

Principles of Counseling - Part 5

Howard Hendricks

I. Introduction

A. Counseling is the process to earn a right to a hearing and be able to influence someone else's life.

B. The goal is to be able to apply the Word of God to the life of hurting people.

C. Observations on the counseling process:

1. No two counseling situations are exactly alike. Even if the problem is the same, the person is not the same.

2. The process below is logical, not chronological.

3. The process can be extended over a period of minutes, weeks, and years.

4. Remember that the important thing is not the problem but how the person perceives the problem.

II. Phase 1: Relaxation and Rapport

A. Warm personal greeting.

B. Concern over counselee's physical comfort.

C. Small talk.

D. Opportunity for counselee to test the situation:

1. How much will I tell this person?

2. What will they think of me?

E. Privacy without time limits.

F. Genuine belief in counselee's worth

1. The value of each person is intrinsic. Man looks on outward appearance but God looks on the heart.

2. We see men based on what they are instead of what they may become through Christ.

3. Jesus did not think any more about Nicodemus than He did about the woman at the well. (John 3-4)

4. The issue is pride, superiority, and intolerance. There is no pride greater than spiritual pride.

G. Unreserved acceptance of the person. If someone is in trouble, they need to be helped not judged. (Galatians 6:1)

1. The hardest thing in Christianity to learn is divine acceptance.

2. People will only share when they feel accepted and comfortable.

3. When you accept a person, you are not necessarily accepting what they are saying or doing.

4. Too often we transfer our hate for the sin to the sinner.

H. Review of the facts from previous interview.

1. What is it that you wanted to tell me about?

2. Review notes from past sessions before interview.

III. Phase 2: Definition

A. Admission and clarification.

B. The person you are counseling comes expecting you to solve your problem. They are transferring responsibility to you.

C. Couselee must understand counselor's role and their responsibility:

1. The counselor does not have the answer. This places you in the role of advisor.

2. We cannot help people; only Jesus Christ can help people.

3. Beware being used as a crutch by dependent people, especially alcoholics.

D. If the couselee expects you to solve their problem, then they will lose confidence in you when you do not solve it.

E. It prepares them for the emergence of a divine answer.

F. It keeps the counselor from developing spiritual pride or anxiety. (John 15:5)

G. If you magnify human wisdom, you minimize divine wisdom.

H. You have to create an environment in which the couselee can find a solution with your help.

IV. William Glasser's *Reality Therapy*.

A. Questions to ask in counseling:

1. Is it right? Is it right in terms of Scripture?

2. Is it realistic?

a. This is one of the strongest characteristics of our time - people with empty idealism living in fantasy and disconnected from reality.

b. The Scriptures teach reality.

3. Is it responsible?

V. Biblical guidance to the counseling process.

A. Counselee cannot be passive but must move into action to find a solution to his problem.

B. The counselee must realize its normal and necessary to have problems.

C. Yield not to temptation because yielding is sin.

D. Count is all joy. (James 1)

E. Problems are common to man. (I Corinthians 10:13)

1. Every temptation that has bothered me has bothered others.

F. The works of the flesh are obvious and manifest. (Galatians 5:19)

G. The only thing that keeps us from committing sins is grace.

H. Elijah was a human being like us. (James 5:17)

I. Christ was tempted in every way just like we are, but He was victorious. (Hebrews 4:15)

J. God never rebukes Habakkuk for questioning Him. (Habakkuk 1-4)

K. When we sin, we have an advocate with the Father. (I John 2:1-2)