

# **Christian Counseling**

*By: Rev. Kelvin N. Broadus, Founder/Pastor of UGFE Ministries*

## **Introduction and Overview**

The area of Christian Counseling identifies as one of the most major crucial aspects of the ministry today. This course will help you to understand its importance in the church and a breakdown of what it entails to provide you with a solid foundation of guiding the children of God. You must first learn to understand people on a general and individual basis of personality and behavior, and then learn how to apply the non-changing truth and wisdom of Christ to bring about conclusion to the problems of life. First I will provide you with some simple definitions that will be of importance in this course as follows:

- **Egocentric** – 1. Concerned with the individual rather than society 2. Taking the ego as the starting point in philosophy 3. Self-centered or selfish
- **Uniqueness** – 1. A quality of being different, a sole or only type or fashion 2. An unusual aspect of someone or something
- **Counseling** – professional guidance of an individual utilizing psychological methods (The difference is that Christian counseling utilizes the word of God to analyze the situations rather than scientific methods)

There are obviously numerous other definitions that go along with a thorough understanding of psychology and/or counseling, yet for the direction and nature of this course, most will be self-explanatory due to the conceptualization of the teachings provided for the requirements of the program. The course shall be divided into seven main categories, which are Understanding Human Behavior (Individual), Understanding Human Behavior (General), The Wisdom of Christ, Compassion in Counseling, Confidentiality, Real-Life Application, and Suggested Readings.

## **Understanding Human Behavior (Individual)**

When it comes to understanding human behavior on an individual basis, the terms of egocentric and uniqueness come into play. Though these terms are more appropriate of general human behavior, practically all people believe that everything about them is unique, and in a way it is. Most people are also egocentric in some way or another, especially when it comes to their needs and emergencies, but egocentrism in the form of cockiness and conceit is a case-by-case basis. When you prepare to counsel an individual, first determine if he/she knows him/herself. The truest individuality is determined upon that individual's identity in Christ, and somewhat understanding God's purpose for his or her life. Therefore, your counseling will somewhat vary depending on whether or not the person is saved, and from there, the spiritual maturity.

## Unsaved

When dealing with someone who has not yet found the salvation of Jesus, you should expect confusion and problems. The main reason for this is that before accepting Christ we are lost. We continually search, seek, and gather things of the world, forever hoping to fill that void that is in our lives; that void that can only be filled by our Lord. With this reality, we have an objective to all of our counseling of the unsaved. That objective is to lead them to Christ.

As we embark on our objective, we must first understand that much of the information within the Bible is unknown to the individual, so we must guide them with the results of our impartation rather than the information within itself. We can simply refer back to ourselves when we were out there and lost, before understanding the importance of God. It was difficult enough just trying to understand the terminology of the Bible, much less its meaning, so if we approach it as “scripture throwers,” we will do more damage than good, most likely driving them away from the Lord. With that in mind, always be prepared to explain the TRUE meaning of Christianity, to clear up misconceptions due to the increase of false prophets and hypocrisy. Finally, remember that this is a way of peace; therefore, stress the urgency of making that decision, but without the pressuring and imposing, which causes people to run away, that many people bring when trying to witness to others.

## Saved

Once the person seeking counsel has become saved, you are in a different arena than with the unsaved, yet the word of Christ is still as relevant to each. In essence, the focus now becomes more of reminding the promises of God to the individual, and applying the applicable Word of God to their situations in a more refreshing and in depth manner, as now they are more opened up to receive the deeper meaning and understandings of it. When it comes to the actual counseling it is important to remember and emphasize the freedom that we now have through Christ who saved us. We must keep in our own minds that through God’s grace, even if our desires and needs don’t occur the way we want them to, that we are still able to get through these issues with peace and happiness, because God will still be glorified and He will remain with us in the midst of them all. Remember though, let the Word be the tool, and the glory will be delivered.

## Rebounced

The final aspect to be touched upon here is the rebounded individual. This is the individual that was saved once, and possibly even touched or empowered with an anointing from God. For whatever reason, this person was distracted and lost his/her motivation and connection with God. For this reason, this circumstance will be dealt with mostly through prayer. This is because, at that point only God will know what it will take to break down the spiritual wall which he/she has developed. If they have sought you at this point though, you can be assured that God has been working on them. As far as this person is concerned, they have tried God and feel disappointed, and even though you know that it is not the fault of God, it would be hazardous to his/her spiritual regeneration to push them to realize their own fault in the situation, except for the special situations that will be revealed to you by the Holy Spirit.

Touchy situations for rebounded individuals make it difficult to talk to them about the goodness of God, for now they need to rebuild their trust in Him. As stated before, most of the battle in this particular situation is fought in prayer for the person. Yet, in subtlety and humility, we must carefully remind them of the goodness that God has offered to them before their disconnection, as well as the future love that awaits them upon their return. One of the most important aspects would also be to lead this counseling by example. Your faith itself must be very high and it must show through your behavior and overall demeanor. Treat this as an educated unbeliever as they know about the word, yet they know longer feel that it applies to them. At the same time, be sure to remain inviting rather than forcing the reality upon them, and avoid harshly throwing their error in their face, but allow it to be realized from within. As counseling is concerned, you must ask many questions to allow the individual to release the problems, pains, and disappointments (thorns) before you can place the healing word upon them.

### ***Understanding Human Behavior (General)***

Most of the general human behavior has already been discussed in the individual human behavioral section, but let us re-emphasize some generic truths about man. Obviously the term egocentric exists, individually as well as overall. We love to feel as though we are the best. We have a sort of competitive nature that causes a need for the flesh to feel in charge. Seldom are we willing to accept a counseling diagnosis if we don't feel like our expression of the situation was heard and mattered. This is not the area of coxing someone's ego, but it is quite very important to establish a greater sense of worth, confidence, direction, and strengthening to the one you are working with. We desire to know that the person who is counseling us at least somewhat sympathizes with us, and somehow cares about what we are going through. More importantly though, as counselors of Christ, we must care, for if we do not, we are illegitimately representing Him, and our work is in vain. Remember, God is Love, and the only way to counsel for Him is through love. Always consider that we are all humans alike; we all have emotions, so keep the scripture in mind that states to love your neighbor as yourself, which was redefined as the "golden rule" – *Do unto others as you'd have others do unto you.*

### ***The Wisdom of Christ***

The wisdom of Christ could not even be contained in writing. This section therefore is only of instruction for the closest attempt to begin understanding to begin to first read the four gospels. For this section of this course, the material is the entire book of St. Matthew of the Holy Bible. Read the parables and instructions given by Christ during his time on Earth. During your reading, continually seek the Holy Spirit in prayer for the understanding of this word that God would have you know. Follow up by reading also in the Books of St. Luke, St. Mark, and the book of St. John. The final instruction concerning the wisdom of Christ is to, lastly, seek Jesus Himself that He may provide you with the final revelation of His Words.

## ***Compassion in Counseling***

There is no question about the need for compassion when it comes down to the terms of counseling. The entire reason for counseling exists because of a problem that someone has gone through. The sad thing is that large amounts of people are most insensitive on the same issues that they'd desire the greatest sensitivity towards themselves. Let us first define compassion that we may have a better response of what to deliver. According to the Merriam-Webster's Dictionary, compassion is sympathetic feeling, also referred to as pity or mercy. From this understanding, we can then apply it to the situations that arise.

### **Application of Compassion**

Compassion, with the understanding of pity or mercy is simply providing to the counselee those same qualities. By all means, it is not our authority to forgive anyone's sins, for only God is able to forgive us of our sins, but having pity and mercy upon another is giving him/her the assurance that we do understand that they are human, and do err sometimes. With that, we must also remind and teach them of God's divine mercy by examples from His Holy Word.

The other aspect of the definition is the sympathetic feeling. Very often just having someone to sympathize with you can take away most, if not all, of your pain. Sympathy in itself is something that is very valuable, yet we take it for granted if it is not concerning ourselves. We, often as humans, pout and cry to receive sympathy about every issue that is bothering us, but refuse to show anything close to the same compassion to others. We must use this reflection of understanding to apply God's direction of sympathy to others. Remember to treat others as yourself, and remember your own sympathy needs to know, or refresh your memory, on how to sympathize with other people's needs. This proves the invaluable resource of storms. The storms that we overcame provide the reference material to provide victorious lessons that we learned to others.

## ***Confidentiality***

In addition to learning and applying sympathy, spiritual counseling requires a great amount of confidentiality. From the years of youth we learn to keep secrets, and as we grow older we begin to understand it from a mature standpoint. Though the world will often try to confuse confidentiality with keeping secrets, which is often applied to the world's use of gossip, the truest revelation of it provides security and honor to personal situations and circumstances.

We don't have to be geniuses to know that personal information needs to remain personal. If you have ever had someone spreading twisted truths about you, you can fully understand that point, but even you have never been gossiped about, its importance should be felt by you. As with any type of counseling, the individual seeking it is sharing personal information to you that he/she usually would not let everyone else know. This exchange of information is done out of trust and full confidence that his/her information will not be given out to others. In the secular world this is referred to as privacy. Businesses are even required to follow a federal law called the Privacy Act, which requires the protection of people's personal information. That is the overall point of it though; the

information is personal and should be treated that way. You would not share any of your personal information with anyone that you believe would spread it “in the streets.” Not only could it infringe on your rights, but it could also cause negative reflection on your entire life as it could challenge your public respect, pride, and dignity depending on the situation disclosed. Even more, issues regarding confidentiality, counseling in particular, are usually embarrassing, shameful, or painful, which is why the person is seeking the counseling to begin with. Being the prideful people we are, counseling is usually the last thing that we desire to seek as it causes us to feel weak or as though something is wrong with us. With this in mind, it should be our utmost desire as Christian counselors to uphold the values of our counselee’s honor by keeping private information private.

### **When to release private information?**

Now that you understand the extreme importance of privacy, you must also realize that there will always be some special exceptions to the rules, even these. While this doesn’t provide a justification for you to come home and tell your spouse about everything that is going on in your congregation’s lives, there are some particular type of situations that you must consider to release information about. Be advised though, no confidentiality should be released without dedicated prayer and supplication, and confirmation from God to do so.

Some examples of times that you may have to release confidential information might be:

- You discover from counseling that a child or someone is a victim of domestic violence or sexual abuse, and is unable to defend himself/herself.
- Someone has confided that they committed a murder or other crime, or is threatening to commit one.

Usually, the only situations that would require the breaking of confidentiality are those that are concerning illegal activity. As stated though, even those must be carefully prayed over before doing such as to prevent extreme repercussions due to misinformation or assuming the wrong thing.

### ***Real-Life Application***

The final stage of this course is putting it all together. You can read and read, even to the point of becoming an expert on the academic side of this course. Though this information will provide a strong foundation, it is just that, a foundation. You will learn many new things along the lifelong journey, and be able to build from this foundation, which is of Christ Jesus. Always remember though, when dealing with any type of counseling, you are dealing with people, and it is important to always treat them with dignity and respect. No situation will be ever be the same in specific terms, yet many situations will be similar in the overall aspects, which is where the general foundation is needed. With the foundation, you will be able to face and strengthen nearly every situation you come in contact with, always remembering to strive in excellence for the glory of the Lord. Be blessed.

2004 © UGFE Ministries. All Rights Reserved. No unauthorized duplication or reproduction.