

## Maranatha Bible Church 2020

### Equipping Hour: Advanced Biblical Counseling

#### Week 4: Correcting the Convicted

#### Introduction

- 1) In this 6 week class, we are taking a deep dive into **2 Timothy 3:16-17** “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for **teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness**; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”
- 2) In the counseling process so far we have looked at teaching and conviction. Both of those actions were undergirded with the firm belief that the Scriptures are fully inspired by God and they are all we need for life and godliness.
  - A) We must not leave our counselee hanging after they have felt the conviction of sin. There are some direct steps which must be taken in order for the individual to live the life that the Lord has commanded.
- 3) To correct someone literally means *straightening up again*. This is very important to understand as we continue with this Biblical counseling course. Also, this is the only place the word is used in the New Testament so we should give it some extra attention.
  - A) Look at **2 Timothy 3:16**, especially the first part. Paul says that *all Scripture is inspired by God and profitable...* Here is what Paul is connecting, it is only by the inspired word of God that a person, who is down and out of line, is able to be made straight (or right) again.
  - B) I know I have said this a lot these past couple of weeks, but if we desire to see spiritual results, not just behavioral change, then we need to stick with the word of God.

**We are going to look at three parts of correction today...Repent...Rethink...Restart.**

#### Repent

- 1) I hope now you will be able to see that the Bible is more than just a rule book that is there to expose our sin and instruct us on what we are not to do.
  - A) We are told in **2 Peter 1:3-4** “...seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.”
    - a) God has given us all we need to know about this life. We know what we are not to do and what we are to do. Furthermore, what God commands He also empowers in the life of the believer to do.

- b) This is one of the many goals of Biblical counseling. We should desire to show the counselee that the Bible is not just there for good advice or to find out if something is good or bad to do. The Bible is there to show us God’s standards so that we may glorify Him in all we do and live a joyful life.
- c) God’s standards, just like a good parent’s standards, are not arbitrarily put in place. He has a clear focus and goal and knows how to best get us there.

2) ***If one truly is convicted of what you have taught him, then he is going to repent.***

A) I think it is important to start off with knowing that repentance is not something that we can make someone do. Paul says in **2 Timothy 2:25** “...with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth...”

a) Contrary to popular teaching in the church today, we are not looking to manipulate people into having some sort of guilt centered experience.

(1) Many today like to create an environment where it is more likely that a person will be able to repent of their sin. They believe that if they can create an emotionally driven experience, the person will be moved to repent.

(a) But that is not what the Bible says at all. In fact, that is mere manipulation which can ONLY lead to a false sense of security and/or salvation.

B) Repentance is “rethinking of one’s behavior, attitudes, and beliefs. It is coming to a different opinion or viewpoint, one so different that it calls for different thought patterns and a different lifestyle.”<sup>1</sup>

a) **A couple of things to point out about repentance.**

(1) This does not carry with it an emotional response. The word does not have any sorrow or grief connotations either explicit or implied.

(a) Even so, I would personally assert that repentance will (most likely) lead a person to have some sort of emotional expression. But, it is important to understand that the presence or lack of emotions, should not necessarily dictate the genuineness of repentance.

(i) Paul says in **2 Corinthians 7:10** “For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.”

a) The word for sorrow that Paul uses means *to be overcome with grief* or better yet, *swallowed in grief*.

b) While in our modern day language we automatically link grief with some sort of outward emotional response, this was not always true.

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<sup>1</sup> Jay Adams, *How to Help People Change*. p. 142

- (ii) Speaking of Esau, the writer of Hebrews says in **Hebrews 12:17** “For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.”
- a) Esau sought after repentance with tears! He had the outward signs of a repentant man. But, we are told that he found no place for it.
  - b) He looked the part, but unfortunately it was not sincere.
- (b) To be sure, there will be some sorrow, some regret and some grief, but we must not put a scale on the outward emotional outward response.
- (c) What can we look for in a person who has repented?**
- (i) We have some guidance on true repentance, but ultimately it is the Lord who judges the heart (**1 Sam. 16:7**).
  - (ii) We should start to see a change in the person...a change in the behaviors, attitudes and beliefs. Just as we are told in **James 2:18c** “...I will show you my faith by my works...”
  - (iii) **The four steps in this process which Adams outlines are:**<sup>2</sup>
    - a) Confessing sin to God and to others (*we will see this next*)
      - a. This is the outwardly expression of godly regret. This is far more important of an indicator than any other emotional response.
    - b) Seeking forgiveness (*we will see this next*)
      - a. This is the first step in which the counselee takes in order to remedy the situation.
    - c) Forsaking the sinful way
      - a. This is the next corrective step in the process
    - d) Beginning an alternative way of life that is pleasing to God.
      - a. This is the final corrective step in the process.
  - (iv) This is why the use of Scripture is so important. The person must know, and believe, they have sinned against God *before* any of this can take place. As bad as someone’s sin may be against someone else, it is even worse because it was against a holy God.
    - a) Think about what David says in **Psalm 51:4a** “Against You, You only, I have sinned.”
      - a. This is David’s prayer to the Lord regarding his sin with Bathsheeba and Uriah. He had wronged her by taking advantage of her and then tried to cover it up by having her husband murdered.
        - i. The consequences of his sinful actions included the death of the child. Yet, he says that he only sinned against the Lord.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid p. 144

- ii. How is this? There were many parities involved and affected by his sin.
  - iii. I like what John Piper says here “Sin, by definition in the Bible, is not wronging another person. It is assaulting the glory of God, rebelling against God. Sin, by definition, is a vertical phenomenon.”<sup>3</sup>
  - iv. David knew that he had broken the very commands of the Lord and that his relationship with the Lord was broken.
  - v. I do not think he meant that what he did to Uriah and Bathsheeba was okay or tolerable. But, he recognized that ultimately he rejected the Lord as his supreme treasure and allowed sin to reign in his life.
- (v) To emphasize the word of the Lord even more, in **2 Samuel 12:9**, Nathan the prophet, speaking for the Lord says to David “**Why have you despised the word of the Lord by doing evil in His sight?**”
- (vi) People sin when they despise the word of the Lord. This is the importance of teaching, so they know they have gone against the word of God and then they can be convicted.
- b) All of this to say, a repentant person should bear fruit that is consistent with repentance (**Luke 3:8; Gal. 5:22-23**). Bearing fruit is not only a true marker of repentance but also of the Christian life.
  - c) This is not some vague command of John the Baptist in **Luke 3:8**, but John was specifically telling them their actions should now match their repentance.

### ***Rethink or Reconsider***

- 1) Once someone has been taught the ways of the Lord, they have been convicted and repented...now they must start to rethink or reconsider their normal daily life. As they do, they will begin to realize the need for confession in their life.
  - A) Repentance and confession are closely related, but they are two individual steps in the process. They most likely will take place either at the same time or within a short time of each other, but they both must take place.
  - B) The reason I believe that repentance must come first is because it is a gift from the Lord. Follow the logical train...it is the Lord who convicts the dead sinner, He brings life to their dead heart, they see themselves as sinners before God, repent of what they have done against Him and only now do they have the spiritual eyes necessary to understand Scripture.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/how-could-david-say-to-god-after-sleeping-with-urias-wife-and-then-killing-him-against-you-and-you-only-have-i-sinned>

a) As Paul says in **1 Corinthians 2:14** “**But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.**”

(1) Memorize this verse and put it in a safe place in your heart. If you are counseling someone and they just are not understanding or agreeing with Biblical principles, remember, they must be born again to fully comprehend the Bible.

2) **Confession means that a change of mind has taken place**, they are now able to rethink how they used to be. The person has gone from thinking their sinful ways are okay to knowing that they are an abomination against God.

3) Remember the working definition from before, repentance is the rethinking of one’s behavior, attitudes, and beliefs. Our goal as Biblical counselors is that they would start to see their own life, and life in general, through a Biblical worldview.

A) **Proverbs 28:13** “**He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.**”

a) Here is where the thought process must begin to change in the individual. They start to see Scripture as the words of life and by which they must live.

(1) If we are not living in such a way where we can confess our transgressions, we are not going to be able to live a victorious Christian life.

b) They begin to see that they have not lived up to the standards of Scripture and realize they must go to people whom they have sinned against and repent.<sup>4</sup>

c) As Adams says “the willingness to acknowledge one’s guilt, to agree with the conviction, is uppermost in the idea of confession.”<sup>5</sup>

(1) What does it mean to acknowledge one’s guilt? It means to repent. The fruit of that is confession.

(2) Confession should be part of the normal life for the Christian.

(3) It is important that you teach them this from Scripture. **1 John 1:9** “**If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**”

(a) They have sinned against God, first and foremost. They need to repent and confess of what they have done.

(i) Remember what Paul said in **2 Corinthians 7:10** “**For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.**”

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<sup>4</sup> Depending on the nature of the sin, going to someone is not always necessary.

<sup>5</sup> Jay Adams, *How to Help People Change*. p. 149

d) **Why do we want someone to confess? What is the purpose of confessing if they have already repented?**

(1) Confession and repentance need to go hand in hand. Some put confession before repentance, but I think a true confession will come *after* one has repented, or so close that it may not be able to be distinguished.

(2) As we are convicted of our sin and repent, we are going to have a change of mind regarding our beliefs, attitudes and practices.

(3) Confession is the outward evidence that someone has a desire to change and be different. This is fruit of repentance that we can see in the person.

(a) One writer puts it, “Perhaps it’s because we don’t understand that confession and repentance aren’t the same thing. In our genuine desperation to be done with the shame and the shackles of our sin, we confess. But then, sometimes, we foolishly exhale and believe our work is done. Not wanting to talk about or be bothered by our sin again, we fail to realize that confession is just the beginning. This failure is why many people experience false transformation. We shirk (avoid) repentance when we agree with the truth of our sin (confession) without choosing the gospel-motivated response.”<sup>6</sup>

(b) What this is saying is that it can be easy to confess our sins to the Lord after we have heard a convicting sermon. Maybe on communion Sunday during our reflection time, we are convicted of a sin that we have been harboring and the mere acknowledgement of that sin eases our burden.

(c) Confessing is agreeing with the conviction that the Spirit has brought upon us through the means of His word.

e) **But why does the guilt and shame come back sometimes?**

(1) This will be an important question that you will need to address with your counselee. They may have been harboring sin for years which is now coming to the surface. Many times in counseling someone, there are root causes which have been hidden under symptoms for far too long.

(2) When these come to the surface, it may not be a simple repent, confess and forget.

(a) I usually take people back to **1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”**

(i) This is where teaching the text is so important. There is nothing that is going to take away sin’s debt and stain other than the shed blood of Christ.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.9marks.org/article/confessionrepentance/>

- (ii) We do not want people to confess their sin so they get a weight off their chest of relieve some guilty feelings.
- (iii) Confessing the sin shows an act of humility and contriteness before God. We have an advocate in Christ, we can stand before the judge of all humanity as clean and clothed in the righteousness of Christ.
- (iv) We must teach people that they should believe the promises of God. If God says they are forgiven and cleansed, they are.
  - a) We have this promise from **Romans 8:1** “Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

## **Restart**

- 1) Repenting and rethinking will ultimately lead to a desire to restart one’s life. Up until this point, the majority of your time has been spent on shifting the mind and how we are to view God and our sin in light of God’s holy standards.
  - A) Going back to **Proverbs 28:13** “He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.”
    - a) Notice that we are told that it is in the confession and *forsaking* of our sin.
      - (1) An interesting word study on this word reveals it means *to leave behind*.
        - (a) The same word in Arabic means *to let go a beast from its bonds*. The beast is our sin and we must leave it behind, completely forsaking it.
        - (b) If we hold onto sin, either by choice or habit, we should never expect the blessings of God.
        - (c) Listen to what David says about holding onto sin in **Psalm 32:3** “When I kept silent [about my sin,] my body wasted away through my groaning all day long.”
        - (d) He also says in **Psalm 66:18** “If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear.”
          - (i) There are two things that David speaks of being affected by not forsaking sin...his physical body and his spiritual relationship with the Lord.
          - (ii) When we choose not to repent and confess our sin, we will have a miserable life. We will feel the effects of our sin in a physical way.
            - a) Take for instance worry or anxiety...it is said to cause:
              - a. Stomach pain, nausea, or digestive trouble, headache, insomnia or other sleep issues (waking up frequently), weakness or fatigue, rapid breathing or shortness of breath, pounding heart or increased heart rate, sweating, trembling or shaking.
              - b) When we choose to not give up our worries and anxieties and believe what Christ has said, these are some of the symptoms we can have because of it.

2) We do have New Testament vernacular for this forsaking which is talked about in the Psalms. The New Testament writers express this action as *putting-off*.

A) As Adams<sup>7</sup> explains:

- a) Putting off sin is abandoning, quitting, forsaking or letting go of sin. It includes the following:
  - (1) A willingness to deny or say no (as Christ puts it) to selfish desires, either sinful in themselves or sinful as taking priority above Christ and His kingdom.
  - (2) An actual breaking with the past practice, situation, or persons involved in the sin.
  - (3) Setting up a structure that will make it difficult to fall into the same sin again.
- b) I want to look at each of these in their own context. To be sure, there is some overlap between these three categories, but numbers 2 and 3 are pretty severe.
- c) Looking, for example, at **Ephesians 4:25** “**Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.**”
  - (1) We are assuming that someone comes to you who is struggling with lying. For whatever reason they simply struggle to tell the truth. Sometimes its an exaggeration, sometimes they omit parts of a story and sometimes they just lie.
  - (2) You can start at the 10 commandments to show the real heart of God’s character or any other place which talks about lying. They can see that it is against God’s word and that there is no such thing as a *little white lie*.
  - (3) After they are convicted that lying is against God, they repent and confess their sin. You take them to **Ephesians 4:25**.
    - (a) This is where we begin to lay out that new way of thinking. We want to see them view their life through the lens of Scripture. You could say something like now that you know it is a sin and you know that it is against God, it is time that *you* put that sin off.
    - (b) It is important to look back at **verse 24** “**...and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.**”
      - (i) Remember, verses are not in a vacuum. I want you to simply notice two things here:
        - a) In **verse 24**, Paul says that our new self has been created...
          - a. When we speak of laying aside falsehood (v. 25), we must tell them that it is in light of the fact they have a new self which has been created in the likeness of God. The *laying aside falsehood* can only be accomplished because we have been made new. Do not miss this! We can choose not to lie now because of it.
        - b) Secondly, he says that it has been created in holiness of the truth.

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<sup>7</sup> Jay Adams, *How to Help People Change*. p. 154

- a. Look at the simple contrast that Paul has created. Our new self has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. Therefore, if we have been made new, we should not be lying because it is against the truth.
  - b. The plain reading is, *stop lying because it is not who you are anymore*. You do not just want to tell the person that, because they could just stop for behavior's sake. Show them in the Bible where they have their power and purpose.
- d) The next two, breaking with the practice and setting up a structure, I want to take as one element.
- (1) Adams<sup>8</sup> calls these steps *radical amputation*.
- (a) Paul says in **1Corinthians 15:33** **"Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals.""**  
Even though your counselee may think they can "handle" being around their old friends and their old way of life, the Bible says otherwise.
  - (b) You may need to counsel someone to make a break with the people around them. This is a hard step, I have been there. But it is one that must be done if they are stuck in a lifestyle which constantly leaves them prone to sin.
    - (i) For example, a musician who travels and leaves his family for multiple months a year. He never attends church. He has no leadership at home, his family is falling apart, he is in and out of bars and hotels. There is a temptation from the women, the drugs, etc.
    - (ii) Being a musician is certainly not a sin, but in that environment it would be almost impossible to maintain a victorious Christian walk.
    - (iii) This would be further explained by Jesus in **Matthew 5:29** **"If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell."**
      - a) This is a radical amputation to rid oneself of all connections to our past sinful lifestyle. This is the cost of following Christ and the mindset one must have.
- (2) As you counsel someone in this direction, the next step falls into place. You break the practice and now set up a structure so that the sin cannot come back. This will be different for each person, but the more radical the sin the more intense the structure must be.
- 3) This is the fullness of correction. They have repented, began to rethink and now desire to restart their life.
- A) The only way someone is going to grow is if they deny themselves and follow after the Lord.
  - B) The correction phase is set up for the individual to realize their strength is not found within themselves, but in the Lord. They get their framework about life from the Lord through His word and then put off the old ways of the old life and view their new life through the lens of Scripture.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid p. 146

- 4) One final thought, this may take some time. People are not always ready to immediately change their life around because of sin. They may want to entertain their sin and try and put one foot out, while keeping one foot in the old life.
- A) Make sure you are ready to show an abundance of grace with people, just as Christ has shown with you. None of us got it the first time around. We have been through the same trials many times, been disciplined for the same things again and again. Yet, our Father still loves us.
- B) We are not looking for quick, superficial change. We do not want something that merely “helps” the person to feel better. We desire the person to have a heart change through the power of the Holy Spirit working through His inspired Scriptures.