**Data Gathering**

2021 Pacific Northwest Biblical Counseling Conference

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**Gathering relevant data in counseling requires asking questions and listening.**

* 1. Biblical counseling is
* One of the ministries of the Word in the Church.
* More dynamic than others (Sermons, Bible Study, Life Groups)
* Who comes? Those other ministries do not reach fully.
* Key distinction - listen first – get relevant data first ministry.
* Personal discipleship tailored to each person.
* 2.Data gathering is
* Definition - Asking appropriate questions and carefully listening in order to understand what is occurring in the counselee’s life.
* Take time – ask good questions – listen first.
	1. Harder and harder to find out there.
	2. Health insurance paying less for talk therapy – moved to medical model.
	3. Medical model – organic problem – no hope of change – medicate problems.
* 3. Persons need to be heard and talked with has not gone away – only availability.
	+ - OPPORTUNITY FOR CHURCH!
		- Sin is the problem – Jesus Christ died for sin.
		- Church answer needs to be
		1. We will take the time to listen.
		2. Give hope and help through the gospel,
		3. As opposed to sending them down the road to the secular machine.
* Need is overwhelming.

**Biblical counselor needs equipping first**

* 1. Word
* Read all of Word – student of Word.
* **Heb 4:12** *For the word of God is living and active* … discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
* Biblical counseling is about heart change,
1. Requires the Word – primary tool.
* 2. Spirit
* Spirit needs to not be hindered.
* **1 Pet 3:10-12** *For “Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”*
* Counselor here first – turn away from evil and do good.
	1. Biblically anything we are doing or thinking that is not honoring of God and obedient to His ways IS EVIL.
* Dependent on prayer – ask for insight.
	1. **1 Ki 8:39** … *For you, you only (God), know the hearts of all the children of mankind.*
* Ask God - reveal heart issues of the counselee.
	1. Pray in preparation for counseling – wisdom and insight.
	2. Pray during the counseling session silently to God also.
* Good to have God open to your prayers - on your side not against you
	1. Walking in obedience yourself is key.
* In counseling room – God, Spirit, Jesus Christ, His Word, counselee and you.
	1. You are least important one in room – facilitator – not about you.
* 3. Counseling books
	+ Abundant – supplemental – not living and active
	+ Read the Bible first and most.
	+ Competent to Counsel - Jay Adams
	+ Theology of Biblical Counseling – Heath Lambert
* 4. Right definition of fear of the Lord
	+ **Pro 1:7, 9:10** – *beginning of wisdom and knowledge – leads to*
	+ **Pro 8:13** *The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate.*
	+ As counselor – not perfect but growing.
1. Need to hate sin in your life – help counselee love God and hate sin also.
2. Both are needed for lasting Biblical change.
* 5. Data from counselee before Meeting
	+ Personal Data Inventory (PDI) – wealth and breadth of initial data.
1. filled out and returned before counseling starts.
* 6. Able to ask relevant questions – learned discipline.
	+ Open ended questions and listen – counselee talking 50+% of time.
	+ Extensive questions
	+ Intensive questions
	+ Observe countenance or halo data.
	+ Withhold judgement.
	+ Don’t jump to conclusions.
		1. Keep collecting data and praying for insight until things are clear.
		2. If not clear, then keep asking and praying.
		3. When possible, listen to all sides.
			- Pro 18:17 - The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him.
	+ Avoid interrupting – but stay in control.
		1. Be respectful and let them finish first.
		2. Also avoid rabbit trails and pointless rambling.
* 7. Listen for things like
	+ Blame shifting, Victim mentality, Hopelessness, Evasiveness, Exaggerations, Defensiveness, Judgements, and Willingness to accept responsibility.
* 8. Be flexible to adjust when new data comes out.

**Gather data – Areas of Life Wheel**

* 1. God and Church
	+ Church history – churches attended and involvement – back to childhood.
	+ Testimony – how have they changed? Should be change.
	+ Baptized? - when and where – meaning; not – why not?
	+ Are they Spirit filled?
1. **Rom 8:9** *You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.*
2. Salvation - requires indwelling Holy Spirit.
3. Don’t assume counselee saved.
	* What is their View of God? - are honoring God as God and giving thanks.
4. **Rom 1:21** *For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.*
5. Consequence to wrong view of God,
6. Getting a right view of God IS PRIORITY number 1.
	* Knowledge of the Word.
7. Goal - Word out of them
	* + - Can’t get out - what is not put in first.
* 2. Family
	+ Info about their family today and relationships
1. Married (how many times), children (young or adult), in laws.
2. Strengthens and weaknesses in family today.
	* Info about their home of origin and relationships
3. Problem solving – discipline – abuse – attitude towards parents.
4. There are 10 Commandments – 8 what NOT to do, 2 what to do.
5. **Exo 20:8** *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.*
* Commandment #4 – what do they do on Sunday?
1. **Exo 20:*12*** *“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.*
2. **Eph 6:2-3** *“Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”*
* Commandment #5 - Honoring parents – IS commanded & NOT TIED to quality of parenting OR presence.
* A promise tied to this – go well with you – consequence if not.
* Honoring parents can apply to in-laws.
* 3. Finances
	+ Financial state.
	+ Spend money – give money.
	+ Married – who manages – control mechanism.
	+ Report income and pay taxes accurately – lying to government.
1. **Rom 13:1-2** *Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. (consequence)*
2. Note where word says consequence – correct – change happens.
3. Paid under the table or lying on taxes – against Scripture – evil.
	* My experience is being obedient with finances – always costs money.
4. Pay taxes fully - give to church - give to missions.
5. God in control of gold and silver – see parable of talents.
* 4. Free Time
	+ What do they do with it?
1. How much time on screens – impact on sleep
	* What do they listen to - how much?
2. Garbage in garbage out – listen to praise and worship music.
	* What do they do for fun - types of hobbies – go on vacation.
3. Halo data - talking about hobbies and vacations.
* 5. PAY ATTENTION TO
	+ HOW THEY SPEND TIME AND MONEY
	+ WHAT THEY WATCH AND LISTEN TO
* 6. Physical Health
	+ Last physical – any concerns – medications – side effects.
	+ Exercise – observable physical issues – caffeine use.
* 7. Education
	+ Education level – where – kind of social – type of student.
		1. Adjust homework to match.
* 8. Work
	+ What work do they do - hours put in.
	+ Attitude towards work – relationships at work.
* 9. Social Relationship
	+ What do they do for social - who do they socialize with?
	+ **Rom 12:9-10** *Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.  Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.*
1. Passage about - relationships amongst believers.
	* + - Fear of Lord shows up - called to hate evil - cling to good.
			- Growing in loving & honoring brothers and sisters in Christ.
	* What is their relationship with people in general?
2. **1 Pe 2:17** *Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.*
3. Here we honor everyone in general and governing leader.
* 10. NOTE WHERE THERE IS CHAOS IN THEIR LIFE
	+ It can point to Biblical improvement needed in relationships.
* 11. Honor
	+ Shows up a lot.
		1. Honor God, parents, fellow believers, others, governing leader.
		2. Love God – love neighbor seen.
	+ What does honor mean.
		1. It originates in our hearts,
		2. value we personally place on someone or something.
	+ Submit or serve – varies for each one – another topic.
	+ If not honoring & valuing what God says - what are they placing value on?
		1. Note these – idols.
	+ God values all people – Christ died for all - we are to do the same.
	+ When counselee aligns with the Word - honors Biblically
		1. Watch the change happen & fruit of the Spirit blossom.
	+ As counselors – we honor our counselee.
		1. Value them regardless of issues
		2. Lovingly & gently encourage - align hearts and actions to God’s Word.
	+ Biblical counseling is grace and truth in balance.
		1. Put forth to the counselee - offering help, hope and healing.

**Evaluate the data Biblically and organize it**

* 1. What is the problem – Sin – sin is always the problem.
	+ Sin cursed body – hurt – died – comfort.
	+ Sinning on their part – doing evil – confront
	+ Someone else’s sin against us – evil done to them – suffering – comfort.
	+ **Rev 21:4** *He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.*
1. Until that day - sin and death removed - thrown into the lake of fire
	* + - Sin is a problem – sin is the problem.
	* How is sin manifested in your counselee?
	* Nice if only one category applied – many have sin and suffering.
		1. Typically address suffering first.
			+ Unresolved hurt - leads to sinful alternatives.
* 2. Desires of their heart.
	+ **James 4:1** *What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?*
	+ Their desires or affections?
		1. They do what they do because they want what they want.
		2. Find out what they want & the Doing will make more sense.
		3. What is it they are wanting bad enough?
			- that they will sin to get it or sin if they do not get it?
	+ Note what they battle with – other people – own heart – with God.
* 3. **1 Th 5:14** - GOOD categories & what approach to take
	+ And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.
	+ Is the counselee - idle – faint hearted – weak?
		1. Typically – fall into more than one – pray about what to address first.
	+ Patience is key regardless.
* 4. Learn to parse Scripture – sequence of things important.
	+ Look at **Rom 12:1-2** as an example - many others.
		1. What is the sequencing or progression of what is given here?
		2. I appeal to you therefore, brothers,
		3. by the mercies of God,
		4. to present your bodies as a living sacrifice,
			- holy and acceptable to God,
			- which is your spiritual worship.
		5. Do not be conformed to this world,
		6. but be transformed
			- by the renewal of your mind,
		7. that by testing you may discern
			- what is the will of God,
			- what is good and acceptable and perfect.
		8. What is sequence?
			- Right view of God – His mercy
			- Surrender control – Lordship.
			- Fear of Lord – not conform – hatred of evil.
			- Now you can choose Good –
			- God’s will and ways
			- Cling to this
		9. Get out of order and can be by works and bring self-condemnation.
			- Behavior modification results – not transformation.
* 5. Circles of Responsibility
	+ Chart we frequently use in counseling.
		1. Says - need to – step up and do their part – trust God to do His
	+ Small circle - things we are responsible for.
	+ Large circle - things God is responsible for.
		1. Each list would be tailored to counselee.
		2. Have Bible verse to back up each one.
	+ The principle is
		1. Not doing their list of responsibilities
			- Hopelessness, despair, depression typically – need to step up.
		2. Attempting to do or manage God’s list.
			- Anger, worry, fear, anxiety typically – step back.
			- Trust God and His sovereignty.
		3. Not an absolute test.
			- Points to things to investigate further, get more data.

**Anything here you cannot do or learn to do?**

* Do not need to be Bible scholar.
* Need to – patiently listen – collect data – evaluate Biblically.
* The Word is your primary tool.
* Wonderful ministry
1. Front row seat to watch God work and transform people.

**Challenge**

* We need help – We need more counselors.
	+ People want help – we are overrun by the need.
* Here at CHCC we have around 50 counselors counseling here.
	+ Doing over 2,400 sessions a year
	+ But waiting list is frequent 30+ and 3+ months.
* Cannot simply push this off on Pastors.
	+ They are overwhelmed.
* The Pastors job is to equip us THE LAY
	+ Pastors are not one-man show doing everything.
	+ If need is unmet – then that falls on the lay
	+ Conference goal – get you equipped and down path to counsel.
* Lay - Do you want the job?
* Pastors/elders – prioritized getting help – equipping the lay.
* Age not a factor.
* We probably turn away as many people for counseling than we take.
* Breaks our heart we cannot help everyone.
* We need help to meet the need – will you pray?
* Will you pray about if you are one called to get equipped to help?
* In Christ, all things are possible – Resist the devil and he will flee.
* That includes you being able to minister the Word.
	+ To your family, your church, even a lost world

God bless.



