

Biblical Counseling

Lesson 1, 29 April 2023

Introductions and Discussions

Steve's testimony

Married, 3 children Tennessee; Church was strong obedience and rules of Christian culture and Bible. Not so much about the presence of the Holy Spirit, the friendship of Jesus in every day, every moment. Some lost their faith. Some lived a life of up and down spiritual walk.

My life had compartments, family, faith, and religion. I used my strength to be a stronger Christian and went to seminary. In war, I relied on my personal strength, not the strength of God. Violence in my head, my personal strength was not enough, and my life fell apart. I could not be with my family or work. Divorce and broken relationships. I wanted to see Jesus face to face and tell him that "I believe in you, but I do not want you." I left Him, but He never left me.

I met a woman who was also not a believer. She saw my pain. She was afraid of my anger. She told me to get counseling, or we are finished. Now I will shorten my story. Counseling helped. Our relationship was better. We dedicated our lives to God. God has restored my relationship with older children. Counseled many people with trauma, loss, grief, depression, and anxiety. I can never see a moment in my life when God left me.

Antonio in Pemba: We give testimonies in church for all to hear. Some souls are saved because of finding faith after hearing our story. First, a Muslim, he knew nothing about Jesus. Most of his family believed after hearing from Antonio. There are more that need to give their lives to Jesus Christ.

Steve: Reminds me of the testimonies in the NT. "All I know is that before, I was blind, and now I can see."

Church's Response

Desire to be discipled, to grow, and then to serve. Love Christ, love ourselves, love others. This is the commandment.

Pastor's role

To be humble, honest, loving, and close to God. Build leaders who are called to serve. The pastor cannot walk with each person every day in each problem.

Discipleship verses Counseling

Sometimes we need to address the pain to get to the sin. We need to pray and represent Christ to the person. We need to show leadership by being vulnerable, honest, humble, and receptive to what God is doing. We must be alert to God's actions.

We need to get back to discipleship and growth. We want to move from spiritual milk to food. If our brothers and sisters are stuck in pain and sin, then they need extra help, not extra judgment.

Lesson 2, 6 May 2023

Trouble and Trauma in Mozambique

Many Muslims and believers come from Islam. They expect that if they convert, they will get something in exchange.

Not just Muslims but others who visit to see what they can get. They do not find what they are searching for and then go away.

Jesus offered eternal life, not material wealth. Water, in which we never thirst again...

So the church has many infant-like Christians, drinking milk and not solid food. Therefore, we will have many emotional problems. Emotional problems can lead to physical health problems too.

"Can God make my problems go away, make me happy, give me a passport, money, fix my health?"

Let's study Galatians 2:20 and try to teach and disciple our church to be surrendered, Christians.

The mentality of "what can I get" is very harmful to the new believer. This person will never know the joy of tithing and giving and the faith that comes from trusting God.

We need to make disciples, not just win many people to the church

We need to nurture the gifts of our church family.

Counseling in Mozambique

Pastor Cardozo discussed that churches are teaching material gifts as opposed to spiritual gifts

Lesson 3, 13 May 2023

Romans 1 prayerfully

We thank you, Lord, for the chance to share your good news of freedom, forgiveness, and eternal life. Even if one person at a time.

Discipleship – strong in the Lord

We believe but are distracted.

Homework: Read Romans 1 and 2, slowly, practicing awareness of the presence of God with you.

Jesus says to bring us all problems, confessions, and intercession for others.

Sometimes, just listen.

We will be better friends with Jesus and family if we learn to be honest with our words and learn to listen completely without thinking about what we will say while they are talking.

We can do this with God if we practice putting our thoughts aside while praying, listening, and reading Scripture.

We often read Scripture and merge our thoughts while we read instead of listening to the Spirit. So we begin to teach our thoughts, culture, and ideas instead of the Word of God.

Paul said in Timothy, not to add to Scripture, not to add new burdens. We all can be guilty of this if we are not careful to listen to the Spirit.

Brother Antonio, pray for his group.

PTSD, Grief, Loss, Depression, and Anxiety in Mozambique

A new person presents anxiously. First, we calm them down and pray together if they allow it.

Step 1 : Connect: build a rapport. Sometimes we start with many questions, and this elevates their anxiety. It is best to listen well. We can say back to them what we thought we heard. If this is correct, we can say how we think they feel. If we are correct, then we will have a good connection. If they tell us that we are wrong, we can quickly correct it. If they say, “No, I do not feel that way,” ask them to explain until we have it right. We are often right, but we used words they did not relate to. Be patient.

Step 2: Get consent: ask permission to ask personal questions. As permission to go to prayer, Scripture, and seek the Lord’s guidance and healing. Do not be afraid to say we must lean on Him for wisdom. They may say they are angry with God and do not want to pray. We will talk about this more later. For now, we understand more about the problem.

Step 3: Establish the presenting problem. We need to understand the problem that they want to discuss today. It may not be the real problem, but it is still important. They may have physical symptoms as well as emotional ones. They may have medical, financial, or social problems.

An example of a presenting problem is a headache. The real problem may be not drinking enough water. Someone may present with anxiety. We do not want to diagnose them too quickly. It could be a lack of relationship with Christ, it may be hunger, it may be blood sugar. It may be sadness that was never addressed. If they do not know why they are anxious, they may take a guess and tell you why they think they are anxious. We must not conclude anything too quickly.

We now have a connection and trust, consent, the presenting problem, and a little bit of the person’s history because they told us some of their histories when they told us their problem. We already know if they are comfortable praying or listening to you pray. They have a sense of control because we keep giving them control. If they have lost a loved one, they may feel very powerless, and we want to give them some power over this process. We will not force our opinions and advice on them.

We have also been practicing awareness of God’s presence, so we are learning to include His thoughts in our conversation. It is okay to pause and pray, even for a second, before we speak.

Now we have time to think about the following:

- 1 – how often should we see this person? Is it urgent?
- 2 – Who should see this person? Have we trained others to counsel? Do they need to see someone with experience leading a Muslim to Christ? Do they need to see a woman counselor? Do they need medical attention?
- 3 – Are they a strong believer who just needs to begin discipleship?

We must share our ideas and get their opinion when we see them again. They often say, “No, I trust you and want to work with you.” So you may need to explain that you are not the best person. You may need to explain that you cannot see them because you cannot give them the attention they deserve. Perhaps you tell them you will check in with them every few weeks. You have time to think, to pray.

Four phases of counseling and discipleship: Redemption, Identification, Liberation, Dedication

To be discussed next week

Lesson 4, 20 May 2023

Prayer

Reviewed Lesson 3

We prayed for Holy Spirit to hold our minds and dwell with us.

Roman 4 slowly and prayerfully

Abraham had enduring faith. The blessedness of the one to whom God credits righteousness apart from works

Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God,²¹ being fully persuaded that God had the power to do what he had promised.²² This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.”²³ The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone,²⁴ but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.²⁵ He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

4 phases of counseling and discipleship: Redemption – salvation, repentance and surrender to Jesus Christ. If this person needs help and does not believe in Jesus, we can still love and serve them.

Identification: This is where we will spend most of our time. Who are we? Who do we belong to? What is our value? What is our purpose? Where do we get our competency and ability?

Liberation: from addictions and patterns of the flesh.

Dedication: Surrender and commitment to Jesus

Informal or formal counseling depends on how much time you have and your relationship with the person.

Formal: Make them feel comfortable, get consent for personal questions, and establish their comfort level with prayer and Scripture. Discuss confidentiality and then always get their consent if you need to talk to another counselor or advisor. This will prevent you from breaking your word and harming the trust in the relationship.

After determining the presenting problem, determine what the person's goal is. You do not have to agree with the goal. They may say that all of their problems are due to having no money. They may have a goal to get money. Do not correct them. Just determine if they are willing to go to the Bible and to God in prayer with you and walk through their problems together.

Do not quote the Bible and say, "This is what you need to do." We are telling people how to think and how to act instead of leading them to depend on Jesus. We need to lead them toward a Christ-centered and grace-oriented walk.

We can tell them our testimony at some point but do not interrupt them to tell your story while we get their history. Do not start giving them advice. We cannot be the answer to their problems. Although eventually, we will give them some advice, we must teach them to think through their situations and then present them to God and long for His presence and obey Him.

At some point, we will ask them to think through their goals and try to get our goals for them and their goals to line up.

If working with a married couple, you can build a connection and discuss consent and the presenting problem. If you see that there needs to do a lot of work regarding living in the flesh, you may want to separate and take their history alone. You may want to get another counselor to meet with the female. You need consent and to be sure the other counselor is trained.

Some thought in summary:

Does the counselee admit that he/she has a problem?

Are they open to a spiritual/biblical solution?

Are they willing to take responsibility to move forward with the biblical counseling and do homework?

Homework

Read slowly and prayerfully Romans 5. Maybe practice silence after reading to listen to what the Holy Spirit teaches. If the Holy Spirit is silent, enjoy being together in silence. Practice awareness of His presence. He is present. Remember Abraham's faith.

Next week we will try to finish discussing how to take a history.

Lesson 5, 27 May 2023

We heard from John about the joy of teaching the children.

It seems that working with children can be hard, and it can also be the most rewarding. They sense the truth from you. They can tell if you are emotionally present; they can tell if you love them. They can tell if you are strong or not. If they express love to you, you can be sure it is real.

John spoke about how they celebrated his birthday, which has never happened. Nelson explained that birthdays are forgotten in Mozambique and that most do not celebrate their own lives. There are too many troubles in life to have this joy.

We must be one with Christ so more people can know Jesus and know the joy of being friends with Jesus. He is the way, the truth, the life. He offers bread that feeds our souls for eternity. He offers peace that transcends understanding.

The disciple, John, wrote in 1 John 5 that we could ask for anything in his name. How is this so? The same person wrote in the Gospel of John all about abiding in Christ and Christ abiding in us. He wrote about Jesus' prayer that we might be one with the Father. This same man said we can ask for anything and receive it. Can you know understand that this is how it is possible? When we are one with Christ, our thoughts are one with His, they are holy, and he leads us not into temptation but delivers us from evil. Can you see how our prayer request will be His will?

As we become less and Christ becomes more. People will meet us and have met Jesus and know joy.

We must be contemplative Christians. Christians who are aware of the presence of God and who can see what God is doing, not what humans are doing. Pontius Pilate told Jesus that he had the power to let Jesus live or die. Jesus told the Roman Governor that he had no power but what the Father gave him. Also, look at Psalms 46:10 and 2 Corinthians 3:18. These verses express the importance of awareness of God's presence and glory.

Lectio Divina: Romans 6, we read prayerfully, and the Holy Spirit dwelled with us and taught us as we read slowly.

History taking

I will send a few pages of questions that will help you consider what questions to ask to gain the full history after learning the presenting problem, consent, and building some rapport. You have already discussed things like when to meet and how often.

At the end of this history-taking. You may take another look at their goals. Try to agree on the goal that the person should be going after. If they say, I want to be a better speaker, suggests that maybe the goal is to be a better listener to God, hear Him well, then speak while deepening a relationship with the Lord. This is just an example.

During the history taking, we are trying to:

Get a context for the counselee's presenting problem

Observe how their unique version of the "flesh" has been formed

What is his/her functional source of life (where do they draw their energy and hope from, such as work, family, identity, fitness, or God)?

We are looking for their Social History, Psychological History, and Spiritual History.

We also want to understand if there are medical needs that need attention.

Listen for their Identity, Rejection, Self-Life (coping and defense mechanisms), and Loss.

Loss is usually far more than what we notice on the surface.

A man that loses his wife might say they lost their wife. We may see that they have lost a friend, a supporter, the caretaker of children, a person who helped financially, their dreams of a future, and their identity as a husband. There can be much more. We need to listen well.

A person often does not know how much they have lost. They only know that feel loss and pain and have pushed deep into their soul and subconscious so that they can move forward with life. The alternative to moving forward is self-harm and suicide. To move forward, we can depend on God, but most of us instead create stronger flesh. We build an identity as a teacher, a pastor, a soldier, a policeman, a mother, and a father. It is okay, and we must not judge because we all do this. We must see that their actions are a response to pain.

When we are rejected, we create a façade or false identity to help us accept ourselves and so others will accept us. Other ways to handle pain can be addictions such as food, sex, and drugs. We may watch TV or find ways to escape reality. Rejection and loss cause pain. Pain causes us to find a way to survive. Many people in the church only see sin and accuse. The devil is the accuser. Jesus is merciful. We must show grace and mercy and listen well. Let them know you have heard and understand them.

We must confess that we cannot fix their problems. We must lean on the Holy Spirit of God and teach them to do the same. We are only walking along their side pointing to the truth. We are not Truth.

We must be contemplative and teach them to be contemplative. We must learn to be still and know He is God.

How One's Flesh is Formed

1 – Family – relationship with parents and siblings or lack of relationship.

2 – Lack of meaningful love – rejection

3 – Ego, our sense of identity

4 – Heart – our spiritual walk and understanding.

Comments:

We must listen well

We must consider our Christian walk to be a biblical counselor

We must continue to work hard and rely on the strength of God.

I Corinthians 5:58

There is so much ongoing rejection

Next week

Rejection and Flesh

Romans 7

Lesson 6, June 3

Steve was away in Washington DC. We sent questions we can ask a counselee or allow them to fill out at home. It is good to learn many of these questions so you can use them as appropriate.

Lesson 7, June 10

We've been talking about getting to know a counselee who needs more help than discipleship.

Taking a history allows us to learn about the presenting problem and begin to see their personal, social, and spiritual life. Physical, emotional, and spiritual problems.

We must be in prayer, humble, and love the person we want to help. Our prayer time is as important as our time with the counselee.

Questionnaires do together, or they can do it at home. We are trying to hear their story. We must listen well. We can repeat what they say to make sure we hear them right. We can even say how they feel and ask them if we are right.

We will see three things;

- 1 – the rejection in their life
- 2 – their response (coping mechanisms and defense mechanisms)
- 3 – their patterns, how they handle rejection, loss, trauma

We will listen to our flesh and follow our patterns, or we will listen to the Holy Spirit

A broken person will have flesh that sounds very different from the Holy Spirit.

A pastor or experienced Christian will have a well-trained and well-educated flesh. This person may have a hard time knowing if they are listening to the flesh or Holy Spirit.

We can learn about the fruit of the flesh and the fruit of the Holy Spirit in Galatians 5. Let's not just practice the fruit of the Spirit. This is like practicing the law. Let's surrender to the Spirit and allow Him to work through us.

We read Lectio Divina, Romans 7

We will send a page on overt and covert rejection.

Perhaps we can also read Galatians 5 before next week.

Rejection and Rebellion

Rejection may one of the leading causes of rebellion. In the individual that has suffered rejection, rebellion may become a fixed attitude. If the attitude of rebellion is allowed to continue, it will eventually dominate the life and will ultimately lead to rebellion against God. Many people do not come to Christ because they fear what God might do to them or require of them if they allow themselves to come under His authority.

Some unfortunate Christians live their lives in a kind of quiet rebellion against God, running their own lives and MAKING ALL THEIR OWN DECISIONS without seeking the divine direction of the One who created them. THIS IS SELF-WILL AND LEADS TO SPIRITUAL POVERTY AND LACK OF PEACE.

Lesson 8, 17 June 2023

We started with prayer and reviewing last week.

We discussed the need to use questionnaires to get to know the counselee and to listen well.

We discussed rejection and how this is something we all face every day. We will face it and respond with the flesh or in the Holy Spirit.

The flesh can be in the form of defense mechanisms and coping mechanisms. All of us do this and we create a false self or façade that allows us to live an identity of our choice.

We must first deal with our own flesh before we can pastor, counsel, or disciple others. This is different from secular counseling or teaching philosophy. In those circumstances, we can use our academic understanding to teach. A biblical counselor must be submitted to the Spirit of the Living God in order to lead the person in front of us to the Great Healer.

As we begin to see the rejection in others and their response to rejection, we can help them with the same awareness and begin teaching them our true identity, our true power, our true purpose, and our true source.

We will continue to study this.

Everyone must have read Romans 7, Romans 8, Galatians 2:20-21.

We will send you a document with Rejection Examples.

We will also send a document with the Manifestations of the Flesh.

Pray for our translators; this is a lot of work.

God bless you all.

Lesson 9, 24 June 2023

We started with prayer and then review.

Our review was about how many Christians love God and are frustrated and even sometimes ashamed that they are still dealing with frustration, impatience, anger, addictions, depression, anxiety, and more.

We must humble ourselves when we meet them because we know we have all been through it. It is hard to confess problems like this because Christian leaders often act as though they do not deal with such problems. Leaders must contemplate the damage they may cause by not being open and vulnerable.

Galatians 2:20 is a very important verse and state of mind. It is a Christ-centered and grace-oriented mindset.

When we read it, and also with our counselees may read it and feel worse. They may ask, "Why can't I live like this?"

We must remind them that it is okay. It is really okay. We are forgiven, Jesus is our friend, He has given us a helper, and we will walk with them toward renewal. Also, we have been there ourselves. In fact, we may be dealing with things as we are tempted, and at times, we do not surrender to the Spirit. We will walk together in humility.

Sometimes very difficult trauma or loss comes our way. During these times, a person may need time to grieve or recover. They do not need to be told they are not surrendered to Christ. Again, be careful not to judge.

By taking their history, we can find that they may need to recover, grieve, ask for forgiveness, and forgive others. We must never judge them but ask them questions that lead them to realize where they are.

How did we get here? Much of our daily difficulty is reacting to trauma, loss, rejection, and other problems with our flesh instead of reacting as Galatians 2:20 says, "crucified with Christ..."

How did this happen?

Since childhood, we have dealt with overt (open) and covert (hidden) rejection.

We will provide a document that has many examples of this rejection. Also, see last week's lesson.

Our reactions include building an identity that includes defense mechanisms and coping mechanisms. This is part of the fallen world and the existence of sin. This does not mean we judge others and say they are sinning. We all have done this, and every person has many years of false identity that has kept them from worse depression or even suicide. Their flesh has gotten them to where they are now. It has kept them alive and with some success. God wants so much more for us. God was abundance, adventure, joy, peace, power...

This will not come from the flesh. We already have Christ in our hearts, and the Holy Spirit dwells within us. How do we submit to this and EXCHANGE our SELF-CENTERED life for a CHRIST-CENTERED life?

First, we have to see where we are. We must admit what we have done. We must confess our sins. It is good to fall on our knees and truly repent. As Christians, however, we are already forgiven. It is good to confess our sins to God and one another. This way, we can stop thinking about ourselves and return to our time with Jesus and serving Him. It can get narcissistic praying and praying about how we have sinned. And then we worship and thank God we are saved. And then we keep talking to God about our growth and our problems. And then we talk about ourselves about what God has done for us.

All of these things are good, but can you see how we continue to make ourselves the center of the universe?

At some point, walking with Christ and submitting to God's guidance, we will wake up and forget to talk to God about ourselves. One day you will wake up to give thanks for His work in the world, keeping all things together, working out his good and perfect will. We will wake up praying for others. If we sin, we will confess and feel bad about getting in the way of the Holy Spirit. We will see that God was doing something, and we got in the way. We will confess and get back to work.

When counseling, we want folks to see the difference between being led by their own voice and flesh instead of the Holy Spirit. When they agree, we can move forward.

We reviewed Romans 1 – 7. God's characteristics were in nature. We loved and worshiped creation instead of the Creator. Then He sent the prophets; we killed them. He sent the law, showing us our sins; we sinned even more. God sent His son, and we killed him too. But the Son conquered death so that we can too. He sent the Helper to dwell with us so we can do greater things than Jesus.

Then we "turned the corner" and read Romans 8. Praise the Lord!!!

We see that I cannot do this; it is the Spirit of God that provides forgiveness and freedom. We live in freedom by not focusing on our sins but confessing and then obeying. This is by faith. We believe what we have heard and act according to what we believe.

Romans 8 and Galatians 2:20 is something we read and say, "I need this, but it is hard." This is why we walk together. We will now walk together.

Lesson 10, 1 July 2023

We started in prayer and review.

Understanding rejection and the need to be heard well and to be understood. This can be supported by repeating their words and asking if we heard correctly. At times, state how we think they feel or felt about things. Ask them if we are correct.

Our counselees, spouses, and children should all feel heard and understood.

We then reviewed Steve's flesh patterns worksheet. We can demonstrate our patterns to our counselees to help them understand. It also shows them that we have dealt with similar problems and that we do not judge them.

I will send the document so we all can do a similar exercise.

We discussed how it is important for our counselee to understand their own patterns and their need for Jesus to heal them. It is okay if they have tried this many times and have failed.

They may need to accept Jesus as their Savior. Perhaps they already did because of fear. Maybe now they need to understand what it means to be a Christian, to be part of the Kingdom and a friend of Jesus. What does it mean to be a part of His family? To be loved and worthy, to be chosen. We obey based on this love and faith in his plan.

Now, accept that we need help and allow brothers and sisters in Christ to walk with us.

Next week we begin this second part of the journey. We will study what the bible says about our spirit, soul, and body.

We read again Galatians 2:20-21, Luke 9:23, and Hebrews 3:13 (Body of Christ must encourage one another).

FLESH PATTERN HOMEWORK:

I will send a document for you to consider the messages, beliefs, and patterns in your life. Here are some notes to help you fill it out.

Flesh Patterns:

Step 1, choose 5 people or groups (mother, father, brother, church, spouse, school, pastor, etc.) that spoke messages into your life. (Steve's example - friends who left).

Step 2, write how each of these made you feel (good or bad) (Steve's example - I felt that I was interesting enough to be their friend but not enough to keep their interest and keep the friendship).

Step 3, write the belief that stayed with you from these feelings (Steve's example - I believed that I was not interesting enough to keep people I care about around me).

Step 4, write the patterns that emerged from these beliefs (coping mechanisms, defense mechanisms, false identity) (Steve's example - I need to say things, even if not true, to keep a person interested in me and stay with me).

Step 5, write the protective layers that you developed to feel better about life and to help you deal with rejection. (Steve's example, To keep friends and possible relationships, I would let them know things about me that they may want to hear. I would prevent them from knowing about my mistakes, I would worry about my reputation, and I would tell them stories that they would find interesting about me. I did these things because I did not think they would think well enough about me if I didn't say so).

Lesson 11, 5 August 2023

Isaiah 61; The power of God declaring freedom.

The Christian message is the good news of freedom, the Gospel.

The deliverer of the message is us. Are we poured out and transformed so that Christ is now working through us?

If not, what is in the way? When we have silent prayer and just spend time with the Lord in the inner room, we often have a flood of thoughts. Silence and listening to the Spirit is difficult.

The thoughts interrupting our time with the Lord is what is between us in our friendship.

We can take inventory of these things and begin to pray.

Many pastors cannot sit in silence as they have too many thoughts of worry. Worry our their own spiritual walk and about their ministry, their church.

Jesus wants our thoughts, our time, our friendship.

The battleground for this is in our soul.

The human model is the spirit, soul, and body.

See the graphs and verses.

Our spirit relates to God and is secure, assured, and justified.

Our soul relates to others; rejection, money problems, and suffering.

Our body can reflect the inner pain, and for the Christian who does not have Christ in the center of their life, this will result in frustration and manifest in hostility.

Galatians 5: 19-21 lists the fruit of the flesh.

Once we identify with the crucifixion, the death of Christ, we account ourselves as dead with Christ. Now, we can identify with the resurrection and our true nature free, and Christ can transform us to be one with the Father, and all believers are to be unified as one.

As counselors, pastors, and friends, we should not start with people who are in pain and try to move right to living a Christ-like life or trying to live in obedience or like spiritual heroes.

First, we get their **history** and learn about the **rejections**, trauma, and loss they have encountered. Then we hear them well. Let them grieve. Pray for healing and forgiveness and forgive others. Establish the **flesh patterns** in their lives. Be sure that they see their flesh is with them, and they want to begin the exchange process.

Then go through the **wheel diagrams** and then the **line diagrams**.

Then: **Commitment page, Selfers Prayer, Who I am, What Happened to Me.**

We will give you all of these documents.