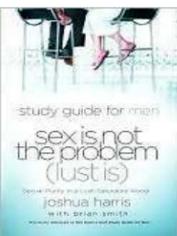


Resources for Life Change

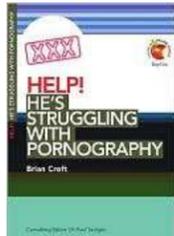
(Resources are available in the Grace Resource Center):

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.

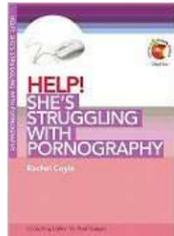
This month in the COG's Resources for Life-Change, we provide a list of resources that deal with the issue of lust and pornography. Most of these are small booklets that are great tools to use in counseling and accountability groups.



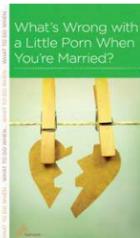
Sex is Not the Problem, Lust Is
By Joshua Harris



Help! He's Struggling with Pornography
By Brian Croft



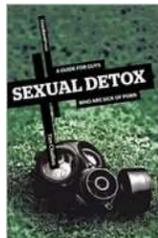
Help! She's Struggling with Pornography
By Rachel Coyle



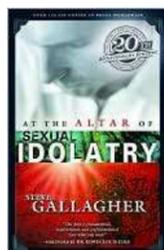
What's Wrong with a Little Porn When You're Married
By Nicolas Black



What's Wrong with a Little Porn When You're Married
By Nicolas Black



Sexual Detox
By Tim Challies



At the Altar of Sexual Idolatry
By Steve Gallagher
This resource comes with a high recommendation for counseling and for small accountability groups.

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.

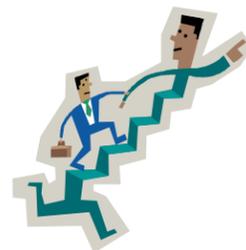
THE COG COMMUNITY OF GRACE Biblical Counseling Ministry Edition #14 — October 2012



Food for Thought

By Kevin Brownlee

(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 focus on "Encourage One Another" and welcome Kevin Brownlee as our guest writer).



Be an Encourager!

Unity among believers in the church is so important, the concept shows up in almost all of Paul's writings in the New Testament. As the early church started about 2,000 years ago a unified body of Christians was essential for not only survival, but for growth, for ministry to each other, to the world, and to glorify God. It continues today as well.

Even though we Christians are unified around the salvation we have in Jesus, and the hope we share of spending eternity with Him, there is diversity among us believers that Paul explained very well in 1 Corinthians 12. Those diverse "parts of the body" of believers are divinely intentional for different roles or duties in the church which when all are used, put together one well functioning unified body, ministering to people. We are to embrace those God given differences, and encourage them.

Today, our society can be characterized as selfish and greedy. Since we are not of this society, but the society of God's Kingdom, we are to live a more excellent way...to love others. Our culture insists "it is all about me", which is the opposite of one of the main tenants of true Christianity: "it is all about Christ, and loving others." When it is "all about me", there is no unity, when it is all about Christ and loving others, there WILL be unity. God designed the church body of believers to help each other, and to grow in Christ. When there is not unity, divisions occur, and ministry of the church diminishes. Where is there unity, the ministry of the church flourishes.

One way to ensure this unity is to encourage others. Being an encourager is something we have to learn and practice, it rarely comes naturally for us. I believe that as Paul matured in his ministry, he focused so much on unity among believers later in his life because early in his ministry there was an issue where encouragement from Paul was lacking. He did learn from this, and became a well polished encourager (for example, to Timothy and Titus several years later).

We too can learn as Paul did in the area of encouragement. In Acts 15: 36-41 Paul insisted that John Mark not go with them on their second missionary journey (for some reason, John Mark left them previously). Because of this, a division occurred amongst the group, and Barnabas took John Mark with him to his home town of Cyprus. Barnabas did so because he could see this hurt John Mark, and he wanted to be an encourager to him. Barnabas is actually his nick name; his real name was Joseph, and Barnabas means "Son of Encouragement". Several times in the Bible, we read and become very impressed with Barnabas as an encourager.

The encouragement Barnabas gave John Mark had very impressive results! For one, John Mark later wrote the Gospel of Mark. Another is found in Paul's last words of his last letter, he wrote to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:11 "Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry." You see, encouragement was the catalyst for forgiveness, reconciliation, and usefulness in ministry!

Being an encourager may mean "going against the grain", as it did to Barnabas. It may be hard to do, it takes extra effort, and it takes self discipline to do. But, the results are well worth it. Encouragement means "support that inspires confidence", "to give hope", or "to build up". Isn't that what Christians that are part of a unified body of believers do?! So find someone that needs encouragement, and support them, inspire them, and give them hope. Endeavor to gain the nick name "Encourager" as Barnabas (Joseph) did. You will be showing love to others, unifying our church, and creating usefulness of that individual as an integral part of the ministry of the church.

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 6)

So far, here is what we have seen in our consideration of the key elements of the basics in Biblical Counseling. As the counsellor, you build a relationship with the person. You come alongside them, not as a judge but as a believer who cares deeply about the person. You live as one who imitates Christ with your compassion for the person. Your example is the Good Samaritan who got truly involved in the messy situation of the man who had been robbed and beaten by the thieves. Involvement is the beginning point for counselling. The person needs to know that you care about him and his situation. You need to build rapport into the person's life so that he is willing to hear your counsel. Secondly, you must gather data. You have to hear the story before you dole out some answer. So you ask question upon question, seeking the data needed to make sure you truly understand what all is taking place in the person's life. Once you have the data, you interpret the data, looking for the specific issues that you need to address and counsel about. We have to be specific because God's Word deals with specifics.

Last month we ended with this question: "What does every counselee (and counsellor) need every time she leaves the counseling room?"

In a word, the answer to that question is, "Hope." Every person, both counsellor and counselee, needs hope. So it is a critical issue in counseling that when the person leaves the office, our desire is that the person would have true hope.

For our sake, let's break this element down into several sections, one of which we'll address in this edition and then the others we'll address in November. First, let's define hope and get some clarification on the difference between Biblical hope and worldly hope. Second, we'll consider the types of people who need hope. Third, we'll want to consider how we go about giving someone hope.

What is hope? If you ask 15 different people this question, there is a good chance you will get 15 different definitions. So let me give you a definition of hope as seen through the eyes of a Biblical Counselor. We would say that hope is the firm belief in God's ability and His promise to bring goodness out of chaos in the future. This definition hangs on and is dependent upon the character of God. If God is weak, there isn't any hope. If God is always changing, there isn't any hope. If God is limited, there isn't any hope. If God is just like us or even somewhat like us, there isn't any hope. If God makes a promise but then, at some point, goes back on the promise, there isn't any hope. True biblical hope is rooted and ground in the character and promises of God.

There is another kind of "hope" that we actually have to avoid giving in the counseling room. It is what I call, "Worldly hope." Worldly hope is that which is uncertain. It is a hope that is conditioned upon others' responses or actions, or is dependent upon circumstances. It is a hope that doesn't have the backing of God. For example, in mid-September, someone may have heard me say at one point in a conversation, "I sure hope the Yankees win the World Series." Don't stumble over the fact that I'm a Yankees fan and miss the point. The "hope" I had was a worldly hope, not because it was tied to the Yankees, but because it was not a certainty. There was no absolute promise to support the "hope." It was not based upon God's character or on what God had promised. It would be the same for the farmer who says, "I sure hope it doesn't rain today. I have hay down and it needs to get baled." Worldly hope is very common. If you don't believe me, listen to how you and others speak. You find it all over the place. When it comes to counseling worldly hope is something that we must be careful to never give to the person we counsel. But trust me it is very easy to do so.

Let me illustrate for you how easy it is to give someone worldly hope in the counseling room. Let's say a woman named Jane comes in for counseling. Her husband has left her because he claims all she does is nag, nag, nag, and spend, spend, spend, and he is sick and tired of this. So he has moved out. We don't know for certain if his reasoning is the whole story, and my guess is, that it isn't. More than likely there are other forces at work here besides the nagging and spending. But I might be tempted to give worldly hope to Jane. You see, if I said to Jane, "Jane, listen, if you do what God wants you to do, then you can get your husband to move back in and this marriage can be saved." Do you see how I offered her worldly hope? I can't make that statement. "Why?" you ask. Because I don't have any promise from God that says that if Jane does "x" then her husband will do "y". Frankly, I have seen it happen too many times that the person in Jane's shoes actually tries to do what is right, tries to do what God wants her to do, only to have her husband get even angrier still and file for divorce. So in this situation I really have to be careful to not set Jane up for a false hope.

Whenever I consider this issue of hope, I like to think about some characteristics of true biblical hope. For example, I would say that true biblical hope is biblically based expectation of good. In other words, it is an expectation based upon the promises of God. God does not lie so when He promises something, the person has great hope in God fulfilling that promise.

Another characteristic of true hope would be that true hope is the result of true salvation. I Peter 1:3 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope..." Christ is our hope so if someone doesn't love and trust Christ, he has no hope, regardless of his belief in the power of positive thinking.

Yet another characteristic of true hope is that it is holistic in focus. In other words, true hope focuses on the whole scope of God's plan for the universe. The person with true biblical hope finds comfort in the eternal, not the temporal. A person with this hope is concerned about what happens in the lives of others. The Apostle Paul had this kind of hope. He had a deep concern for the lives of other people. True hope, because of its holistic perspective, focuses on the eternal, unshakable plan of God.

Another characteristic of true hope is that it is realistic. True hope is a daily thing. It is not as if God gave a person a shot of hope at the point of salvation and it lasts for a few years before running out. No, hope is realistic and is like faith in that one has to live by faith day-in and day-out. Certainly, we as believers have a future hope, but that hope is inextricably tied to our present hope as well—that is Christ Himself.

Lastly, I would say that true hope is inseparable from a diligent and an accurate interpretation of God's Word. Psalm 130:5 says, "I wait for the Lord, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope." Because our hope is rooted in the promises and the character of God's Word, we must know what His Word says. We must interpret His word accurately. Many people in the church don't have true biblical hope because they neither know God's Word nor do they interpret it accurately. As such, they misapply God's Word and thus, they fail to provide true hope to the hopeless. Instead, when one misinterprets and misapplies God's Word, it is the breeding ground for great disappointment, hurt, anger, bitterness, etc.

Rest assured, if we are to truly do Biblical Counseling and if we are to help another person, one thing that they must have is true, biblical hope. Thus, the challenge before you and me is this: "Get to know God's Word. Study it. Read it. Study it more. Know the book. Do what Colossians 3:16 says and "...let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly..." It is when we know the book that we can then bring true hope to those who come to us for counsel.



Question: One of the objections I have to Biblical Counseling is that this philosophy is against psychology, talks about the ills of psychology, and says that psychologists and counselors are wrong. I have family members and friends who are psychologists and counselors and, not only is it offensive to me how Biblical Counseling opposes them, but they too find it arrogant that something so anti-science and simple would be opposed to them. My observation of them is that they care deeply about people and really do want to help people. Can you provide a response to my objection?

Answer: This is a great question to address at this juncture because it seems to come up in one shape or form about every second or third month. It usually comes to me by way of a "messenger" of sorts, rather than the actual person who finds it offensive coming to me to talk about the issues involved. I take this objection very seriously because I believe it revolves around misunderstandings and some critical differences that Biblical Counseling would have with every other form of counseling on the planet. Because of this, let's look closely at each point in the question, using several editions of The COG to do so.

First, I have found that people who love the Lord really don't object to Biblical Counseling. I remember one guy saying to me, "Blake I don't agree with you on Biblical Counseling." He quickly added, "I agree with you in that I am not against using the Bible to counsel..." and then he went on to explain what his struggle was. It turns out that as he described his philosophy of counseling that he and I really weren't that different. I normally give the person who raises this objection, the benefit of the doubt, in that, I don't think many people in the church are saying that they are opposed to counseling that is solely biblical. So what exactly are they opposed to? The question is asked in such a way that it seems that they are struggling with or opposed to how the philosophy of biblical counseling takes a stand against psychology. I understand this and I would say that Biblical Counseling does stand opposed to all other systems of counsel. But I would hasten to add that really, when biblical counseling is truly represented, it, as a philosophy is more Pro-Sufficiency of God's Word than Anti-Psychology. It is true that any of us who teach a counseling class will have to step into an area of demonstrating to the audience why God's Word and psychology cannot be melded together. It is true that as a biblical counselor I believe that God's Word is totally sufficient and that no element of prescriptive psychology is needed to add to God's Word to provide a superior counsel. (For a description of prescriptive psychology, see an earlier edition of The COG). This belief about God's Word is wrapped up in my worldview.

The issues that have to be addressed in this discussion are issues that relate to sources of truth, the source(s) of problems that people face, and answers to those problems. The Biblical counselor believes that God has spoken and we have His Word. We believe that in Christ and His Word, God has given us everything we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). Usually the immediate objection raised at this point is rather silly. One will say, "So you are saying that

you don't need food and water? You don't get those things in the Bible. So does God's Word really give you everything for life?" Such an objection is foolish for most know that that is not what is being said when we consider this verse. But we are saying that if a person has Christ and His Word, he doesn't need any outside source of counsel in order to help him deal with living life in this sin-cursed fallen world. We don't apologize for taking that stand. We realize it is offensive to some because once we say what I just stated it does seem to alienate some people, good people, well-meaning people who have family and friends whose lives are given to counseling others using some method other than Scripture.

Some times I feel like we end up beating a dead horse with this discussion because we come back to it so often, but there is a reason why we have to continue to come back to the basic point related to the sufficiency of Christ and His Word. That is fundamentally what this discussion is about. Sadly, in the church, there are many who give a nod to the teaching that says, "Christ and His Word are Sufficient," but then claim that we need psychology in order to counsel modern man. So, the question remains: is Christ and His Word sufficient or not?

Another objection that seems to be raised is that "...to speak against psychology is not an act of love, for when we do so we have to say that those who embrace psychology are wrong..." This objection comes from the post-modern mind-set that runs rampant throughout the church. In the post-modern mind-set this is not acceptable and it is not an act of love. One person who used this objection with me just happens to have a deep love for the lost, especially those who are in the Mormon religion. So I asked him, "Do you believe that Mormons who truly embrace Mormon doctrine are lost?" He answered, "Yes, there is no doubt." My next question was, "So do you feel like it is unloving when you share the gospel with them and in doing so, you have tell them that what they believe is contrary to God's Word?" His obvious answer was, "No, not at all." I then asked, "So, if I understand you rightly, you are saying it is not unloving for you to tell someone who believes something contrary to God's Word that what they believe is wrong but it is unloving for me to say that prescriptive psychology which is contrary to God's Word is wrong? Please help me understand this. Are you saying that false teaching is bad as it relates to a person's salvation but it isn't bad as it relates to a person's sanctification?" At this juncture this very wise friend agreed with my point.

You see, the objections that we as Biblical Counselors raise, come out of a deep love for Christ and His Word, a deep and firm commitment to the authority and sufficiency of God's Word, and a great concern that Christians are turning to broken cisterns that cannot hold water when they turn to the counsel that is outside of God's Word.

Next month we have to address a couple of issues related to this question. One pertains to the definition of the word, "Help". The other has to do with the issue of whether Biblical Counseling is truly anti-science.



Counselor's Corner

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

PLANNING AHEAD: Are you going to be here in the Bozeman area next July? If so, we want to invite you to mark July 25th-27th on your calendar and begin to make plans now to attend our First Annual Biblical Counseling Conference, right here at Grace Bible Church. For this conference we will have the privilege of learning from a variety of speakers from Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, Billings, and Bozeman, covering a whole spectrum of topics. The conference will be designed for all believers who love others and want to walk with and help other people living life in this sin-cursed, fallen world. A brochure and more information is coming out soon.

