

- 1. Mankind is created in God's image and is relational.** Mankind is viewed from a Judeo-Christian world view as being created in God's image and existing in three dimensions, each with its own functional domain and consciousness: the spiritual dimension that functions through conscience, intuition, and worship, making us conscious of God; the soulish dimension that functions through thought, feelings, and choices, and makes us conscious of self and others; and the body that functions through the five senses and makes us conscious of the world/environment. (nature of mankind)
- 2. Mankind is both "fallen" and "needy".** Mankind, due to sin, is "fallen" or separated from God, and is motivated primarily out of a need for intimacy with God and others ordained by Him specifically, one's spouse, family, and the church, the body of Christ. (nature of mankind)
- 3. Man's basic need for relationship is pursued in two manners.** Man's inherent need for relationship with God and others, requires people to express humility, exercise faith, and experience intimacy. In contrast, man's fallen condition prompts a selfish, self-reliant, and self-condemning response to this neediness. (nature of mankind)
- 4. Abundant life is found in relationship.** Life eternal is a gift of God and realized through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Abundant and fulfilling life is experienced in the present through intimacy with God and meaningful others as ordained by Him. (life and meaning)
- 5. Human problems stem from unmet relational needs.** Individual life problems and relational conflicts are considered from an object-relations/developmental psychology framework, in the context of unmet intimacy needs which result in unhealthy thinking, unhealed emotions, and unproductive behaviors. (etiology of problems/pathology)
- 6. God's provision for man's needs.** God is profoundly concerned with man's aloneness/neediness (Genesis 2) as well as his fallenness (Genesis 3). Patterns of unmet intimacy needs, unhealthy thinking, unhealed emotions, and unproductive behaviors are the major hindrances to intimacy and abundant life and thus become the focus of the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. God is viewed as the ultimate provision for all human neediness and the Bible as giving complete and adequate instruction for mature living and fulfilling relationships. (resources for change)
- 7. Intergenerational influences contribute to current problems.** An intergenerational systems perspective is employed to understand and address the hindrances to intimacy mentioned above. Failure to meet the intimacy needs of one generation may continue to impact subsequent generations since "cleaving" to a new nuclear family may not have been preceded by emotional and psychological "leaving" of the family of origin. (etiology and treatment)
- 8. Intimacy is enhanced through the experiencing of God's manifold grace via four processes: affectionate caring, vulnerable communication, joint accomplishment, and mutual giving.** As couples and journey mates give and receive God's grace using these intimacy processes, they experience relationships that remove aloneness. Intimacy is developed and maintained as these processes are linked together in a repeated spiral across the life cycle stages. (growth processes across the life cycle).

Intimacy Therapy Principles

9. **The natural stages of family life bring predictable challenges to intimacy.** In order to continue our experiences of intimacy, we must repeat the cycle of affectionate caring, vulnerable communication, joint accomplishment and mutual giving with each new stage (new marriage, children, teens, empty nest etc.)
10. **The beginning point of therapeutic intervention is the experiencing of empathic comfort.** The empathic comforting of identified hurts and needs is a pivotal element in the affectionate caring process for developing intimacy. The lack of empathy is a fundamental breakdown in a care giving relationship. (process of change)
11. **Genuine relational intimacy is built upon the experiencing of God's truth.** Such experiencing of biblical truth produces cognitive renewal, emotional freedom, and behavioral discipline, and spiritually relevant outcomes. (process of change)
12. **The definition and goal of intimacy in relationships is drawn from God's example.** God knows us intimately and allows us to know and experience Him and His caring involvement in our lives. Thus, our definition and model for mature personality development and fulfilling relationships is deep mutual knowing for the purpose of mutual love and caring involvement. (therapeutic goal and change process)
13. **The therapeutic process for individual, marital, or family issues is structured in four "stages."** These stages are: 1) **Initial Assessment Stage**, which may include a self-inventory, definition of symptoms, relational and intergenerational dynamics; 2) **Stabilization Stage**, where the individual(s) and/or relationships are stabilized as a basis for subsequent work to improve functioning and foster further maturation; 3) **Leaving (family of origin) Stage**, where the "leave/cleave" issues of intergenerational significance which contribute to personal problems and relational discord are resolved; and, 4) **Intimacy Disciplines Stage**, where disciplines intended to promote further intimacy with God and others, personal maturity, and life fulfillment are developed. (therapeutic process and change)
14. **The role of the counselor or encourager is to assist the individual, couple, or family to eliminate hindrances to, and promote growth of relational intimacy as ordained by God.** Significant ministry of this nature occurs as believers serve a scripturally-defined role within the body of Christ to encourage and equip others to actually experience abundant life as referenced in John 10:10. This approach includes much more than cognitive instruction. Rather, it calls for the "imparting of our very lives" to others as described in I Thessalonians 2:8-9, encouraging them to encounter the work of God's Spirit in their lives at the point of His Word. Specifically, the counselee is helped and encouraged to live and experience biblical truth in order to realize greater intimacy with God and others. Five areas of change are identified below:

Eliminating Hindrances

- Identifying and interrupting unproductive behaviors
- Resolving unhealed emotions
- Identifying and countering unhealthy thinking
- Identifying unmet intimacy needs
- Exposing and resisting selfishness, self-reliance, and self-condemnation

Enhancing Intimacy

- Modeling and reinforcing productive behaviors
- Experiencing positive emotions
- Internalizing healthy thinking
- Modeling and encouraging the meeting of intimacy needs
- Encouraging expressions of humility, exhortation to express faith, and rejoicing in experienced intimacy

Adapted from Appendix A of *Parenting with Intimacy Workbook*