

Maranatha Bible Church 2020

Equipping Hour: Advanced Biblical Counseling

Week 5: Training in Righteousness

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, conviction and correction. All of this will be for nothing if the person does not know how to *continually* walk in righteousness.
 - A) We are told in **1 John 2:29** “If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.”
 - a) Notice the correlation here here...you can *know* if someone is righteous, not if they *say* they are righteous but if they *practice* righteousness.
 - b) From day one, this is our goal with the counselee; that they would live a life which is characterized by practicing righteousness.
- 3) Before getting into the *how-to* portion of training, it is important to understand that when the Bible speaks of righteousness there are two main ideas.
 - A) The first is the righteousness from God which is imputed to us through Christ that we may now stand clothed in Christ’s righteousness. This makes us blameless before God and perfect in his sight.
 - a) Paul says in **Romans 5:19** “For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.”
 - (1) You are made righteous because of Christ, not because you did anything good of yourself.
 - (2) Because of this righteousness, which you now possess, your **position** before God has changed.
- 4) Here is where the rubber meets the road...as a Christian, you are **positionally** righteous before God. You have been transferred from the kingdom of darkness and death into the kingdom of light and life.
 - A) Because of that, as we read in **1 John 2:29**, we are now to live a life which is continually practicing righteousness. This is the final step, *training in righteousness*.
- 5) You will fail the counselee if you do not continue with this final step. When you get to step four, you have essentially created a vacuum in their life. You have showed them what they are doing is not according to the Scriptures and led them to put it off.
 - A) If they do not know how to now respond accordingly to their environment, they are going to fall right back into those sinful patterns. Even worse, they will think that Biblical counseling does not work and search out some manmade way.
- 6) A few words about this *training* that Paul is speaking of here.

A) The Greek word is paideia (pie-die-ya). This is a word which is normally reserved for the training and discipline of children.

a) In fact, Paul uses the same word in **Ephesians 6:4** “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”

b) Also, the writer of Hebrews uses this word several times in chapter 12 when speaking of how the Lord disciplines His children.

(1) The capstone of that chapter being 12:11 “All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.”

c) What is this training then that Paul is speaking of in 2 Timothy?

(1) One definition is “the whole training and education of children (which relates to the cultivation of mind and morals, and employs for this purpose now commands and admonitions, now reproof and punishment)”¹

(2) Also, "whatever in adults also cultivates the soul, especially by correcting mistakes and curbing the passions "; hence, instruction which aims at the increase of virtue”

(3) Remember back to **2 Timothy 3:16** when Paul said that **All Scripture is profitable for...training in righteousness.**

(a) Here is the key...the Word of God is the tool that we use to be disciplined in training in righteousness. Therefore, as Biblical counselors we have to now train the person in two important areas:

(i) They need to replace their sinful ways with righteous ones

(ii) They are empowered to do this by use of the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit

7) While there are many places in the Bible that we can take someone to show them the new life which is not only offered but commanded, I want to walk through **Colossians 3:1-17** this morning.

A) You should have something in mind that you like to walk through with someone when you get to this stage in the counselling process. This is the part where you are now filling the vacuum which was created when they put off their sin.

This morning as we are going through an overview **Colossians 3:1-17** and applying it to our counselling, we will see that now the stage is set, sanctification is the goal and we must stay the course.

The Stage is Set 3:1-4

1) This is the point that you have been working towards. The counselee is ready to start training in righteousness. Looking at **Colossians 3:1**, Paul says...*Therefore.*

¹ Strong's NT #3809

- A) This word means that now the stage is set. For the first two chapters of Colossians Paul has been diligently explaining who Christ is and who the Christian is in Christ.
- 2) Now is when we begin what is known in the Biblical counselling world as the *put-on* phase. There are dozens and dozens of put-off and put-on's in the Bible along with many books written about them. We as Christians need to be actively putting off the old man and putting on the new.
- 3) *If you have been raised up with Christ...* this "if" is not a question but rather a statement. Some have rendered it *since*, making it a fact.
- A) Here is the point that Paul is making, because you have a new life, because you have been raised with Christ, because your status has now changed...you need to seek (or pursue) the things above. Think of this as Paul's reminder to his readers of their current position before Christ.
- a) The word for *keep seeking* is a present imperative verb. That means that we are to be in a continual state of fulfilling the command to seek the things above.
- (1) Notice this is not a *good things come to those who wait*. It is a command to be seeking. Just like Jesus said in **Matthew 6:33 "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."**
- (a) The same word that Jesus uses in Matthew, Paul also uses in Colossians. It is a continual state of seeking.
- b) For the counselee, there may be some important distinctions that need to be made. This is something that needs to overflow into every area of their life. If it is the promotion at work, their personal life, their married life, etc. they need to be seeking the things above.
- (1) The *things above* would be those characteristics of Christ Himself. Because they are raised with Him, they should seek to be tender, meek, loving, patient, kind, etc.
- (2) It is only when we focus on living as new creations in Christ that we can start to really have joy in this world.
- c) We are to now view things in this life with an eternal perspective, no longer just thinking about the here and now.
- 4) **Verse 2** starts with another present imperative verb...*set your mind*. Once again, as a new creation who has been made righteous, we are to be seeking the things above and now continually setting our mind on things above. To make the contrast, Paul says *not on the things that are on earth*.
- A) You need to train your counselee to stop looking backwards and downwards and live looking upwards. The problems of the world are not going to be ultimately resolved here, but only when we appear with Christ in eternity.
- B) Most people are constantly looking back at all the times they have been wronged. They look at themselves and say they are just not good enough or they are simply victims of someone else's actions.

a) While there is certainly a proper place for looking back, the believer must do it now with the proper lens of the Scriptures.

b) What does this look like? We have Christ as our example in **Hebrews 12:2** “...fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, *who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*”

(1) Christ patiently suffered the cross because He knew that God is a righteous judge and that His joy was on the other side, the reconciliation of us to God.

5) **Verses 3-4** help the believer to know that our life is not ultimately here on earth. Though we certainly live in the present, we are ultimately going to be revealed with Christ in glory.

A) This is one of the motivations to live the way that Scripture defines it. We are most certainly going to be revealed with Christ.

The Struggle is Real 3:5-9

1) Paul, once again, starts with a *therefore*. So, because of all he just said in verses 1-4, we are to *consider* our earthly bodies as dead.

A) Following his trend, Paul uses an imperative verb here, commanding the believer to consider their bodies as dead. This is another way to say *mortify your flesh and its desires*. This is a unique word that Paul uses, the only other time he uses it is when he is speaking of Abraham in **Romans 4:19** “*Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb.*”

a) In both instances it means *to deprive of power* and *to destroy the strength of*.

b) Essentially what Paul is saying is that our positional reality must be lived out in our practical living. In order for the counselee to have victory over the sin plaguing their life, they must come to know and act as one who must continually be killing sin in their life.

B) Here is the contrast, if you are dead (as Paul lays out in chapters 1-2), then why would you want to walk in those old sinful ways any longer? You are no longer under the power of sin and can righteously choose to follow Christ.

a) We are told in **Romans 8:13** “...for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”

(1) There is no middle ground when it comes to sin. It brings death...the Spirit brings life.

b) It is important to lay out for the counselee that they are still going to sin, we will never be free from that reality until we are home with Christ.

(1) But, they are to strive against sin because they are dead to it.

- C) **Verse 5** is a powerful verse for you to use on a regular basis with believers as Paul links our doctrine and our practice. *This is their new life, dead to sin and alive to Christ.* They have now been bought with a price and carry the solemn responsibility to honor Christ with their bodies.
- a) Paul finishes verse 5 by laying out a list of sins that a believer should never be accused of because they are dead to such things.
 - b) This list is certainly not exhaustive nor should be some sort of gauge for serious and non-serious sins. Looking at this list, Paul seems to be focusing on our feelings and how if we allow our feelings to rule over our decision making process, we will likely fall into sin.
 - c) Look at how Paul links greed with idolatry. Greed is another word for covetousness, which is the root for all sin.
 - (1) We are told in **James 4:1-2** “What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask.”
 - (2) It is because we want what we want, and when we do not get it, we throw a fit. Here is where you are getting to the real Christian living with your counselee.
 - (3) *When people sin, they are doing what they desire in spite of knowing what God desires them to do. They are placing themselves on the throne and setting God aside for their own pleasures.*
- D) If that is not enough reason not to sin, **verses 6-7** gives us two more reasons not to sin...the wrath of God is going to come down upon us and it is not who we were.
- a) One should never desire to be under the wrath of God. This is always God’s reaction against sin, wrath. Ultimately, those who live and die in constant rejection of God will experience his wrath fully in eternity.
 - (1) We should never confuse God’s chastisement with His wrath. We will, as believers experience His loving discipline to conform us more into the image of Christ. But, we will never have His wrath upon us.
 - b) The second reason not to sin is because we are not dead to that...that life is over and we now have a new one. It would be like returning to the poverty stricken slums after having a new house given to you. These things characterize the unsaved world, not those who call on the Lord for salvation.
- E) **Verses 8-9** Paul names off some more sins, different than the first list. Instead of emotional sins, these seem to have more to do with how we interact with one another.
- a) In **verse 8**, Paul starts off with another imperative verb, *put them all aside*. He is speaking of the sins which he just named off and will name.
 - b) This is the *put-off* command here.

- (1) As you are training the counselee in righteousness, you have to remember that you are building a case for them to understand and follow.
 - (a) They are dead to sin, they must actively, continually die to sin, if they choose not to, they are in danger of falling under the wrath of God because they are acting like their old self.
 - (b) They must put off the old ways so that they can not only prove to be children of God but also walk in the new ways prescribed to Christians.

Stay the Course 3:10-17

- 1) After setting the stage and explaining that there is going to be a struggle, it is time to encourage them to stay the course which is set out.
- 2) Notice in **verse 9** he says *since you laid aside the old self...* then in **verse 10** he says *and have put on the new self.* **Here is where he starts the put-ons of the Christian life.**
 - A) It is so important that we do not just skip to this part while counseling someone. They need to know they have sinned against God, they need to know they must repent and confess and then know they have been made new and are covered in the righteousness of Christ.
 - B) It is only then that they can start to reckon the old man dead and put on the new man.
 - C) This is the change that is pleasing to God. When we forsake the old sinful ways and strive to live a life which is worthy of the gospel.
- 3) The rest of **verse 10** is really such a good encouragement for us and the person you are counseling.
 - A) First of all, *who is being renewed* is a passive verb. This means that it is happening to them as they are putting off the old man and putting on the new.
 - B) Secondly, it means they (like us) are not going to become instant spiritual and theological giants. Spiritual growth takes time, some people take longer than others. There are going to be great strides ahead, and on other occasions there will be great times of failure.
 - a) The battle against the flesh will continue all throughout our life and this is one of the many things we should be looking forward to when we get to heaven.
 - C) As we are being renewed, it is not just some ambiguous statement of renewal. We are being renewed in a very specific way...*to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.*
 - a) The process of our renewal brings us new knowledge.
 - (1) Listen to **Hebrews 5:14** **“But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.”**
 - (a) The writer of Hebrews makes a connection between those who are mature and their ability to discern good and evil. There is no growth in the Christian life apart from knowledge.

(b) Therefore, in order to mature we must grow in knowledge. As we grow in knowledge, we are going to be practicing what we know. As we practice what we know, we are going to be growing in our ability to discern good and evil.

(i) This simple thought pattern laid out in Scripture is key, not only for the counselee but also for us as Christians. Far too many believers stop growing and sit stagnant and their senses grow dull. They no longer can tell the difference between good and evil.

(ii) This is not only what you want to stay away from but also what you must tell the person you are counseling to stay away from.

a) This is one of the reasons there is homework which is assigned to people as they counsel. People must continue to read the Bible on a very regular basis so that they can build good habits and learn how to sustain themselves, without a counselor.

(2) I will talk more about this down in **verse 16**, but Peter says in **1 Peter 2:2** “...like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation.”

(a) Our growth as believers is directly linked to the knowledge that we gain and put into practice. If we need knowledge from God in order to discern good and evil, we must be growing our knowledge of the Scriptures on a regular basis.

4) **Verse 11** is also good to remind those in the church that there are no advantages in the house of God.

A) This is important in counseling as people think that someone else has it better because of their upbringing, economic standing or any other superficial way of judging people. As a Christian, you have **the advantage**, as Paul says, ***but Christ is all, and in all.***

5) In **verses 12-17** is the practical expectations which the Lord has for believer in response to all that He has done for them. We are attempting to fill the vacuum, as it were, in their life and training them how to discipline their minds and bodies so that they will be able to withstand the attacks of the enemy and say no to sin which will come into their life.

A) Our identity in Christ is revealed by our righteous behavior. Our outward behavior is proof of our inward change.

B) Paul starts with the simple fact in **verse 12** that we are born again only because we are chosen of God. Now, because we are chosen of God, it also means we are holy and beloved.

a) For counseling purposes, this is huge. To be holy means that you are not longer part of the world but set apart for the Lord to use as He wills. We must be different than the world, standing out as a peculiar kind of people.

b) To be beloved of the Lord means that we are objects of His love. Even if your earthly dad did not love you or treat you with kindness, your heavenly Father most certainly does. God is not cold towards His creation but desires a relationship with us.

c) **What does it mean to be set apart and holy?**

(1) This is the question you should answer for your counselee...as Paul does here:

(a) This is the put-on section...

(i) Heart of compassion

a) We often speak of fairness and having our rights, but as Christians we are called to be compassionate. One of the ways that the church has separated herself over the past 2000 years is by the treatment of people.

a. In counseling, this may be hard to convey to a person, that they must show compassion on those who wrong them. But, we do have the ultimate example in Jesus Himself, having compassion on us.

(ii) Kindness

a) Kindness is compassion in action. If you only sympathize with someone without any action, it really does not do anyone any good.

(iii) Humility

a) Instead of pushing self-esteem and self-worth, we need to help our counselee be humble. The Bible already assumes we think too much and too highly of ourselves.

b) We think that we are a valuable person to everyone around us and cannot wait to share how good and needed we are.

a. The problem is, when we think this way and nobody affirms us, we start to whine and complain.

b. Instead, we need to fully know that without Christ, we are hell bound. We deserve nothing, except to experience the full wrath of God.

(iv) Gentleness

a) This is also translated meekness. We are to deal with people in such a way that communicates to them that you are no better than they are. We need to approach others, acknowledging our own sinfulness and limitations.

(v) Patience, bearing with one another

a) Patience is to continue on God's timetable. We do not seek out revenge or return insults for insult.

b) Bearing with one another is closely related. This carries with it the idea of *putting up with someone*.

a. We are so easily irritated or angered because we are not able to put up with them. The sin of anger is not the other person's fault, but the believer who chooses not to put up with someone but rather force their own way.

- b. This is, most likely, one of the most common underlying issues in counseling today. We would rather blame the other person, blame our environment or anything else...rather than just bearing with one another.
- (vi) Forgiving one another
 - a) Forgiveness is not only a hallmark of our faith but also a standard which we need to adhere to. Because of Christ's forgiveness towards us, we are to forgive those who have wronged us.
 - a. This is a difficult command for many counselees, but a command none the less.
- (b) **Verse 14** is almost like a summary statement for the previous two verses...love one another.
 - (i) Love will show itself in all the aforementioned characteristics. Love is what bonds us together as a church and what motivates us to keep going with one another.
- (c) **Verse 15**, Paul puts peace, unity and thankfulness all together.
 - (i) This peace comes from Christ, knowing that we are not under His wrath. But, we are to also to seek peace with other believers so that we can have unity.
 - (ii) We will only have peace and unity when we have thankful hearts.
 - a) As a counselor, we must strive for this with the people we counsel. Help them to find ways to seek out peace for the purpose of unity.
- (d) **Verse 16** is one of my favorite verses in all the Bible.
 - (i) All of the characteristic traits which Paul just mentioned can only come from a mind which is controlled by Scripture.
 - (ii) You need to stress that without Scripture to guide, the counselee will have no shot of living a holy and set apart life for the glory of Christ.
 - (iii) This too is another way of saying to be filled with the Spirit. The Spirit is able to guide and direct through His Word as you are taking in more and more.
 - (iv) As a Biblical counselor, you must be ready to talk about anything and be able to exhort people as they come to you. You will most likely not have a week to prepare for a message, but meet up with someone quickly.
 - a) It is much more important for you to have the word in your heart so that you are able to teach and admonish one another.
 - a. The word for *admonish* is where we find our word for counseling. To be an effective Biblical counselor, you must know the actual Bible.
- (e) Finally, in **verse 17**, Paul puts the capstone on this wonderful section and sums it up nicely.
 - (i) The most basic rule of the Christian life is this...do all that you do in the name of the Lord Jesus, always giving thanks.

(ii) Our goal, is to become more like Christ.

(iii) The more of the Scriptures we have flowing in us, the more of Christ's characteristics can flow from us.

C) This is encouraging to anyone you are counseling. There is always hope, but it's certainly work. The stage has been set for them, they should know the struggle which awaits them and be encouraged to stay the course, continually putting off the old man and putting on the new.