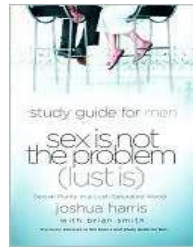


Resources for Life Change

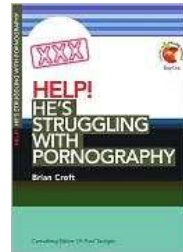
(Resources are available in the Grace Resource Center):

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.

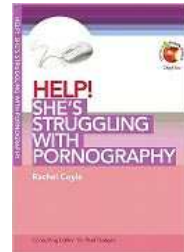
This month in the COG's Resources for Life-Change, we provide a list of resources that deal with the issue of lust and pornography. Most of these are small booklets that are great tools to use in counseling and accountability groups.



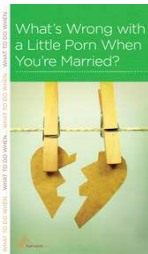
Sex is Not the Problem, Lust Is
By Joshua Harris



Help! He's Struggling with Pornography
By Brian Croft



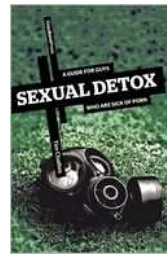
Help! She's Struggling with Pornography
By Rachel Coyle



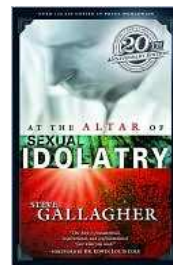
What's Wrong with a Little Porn When You're Married
By Nicolas Black



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:
From Your Heart, Forgive, by Aaron Sironi



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.



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 focus on Accept One Another.

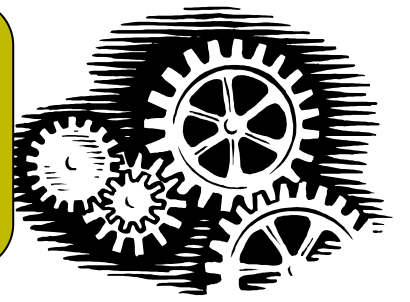
Are you ready to give some thought to an issue? Are there people in your life whom you struggle to accept? Are there fellow Christians whom you really struggle with? You know, you struggle with their convictions, their commitments, with some of the decisions they make? Think for a minute of some issue that you are very passionate about, an issue that is not specifically talked about in Scripture. Do you know of other believers who don't have the same passion for that issue? I'm not speaking of things in Scripture that are black and white. I'm speaking instead to those areas of life that are not addressed in the pages of God's Word. Do you struggle to accept those people?

Isn't it true that there are some commands in Scripture that are easier to obey than others? Sure it is. Mark Twain once stated, "It ain't the **parts** of the **Bible** that I can't understand that bother me, it is the **parts** that I do understand." I've never considered Mr. Twain to be a great theologian but he did get this right. In our series on the "One Another" commands of the New Testament, you have possibly bumped into one or two commands that you personally found easier to follow, while at other times you may have realized that some of the commands expose an area of weakness in your own life. For some, it isn't a problem at all to serve others, while others are just naturally encouragers, so commands to "Serve one another" or "Encourage one another" really are not a struggle. But there is another "One Another" command that might just be the hardest one to pull off. It is the command to "Accept One Another." That is the feature of this month's "Food for Thought" column.

In Romans 15:7, God tells us, through the pen of the Apostle Paul, that we are to "accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God." This verse is powerful in so many ways. But first, let's note the context in which Paul writes. In chapter 14, he has been discussing the Law of Liberty and the freedom that we as believers have in Christ. In the cultural setting of the day, believers were saved out of a pagan background of idolatry and in that idolatrous religion of that time people would take meat and offer it as a sacrifice to idols. Afterwards the meat was taken to the local food market where people could then purchase the meat and enjoy it for meals. Put yourself in the shoes of a person who believed on Christ for salvation and was saved from this idolatrous background. Many undoubtedly would struggle with eating meat that had been offered to idols down at the local pagan temple. There were, however, some in the church who could enjoy the meat at their meals, doing so with a clear conscience because they knew that the idols were really not living, thus the meat was not affected. It was an issue of conscience because God did not forbid the eating of the meat. But you can imagine how this difference would provide an opportunity for judging and division among church members. So Paul writes that people should not judge others. In other words, if one could eat the meat with a clear conscience, he is not to judge one who can't. And if one can't eat the meat with a clear conscience, he is not to judge the one who can. Paul develops the same thought related to a day of rest—as it relates to the Sabbath (Romans 14:1-12). Paul goes on to explain a higher principle of the Law of Love where every person, instead of judging others, actually practices love for one another and seeks to avoid offending others and causing them to stumble. In chapter 15, Paul tells the believers to bear one another's burdens. That is love. He tells them to seek to edify the other believers. That is love as well. Paul prays that believers would be of the same mind with one another. And then he drives home the point with, "Therefore (based upon what you have been reading), accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God..."

What is our motivation for accepting one another? Let's face it, we all have strengths and weaknesses. We all have quirks about us that perhaps make it hard for others to accept us. As humans the easiest way to deal with a person who is odd, who doesn't fit, who doesn't line up with what we believe is right, is to simply avoid such a person. It's the easiest. But it isn't biblical.

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The command is to accept one another and the motivation for doing so is simply because Christ has accepted us. Ponder that point for a moment. Don't blow past it. Think about the fact that the eternal God, clothed in His glorious splendor, the holy God who knows no sin, totally accepts you and me. He doesn't wait for us to clean up our act before He accepts us. He doesn't demand that we become something that we are not in order to find complete acceptance from Him. He just accepts us as genuine believers. And it is this very fact that gives us motivation to accept one another. If you struggle to accept another person, you don't understand how God accepts you. The NKJV translation of Ephesians 1:6 tells us that God has made us accepted in the Beloved. In other words, because we as believers are "in Christ" we are totally accepted by God the Father. There is possibly no greater place to be on earth than in that position. If you struggle with accepting others bring yourself back to this specific point of reference.

But let's move beyond the issue of odd quirks and let's talk about things that hit closer to home. Ponder for a moment some other issues that make it a challenge to accept one another? If you ponder this long enough, I'm guessing you can come up with a fairly extensive list just like I can. Here's one: Let me introduce you to Scott and Marcy.

Scott and Marcy had attended their church fellowship for six months when they realized that there were various people groups within this large church of 1000 people. Being parents themselves they had all three of their kids in a local grade school and had never thought much about other options in schooling. Scott and Marcy worked together in their business. He was a dentist and she worked as the secretary and the issue of schooling never seemed like a point of contention for them. That is, until they joined one of the flock groups made up of seven other couples from the church. Frequently, discussion at the flock group would turn to education, mostly because every one of the couples had school age children. It wasn't long before Scott and Marcy realized that their decision to send their kids to public school was the exception. Most people in the group were wise and careful about the words they would say about schooling choices. But not everyone. Scott and Marcy were never truly accepted within the group. They later found a few couples in the church who were known as "public school families" and began to spend more and more time with them. But Scott was burdened every Sunday because, to him, he could see the division within the church. He described it as "the elephant in the room," the issue that everyone knows is there and is a problem but no one wants to talk about. As he met more and more people he found that there was a large contingent of home-school families; Four Christian schools, all with various philosophies, also were represented within the church family, and then there was a fairly large contingent of families who had placed their kids in the public school system. Scott observed the situation for over a year. It struck him how very few of these families actually interacted with families of a different schooling flavor. He observed comments of arrogance within each of the camps. In the process he was confronted numerous times about his own schooling choice and how it supposedly violated Scripture. He handled these confrontations well. But for him the command to "accept one another" wore heavily on his heart. You see, Scott knew that Scripture didn't command home-schooling. He recognized that some of the Christian schools really did a good job of educating kids, and he recognized the inherent problems in the public educational system. He knew the strengths and weaknesses of all of the various approaches to education. But the issue that gnawed at his heart was the problem of the lack of accepting one another in his church fellowship.

Scott had an accurate read on a huge issue within the evangelical church. His burden should be your burden; my burden; our burden. But is it? Scott knew full well that the command to accept one another was being violated over and over in the church family; not just in relation to educational choice but in many other areas. But this issue seemed front and center in his concern. But what could he do? He was one voice among a thousand. Let me ask, "What would you do? Really, if you were in Scott's shoes what steps would you take to perhaps help the church move towards obedience to Jesus Christ in this area?" You already have an answer tucked in Romans 15? Let's begin to live it out.



The Counseling Zone

By Pastor Blake Shaw

(A Look at the Basics of Biblical Counseling—Part 7)

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. Our 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.

Now what? Last month we began to look at the issue of giving hope to the person you are counselling. Every person needs hope. You. Me. The person who comes to you for counselling. Hope is an absolute necessity. Last month we saw a definition of hope, looking at a contrast between worldly hope and godly hope. We also considered some specific qualities of biblical hope. For our time here, let's consider what type of people need hope and then how we can give hope to a person.

What are some types of people who specifically need hope? Here are a few. 1) Unbelievers need hope. Ephesians 2:12 describes the unbeliever as one who is without hope. At times we get the chance to provide Biblical Counsel to unbelievers. They need Christ. They need hope. So the counselling opportunity provides an amazing chance to share Christ with one who has no hope. 2) The elderly need hope as well. This is the largest growing segment of our society. Many of them no longer work. They have physical problems and they face the loss of a spouse and many friends. Truly the elderly need hope. 3) Those with marriage difficulties need hope. Some couples have had problems in their marriage for decades. Certainly they need hope. 4) The depressed and suicidal obviously

need hope. 5) People with life-shattering experiences desperately need hope. Consider those who have had an unfaithful spouse, or have lost a child, or have walked through bankruptcy, or have lost their job, or had a fire destroy all of their possessions. These are life-shattering events. Such people need hope. 6) How about young people facing marriage? Yes, they may need hope. Consider for a moment the number of young people who grew up in homes where divorce had taken place. As they stand on the precipice of marriage, they may be thinking that, though they are excited about getting married, will their marriage will be just like their parents' marriage. 7) Young married couples often need hope as well. We usually think of the young couples who are still in the honeymoon phase of married life but we must consider the couple who have left that phase and reality has now set in. Each are wondering what happened to the person they married two years prior. They both realize that the other person wakes up with bad breath. 8) Everybody needs hope. That's right. I need hope. You need hope. We all have a common need: Hope.

So how do we go about giving hope to those we counsel? Let me note some ways: 1) Use the Promises of God's Word. True hope is always rooted in God's Word. Once you step outside of God's Word, you offer your opinions, which might not be all bad, but our opinions don't have authority. Use the promises of God's Word. You might be asking for specific examples, so here are a few. Let your brain soak in these amazing passages and see if you can draw hope from them for your own life. Romans 8:28-29; 2 Corinthians 1:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Hebrews 4:15-16; James 1:2-12; Philippians 1:12-13 are just a few examples. To give hope, we must use the promises of God's Word. But this means we must know God's Word. So study hard. Know the Book. 2) Remind the person of how God has fulfilled His Word in the past. Point them to the Scriptures and God's consistent faithfulness to fulfill what He promises. Use illustrations from your own life as well. 3) Be an example to show them that victory is possible. Hopefully you have illustrations in your own life where you can exalt Christ and talk about how He gave you victory. 4) Label sin as sin and take sin seriously. Labels matter. Christ died for sin so there is great hope when the right label is used. In contrast, let me ask you. If you struggle with anger

and a counsellor labels you as having Explosive Disorder, what hope do you have? Good data gathering helps us come up with the right label to give to the counslee. 5) Be solution oriented. Biblical counselling is not talk therapy. Talk therapy does no good and it provides no hope if all we do in counselling is talk about the problems. Always move towards the solution—God's solution. 6) Communicate how long you expect to work with the person. Remember, he may have been to many counsellors before he came to you. He may have been in counselling for years. So communicate with the person that if they go God's way and do what the Lord asks of them, the counselling could be over in 12 or so weeks. 7) Do not be fooled or manipulated by the person. If they practice manipulation, you won't be able to provide them with hope. If you sense that they are manipulating the counselling or you, or you find that they continuously blame shift, confront it with a genuine love for the person. By doing this you actually give hope because you are then directing the person right back to the Savior. 8) Who you deal with first can engender hope as well. For example, if parents drag their teenage son in for counselling, we might think that our first counsel should be directed at the rebellious teenage son. Actually, one of the ways to bring hope to the son's life is to look at the parenting. You see, under this principle, deal with the one with the most responsibility before God. Here's another example. A wife and husband come in for counselling. She's saved. He's not. Deal mostly with the saved wife. As she begins to practice 1 Peter 3:1-6 it just might bring hope to the unsaved husband. 9) Guard against defeating language. Our words mean a lot. If we use words such as "mental illness" there is no hope. (Never mind the fact that the mind can't have a disease). If you use words such as, "Emotional problems" or "Inferiority complex," you'll gain acceptance from the world, but such language doesn't provide people with biblical hope. 10) Last, deal with what you have. In other words, not all data comes out at one time. Some people take several weeks before they share an important element of data. So you work with what you have. As you build relationship with the person, they begin to trust you, and as trust is built, they share more critical data. But by dealing with what you have, you begin to bring hope into the person's life.

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:

As I stated last month, most believers don't really object to Biblical Counseling. Most people who raise the question stated above are merely trying to make the argument that God's Word doesn't cover the whole gamut of issues for which people need counsel, thus, there are people who are trained in psychology who can counsel people more effectively, using elements of psychology to provide a superior counsel. Sometimes, when giving an explanation of Biblical counseling, one will have to state up front that he disagrees with psychology. He will have to state up front that psychology is not needed to counsel humanity. Therein is the rub, because when we state this we are saying to that person that their family member or friend, as long as they are using psychology, is not needed in the counseling room. It is critical, however, for the reader to understand that 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.

Now, let's develop our answer from where we were last month. One of the words used in the question above is the word, "Help." We have to consider this very simple word because the justification for a whole segment of professional society hinges on this one word. This is one of the arguments given by people who take psychotropic drugs as well. One might hear a person say, "Well, my sister struggled with depression and she went to a doctor, he put her on an antidepressant, and it helped." Or, "Our son was struggling in school, always getting in trouble with teachers, and we took him to a doctor who diagnosed him as having ADD/ADHD and gave him Ritalin and it helped. He is now a great student." Notice the word "Helped." So what is meant by the word "help"? It is obvious that this little word is important to the whole argument forged to try to support the use of psychology or, as noted in the illustration above, the use of medications.

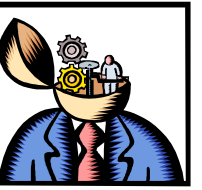
I will often ask the person who uses the word "help" (or "helped") to define what they mean. Most often, what the person has in mind is that the person went to the psychotherapist or took a medication and this allowed them to have a stable life or to have a good quality of life. The person who was depressed, went to psychotherapy, is taking medications, and this has brought them out of the pit of depression and allowed them to function back to what one would describe as a normal life. So the argument goes: "See, the psychotherapy and medications helped." So how do we, as biblical counselors, see the concept of "helped" differently? Let me explain.

First, we would wonder if the psychotherapy and medications really helped the person become more like Jesus Christ. Since that is God's agenda for the believer then it would only follow that one would want to explore that idea. What if I were shot through with anxiety, even to the point of having a panic attack? I go to the doctor, he rules out all the possible organic/physiological issues that could cause this, causes that are testable by blood tests or scans. So the doctor does out a prescription to stop my anxiety. The medications may help and I might not have anxiety to the degree I did before. So in that sense, the meds helped. But what if God was at work to show me my heart and what I worship and to help me learn to walk by faith, not by sight; to help me learn how to trust Him fully and to not lean on my own understanding; to help me learn to think biblically and to take my thoughts captive to obedience to Christ? Now, however, I don't have to work on the heart issues, how I think, and what I worship, because medications have taken away the intense battle with anxiety. This is fundamentally the struggle that the biblical counselor would have with the misunderstanding of or the misapplication of the word "help."

If I sat down on a tack and the tack stuck into the back of my leg, I could do a couple of things. One, I could pull out the tack. That would be the sensible course of action. Or, two, I could leave the tack in my leg go to the doctor and he could prescribe some pain killers. After a while, even though the pain is managed by the pain killers, a red streak begins to go down my leg. The doctor could actually help me with this by giving me an antibiotic. We would say that those two types of drugs "helped" me. But wouldn't it make more sense to pull the tack out? Sure it would. So it begs the question: If a person is struggling with some issue in life (depression, anger, fear, anxiety, worry, addictions, etc.) wouldn't it be more beneficial to help them deal with the root cause of their problems? Wouldn't it be a better "help" to enable them deal with what is going on in the mission control center of their life—the heart? Yes, it would.

As a Biblical Counselor, I am grateful when someone goes from the pit of depression to functioning back to what they would say is a normal, responsible life. I am grateful when a once-out-of-control-kid begins to raise his grades and behave in the school. I am thankful when the person doesn't struggle with "symptoms" of Obsessive Compulsivity or the extreme highs and lows associated with bipolar disorder. To me, the issue is not really whether or not the psychotherapy or the medication is right or wrong. The biggest question is whether the person is truly helped to become more like Jesus Christ. In order to accomplish this we have to help them deal with what is going on in their heart. Solomon wrote, "Watch over your heart with all diligence, for out of it flows the springs of life" (Proverbs 4:23). Jesus said that it is "from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness..." (Mark 7:21-22). This list is not exhaustive. I believe Jesus is simply pointing out that the problems and struggles in life come out of the heart. It is the heart that needs help. And only Jesus Himself can truly deal with the defiling effects of the heart. No drug and no psychotherapy will help deal with those issues.

Next month we have to address one other element of this question and that is whether true Biblical Counseling is actually 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 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. If you have family and friends in the greater Montana area, encourage them to make plans now to attend this much anticipated conference. For this conference we will have the privilege of learning from a variety of speakers from Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, Billings, and Bozeman, covering a 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 will be available soon.

