

HOW TO HELP PEOPLE CHANGE: The four-step biblical process
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(Summarized by Paul Schlehle)

I. **First Point**

II.

III.

IV.

V.

VI. The Importance of Teaching

A. Learning by hearing and seeing—that is discipling.

VII. **Teaching God's Standards**

A. It is wise to stress the Bible as standard early in counseling.

B. Frequently counselors want to solve a problem too quickly and move on. A few extra moments in the beginning to emphasize that Scripture has all the answers will pay dividends.

VIII. **Teaching Biblical principles**

A. Unless the counselee is taught how to *stay* out of trouble (not just get out of it), he will be ripe for future failure and will depend on the counselor more than Scripture.

B. We must teach them radical amputation. Cutting off a hand or a foot or an eye is a preventive measure to deter repetition of sin. It is a way of preventing unconscious, automatic, habitual sin. It also makes it difficult to sin again in the same manner.

C. It is designed to impress upon us the urgency of taking radical measures to safeguard against sin.

D. Jesus treated the disregard for such precautions against future sin as indicative of an unrepentant and unsaved condition, as seen in his comments about being thrown into Gehenna in Matt. 5:30

E. Counseling is often like a visit to the dentist. The patient is in pain and the dentist and medicine bring him relief. He doesn't see the need to return. Sin by nature causes pain, and though initial talks with the pastor may bring relief, he must not stop coming, for most likely the sin will return, and the pain along with it. This fact must be emphasized, as the counselee will be tempted to skip or not show up. Take time to read Jesus' words about radical amputation.

F. The counselor should be an expert in one thing only: in teaching counselees how to become more and more dependent on God and less and less dependent on anyone else.

G. For those who think their case is hopeless, take them to 1 Corinthians 10:13 and explain how the promises apply to them. There are three promises in this passage: (1) no trial is unique (2) Our faithful God vows no trial greater than our ability to withstand (3) God in his time will remove the trial.

H. Hope comes from doing what the Bible requires, the counselor will never allow the counselee to shirk his responsibilities, no matter how difficult, but will insist the promises of God leave him neither helpless nor hopeless.

I. Regarding self-esteem, unless we say no to self and crucify self, we cannot truly serve Him (Luke 9:23-27). We shouldn't pamper ourselves, but lose our life for Christ's sake (Matt. 16:25).

IX. **Teaching in Milieu**

A. The goal in all teaching is to change people, to help Christians to move closer to God.

- B. Our goal should be Colossians 1:9-10, in that we teach that they may obtain spiritual wisdom and understanding, *so that* they “walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work...”
- X. How to Teach
 - A. Personal Involvement: Important to become personally involved with the counselee. Paul was not disengaged.
 1. 2 Cor. 11:28-29 (Paul felt their weaknesses and hurts)
 2. 2 Cor. 12:21 (we are not to be cold and aloof)
 3. 1 Thess. 2:11-12 (a counselor shows he cares by being involved)
 4. 1 Thess. 2:8 (show concern)

CONVICTION

XI. The Role of Conviction in Counseling

- A. Yes, the Holy Spirit convicts, but the Scripture is often the tool he uses.
- B. Scripture convicts men of sin (2 Tim. 3; 2 Tim. 4:2).
 1. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16).
 2. Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching (2 Tim. 4:2).

XII. What is conviction

- A. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent (Rev. 3:19).
 1. Jesus explained that he convicts, not to punish or get even, but because he cares.
 2. The word “reprove” or convict means to show someone their sin and to summon him to repentance. So it is not just a charge, but being able to show the truth of the charge.
 3. We are tempted to think that to “reprove” or “convict” does not need be effective. But if we see this to mean “bring about conviction”, it means he has actually be declared guilty and proven to be so.
- B. There can be no repentance without acknowledging guilt. He must be “convicted” or else he cannot repent. So conviction is proving that the charges made against someone are true. We are to bring the facts to bear on a case so as to prove the person is guilty of sin.

XIII. Conviction and Data Gathering

- A. Gathering data is vital because the counselor must know the facts. If Nathan doesn’t have the data, he can’t say to David: “You are the man!”
- B. Romans 12:3b requires that we make a sober judgment about ourselves: we are not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, but to think with “sober judgment.”
- C. For those who are not convinced to repent, our job is to show them that they are not analyzing the problem biblically. We do this by showing (1) that Scripture does not use the categories and terminology they are using (2) Scripture describes his attitude as sin.

XIV. The Use of the Scriptures in Conviction

- A. Use 1 Peter 4:1-2 to counter the claim that desire is uncontrollable or overwhelming.
 1. Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God.

- B. Often times desires to sin are overwhelming because we have submitted to them for years. One can become a slave to his desires (Titus 3:3-4).
- C. Nathan convicted David by having his own mouth convict him (2 Sam. 12:13).

XV. Supplementary Thoughts About Conviction

- A. A person who merely gives assent to truth, who merely corrects the errors of his thinking without repenting of sin, does not change in God's way.
- B. Sometimes the only thing that restores life to the deadened nerve cells of a seared conscience is the threat or actual pursuit of church discipline. Some must be "taught by discipline" (1 Tim. 1:20).
- C. Paul rarely corrects with stinging words but usually with sorrow. Also optimism.

CORRECTION

XVI. What is correction?

XVII. Correction and Repentance

- A. Judas had an emotional experience but did not truly repent (Matt. 27:3). He regretted the actions because of the consequences.
- B. Esau had great emotional outbursts but could not repent (Heb. 12:17).
- C. Godly sorrow produces repentance (2 Cor. 7:10).
- D. People may feign behavior that shows repentance but this quickly ends. Only God is able to know the hearts of men (1 Sam. 16:7), so we must look on the outward appearance alone.
- E. We must rid ourselves of all those things that influence us to do evil (1 Cor. 15:33).

XVIII. Confession of Sin and Forgiveness

- A. Key verse→Prov. 28:13, "He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will receive mercy."
- B. We confess in order to find forgiveness. To forgive is a promise to remember the offense no more and not to bring it up again to the offender or others. Matter closed.

XIX. Forsaking Sin

- A. The person who wittingly or unwittingly holds on to sin cannot expect the blessing of God. This is the same idea of "putting off" in Ephesians etc.
- B. Included in "forsaking" is the willingness to deny or say no to selfish desires. It also includes the desire to eliminate and stumbling block. Radical measures are removing limbs or appendages.
- C. There is no substitute for forsaking sin. Now, some will take (2 Tim. 4:2) and it takes patience.
- D. Those unwilling to part with sin should be reminded of the consequences of resistance (Prov. 13:15; 28:13; 29:1).

XX. Restoration

- A. In Church discipline, the first two informal stages are one-on-one and later with some witnesses. It then comes before the leaders of the church and then the church as a whole. The state of the unrepentant person is made known.

DISCIPLINED TRAINING IN RIGHTEOUSNESS

XXI. The Need for Disciplined Training in Righteousness

- A. "Instruction in Righteousness" means instruction by chastening.
- B. The Lord disciplines those whom He loves and whips his sons (Heb. 12:6).

- C. Forgiveness buries the guilt of the past.
- D. Counselors are tempted to end too soon. Due to this, people relapse into sin.

XXII. Righteousness: The Goal

XXIII. But is Righteousness Possible?

- A. It is possible to live righteously (Luke 1:74-75).
- B. Christians belong to a new master (Righteousness) and not to their old master Sin (Rom. 6:20, 22).
- C. It is possible to live righteously (1 Peter 4:12).
 - 1. Notice: our problem sinful, fleshly desires has been dealt with by Christ on the cross
 - 2. Whenever we are tempted to sin, there will be a battle.
 - 3. We can overcome sinful temptations when we remember that we have died with Christ.
 - 4. It is possible, then, to live differently.
- D. We must insist that it is possible to overcome bad habits and live righteously by creating new habits (1 Peter 1:18).

XXIV. Biblical Training

- A. The first matter of importance is to believe that people whose lives have been steeped in sin can change.
- B. Paul accepted no excuses for bad behavior. If after reasonable teaching, exhortation, and other help the person does not repent, discipline awaits him. We should expect change.
- C. A habit involves unconscious, automatic, comfortable, and skillful action.
- D. Great section here on habits.
- E. We are to put off bad habits (Eph. 4:22).

XXV. Conclusion