrived at home only to spend the next three hours counseling a couple of my own children through some tough situations.

I share that experience because I believe it relates to the very issue that you speak to in your question. You see, about 75% of these counseling situations involved people whom I know, whom I consider friends (and my own kids). In all of that, it is indeed easy to be overwhelmed and discouraged. I mean, it is one thing to take a phone call from a stranger and share God's Word with them, trying to give them some biblical counsel. It is quite another when the phone call or the office visit is with someone with whom you worship Jesus, have fellowship with, and share life with. When it is friends and fellow church members who are struggling, that is where the battle ensues.

With this issue I think of Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 4:8, "We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair..." We know Paul faced persecution for teaching truth. We know he was also greatly burdened for all the churches. Paul cared deeply about the people in the various churches for he had not only lead many of them to Christ, he had also imparted his own life to them as well (1 Thessalonians 2:8). Paul had spent much time with many believers, teaching and admonishing them, publicly and privately, doing so with tears (See Acts 20). Paul had a great concern for believers and the doctrine they embraced and the Christian life they lived. So what kept him going? How did he not get overwhelmed and need counseling himself? We don't have all the details of his story so we can't categorically say that he never was overwhelmed or he never needed counsel from someone. But perhaps Paul's writings tell us what kept him going. I believe it was that he was so gripped by the gospel of Christ that, even though perplexed and hard pressed, he kept Christ at the center of his thinking. He had tasted of the grace of God in a very personal way and he often basked in it. He understood what he deserved so he was motivated to please Christ regardless of where he was at or what was happening in his life. In fact, I like what he wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:9 where he says, "Therefore, we make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him (Christ)." That was his goal: to please Christ. That is the desire he had when he woke up in the morning. This is fundamental to keeping perspective in the midst of counseling. Everything is to be done for His glory (1 Corinthians 10:31). Our aim, our goal, our desire is to simply please the Lord Jesus Christ. And we constantly have to remind ourselves that we are not the Savior. It is true that when you counsel, you hear heartbreaking stories. You hear about the effects of sin on mankind. You realize over and over how devastating sin can be on families and individuals, how enslaving sin can be and how deceitful it is. At the end of the day, if you don't rest in Christ and take your own thoughts captive, you can become very burdened with people's problems and you can easily forget that change for the person or persons is not, in any way, dependent upon you. What makes this harder still is that as Christians, we care about people, we love people. We are also ones who are to weep with those who weep, and being compassionate is part and parcel of being like Christ. But when the dust settles on the day, the person who counsels has to move forward knowing that it is God who causes the growth, that the individual is responsible for his life, not the counselor, and that he, the counselor is called to be faithful to Christ. For you, the person who asks this question, I invite you to join us in our counseling ministry. Jump into a class. Be trained and see how God might use you to help another person live in this sin-cursed, fallen world.



Counselor's Corner

How to Use a Book in Counseling: Oftentimes in counseling we will have a counselee read a book while we are going through the counseling process. We have to use a book strategically. Rather than simply asking the counselee to read the book, one very helpful and strategic way to use a book effectively is to have the person read a chapter each week, to underline at least 10 points in the text of the particular chapter, points that encourage, challenge, confront, etc., them. Then they can take 3x5 cards and write out at least 3 of those points on the cards. Then, in the weeks ahead, you have the counselee read his 3x5 cards each day (and you can make it more specific to "read them five times a day"). This accomplishes a couple of things: 1) This gets the person to read a book for drawing out application to life; 2) Provides the person with specific statements of counsel that he can use to counsel himself between sessions. There are a lot of excellent books to be used in counseling. We simply need to use them wisely.