

Counseling God's Way

I. What Counseling Is

Lesson 3 - Counseling and Discipleship

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[Matthew 10:8](#)

Lord, we give You great thanks again for the wonderful salvation that we have in Jesus Christ. We thank You, Lord, that You are a Wonderful Counselor and we thank You for the way You are going to counsel us even in this time of study. We seek You, Lord. We look to You. We ask You to do a great and mighty work. Speak to us. Shed Your light upon our hearts and our path. Show each of us in this time in the Word what You have for us as You counsel us, as You equip us to counsel and as You warn us of the dangerous paths of man in counseling. We just trust in You now, Lord, in Jesus' name. Amen.

What Counseling Is

In this study in Counseling God's Way, this is just a quick reminder by way of introduction. Our study last time was "What Counseling Is." We started out with the issue we are going to continue with now. But we looked at what the first issue is, and that is the Lord as Counselor. Seeing the Lord as the Counselor is the bedrock issue in Counseling God's Way. It is knowing that the Lord is the Counselor. Not man, but the Lord God Himself.

...And His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor... (Isaiah 9:6).

And the big issue in that is when we need counsel we should be looking to the Lord and when others come to us for counsel we need to be pointing them to the Lord, because He is the Counselor. We can certainly be His instruments. But the only way we can be His instruments is to the extent that we are committed to this truth—that He is the Counselor.

Now to continue in "What Counseling Is." Counseling, from God's perspective—and we need a good definition from God right at the beginning of our course of study, so we are kind of honed in on the Lord's perspective and protected from man's. There are so many crazy ideas about what counseling is in the world and even in the church world. Counseling and discipleship must be considered. When the Lord counsels, He counsels unto discipleship. True counseling, Biblical counseling, must be a part of the discipleship process.

In Counseling God's Way, the Lord is not merely aiming at removing needs or just meeting needs. But far bigger than that, the Lord wants to use the needs in people's lives to either bring us onto the path of discipleship, if we don't know the Lord, or if we have met the Lord, to move us along the path of discipleship. Really one verse is sufficient to set that perspective, though we will look at many. And that is Matthew 28:19, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations."

This is often called the Great Commission. I think it is rightly named. It is the grand one, the great one, the overarching, overriding, all-encompassing instruction of the Lord. He came to call out disciples to follow Him. As He was about to leave to go back to the Father, He said to them, "Go make disciples." And everything that the church is to be involved in is to be a part of the discipleship process. Everything. This includes: worship, prayer, study, serving, giving, receiving, growing, learning, and sacrificing. You name it, it is part of following the Lord.

Going to all the world. Whatever you are doing, where ever you are going, all the time, be making disciples of all the nations. This is Jesus' basic instruction to the church.

We must not view counseling as something that is done in this way and this arena. And then think that discipleship is something done that way over in another arena. They are totally tied together.

One is bigger and greater than the other. The greater is discipling and counseling is just one way to disciple. In fact, you could say Biblical counseling is discipling around someone's felt need or desire or motivation or search or quest. Someone is stirred with a need or vision, a concept of service and a path of walking with the Lord, and they are crying out, "Help me! I need a word of counsel." Well what we do in that situation is ask the Lord to use us to help disciple that person, help make more of a follower of the Lord of that person right in the arena where they are struggling or seeking or hungry and ready to move on.

What counseling is from God's perspective, it is first, the Lord as Counselor. Then it is relating counseling to discipleship. Because when the Lord counsels, He is counseling unto discipleship. The Lord did not leave heaven above, come to a sin-scarred dead and dying world and be misunderstood, rejected, lied about, spit upon, beaten, crucified just in order that Christians might have some way to get relatively a bit more well-adjusted as American religious citizens. He came to make disciples, nothing less. And we do not want our counseling to aim at anything less than that.

And you might think, "Well, what is the point of all this?" The point of all this is the preponderance of counseling in the church world has nothing to do with discipleship. In fact it is worse than that. The major emphasis in counseling in the churches today and in the so-called Christian counseling clinics gets in the way of discipleship—let alone contribute to it. That is the point of this. And I think we will see that more and more, as we think of what is going on around us and what the Lord has said in His Word.

Now that is all by way of introduction to the subject of counseling and discipleship. Now let's get into a few Biblical headings that elaborate upon that. Counseling and discipleship can be examined under this perspective—following Jesus and denying self. It may be best to put it in reverse order—denying self and following Jesus.

Matthew 4:19. "Then He said to them, 'Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men.'" The call to discipleship was "Come, follow Me." Jesus went about giving that invitation. "Come follow Me." Discipleship is following Jesus. Jesus came to make disciples, followers of Him. He went about saying, "Come follow Me."

Discipleship is a lifelong, life-giving, life-changing, life-filling, life-developing relationship with a Person. And the Person is the Wonderful Counselor, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the Lord of glory, the Lord Jesus Christ. And this One who is the Wonderful Counselor has called us to come and follow Him. We will learn to counsel as we follow Him. We will get the counsel we need as we follow Him. And we need to be, in our counseling, calling others to follow and helping others to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. Discipleship is not just a religious procedure or a religious regimen, or a list of dos and don'ts. It is a living relationship between us and our Master. Again, it is a lifelong, life-giving, life-changing, life-filling, life-developing relationship with a Person. And the Person is God the Son.

Jesus says, "Come follow Me and I will make you fishers of men." There are many things the Lord wants to make of us. One of them is a fisher of men. He used that phrase here because these had been fishermen of fish and He was going to change their lives and make those who were in His hands nets, instruments to catch men for the kingdom. But there are many things the Lord wants to make of us. But oh, what an insight here as to how it happens! Come follow Me. I will make you.... Oh, that is glorious. That is powerful. That is life-changing.

How do we become what the Lord wants us to be? We become that by following Him. We pursue Him. We keep seeking and learning of Him. We develop a relationship with Him and while we are giving our attention to following Him, He is giving His attention to remaking us.

Oh, this is so different from the counseling of the world! The counseling of the world is, "Get a grip on yourself." Or "Find a life." Or "Let's get a program and see if it works." It is man, changing man or self, changing self. It is so anemic. It is so low. It is so earthbound.

Now I am not questioning the motives of everyone trying to help people through all the sociological, anthropological, psychological systems and theories of man. Some are in it for scheming bucks, sure. But a lot are well intended, but it doesn't matter whether it is a con-artist, or an absolute true-hearted servant wanting to help people, if we don't use God's means we cannot do it.

"Come follow Me, I will make you..." that should be right at the heart of Counseling God's Way. We call people to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. And as they are following Him, He will be changing them. We do not have to change them. And we are not there to show them how to change themselves. We are telling them *Who* to follow and what to expect. If they will follow Him, He will remake them.

I love to meditate on the implications of this simple statement, "Come follow Me, I will make you..." It is glorious. It simplifies the whole thing. Plus it gives such enormous hope. You mean if I just follow after the Lord Jesus, get to know Him, seek Him, find out where He is going and where He wants to take me and just be willing to go there and walk His path, then He will be making me what He wants me to be? Wow! This is almost too good to be true. And yet the more the Lord tells us this, the more we believe it, and the more we see He is reliable and faithful and able, the more we count on it. And He does it.

Denying self and following Jesus; denying self is definitely involved. Counseling should be marked by the flavor of discipleship. If our counseling isn't unto discipleship, we are not counseling God's way. We have drifted somehow into man's way.

Luke 9:23 gives us a very beautiful perspective and a very succinct fashion of what discipleship is about. This should flavor our counseling and give it a simple overview statement as we read it. Our counseling should help, assist, allow, enable and direct people to see 'self' dealt with that they might follow Jesus more effectively "Then He said to them all, 'If anyone desires to come after Me let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me.'"

Jesus was saying this to everyone. This is the word for everyone no matter where they are in the spiritual spectrum. Everyone in the crowd that day heard the same thing; the seekers and those who were curious, those who thought they were committed or those who needed to be. Those who had met Him before and those who just, as they thought, stumbled across Him that day. He said to the multitude, in one of the passages that says the disciples and the multitude were following Him and this is what He turned and said to them all—this is a word for everyone.

Too many churches kind of hide this for some moment down the road, thinking this is kind of radical to put up front, we've got to kind of inch people into this. This is not very user friendly here. It does not fit the American church growth movement, which is built on the premise not to ever say or do anything to offend anyone or to put them into the risky position of maybe not coming back to your meetings. Boy, the Lord didn't read that manual!

Look at this. He said to them all. "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me." "Come after Me." If anyone wants to follow Me, if anyone wants to walk through life with Me, if anyone wants to be My disciple in answering the call to discipleship, here is what's involved." First, let him deny himself. The first aspect of discipleship is saying 'no' to the self-life. It involves disowning self hope, self-help, self-centered way of living. It says "no" to the independent self-life and its sins of self-righteousness, self-sufficiency and self-exaltation. It is really saying no to all that we would be and do, including how we would do it and even why we would do it, apart from Christ in us, our hope of glory. It is finding a whole new way to live other than self-resource, self-will, self-glory, self-confidence. It is no to all that stuff.

All that stuff—in that little simple phrase I'm laying aside almost all of American culture, you know. We are self-made people getting stronger every day in self-confidence. And Jesus says, "You want to follow Me? Deny self." That is right where the issue is. The second aspect goes from what the flesh would call "from bad to worse." It goes from "no to self" to "death to self." First let him deny himself—no to self, then take up his cross. Remember what the cross was in the first century.

Where I was ministering over the weekend, the worship team led us in the singing of "The Old Rugged Cross," and oh, I was blessed. You don't get many opportunities to do that these days, even in good cross-preaching, Bible-teaching, Christ-centered churches. It just isn't sung that often. And that is all right, there are plenty of other great songs to sing instead. But it was a real blessing. But "The Old Rugged Cross" isn't just something to get kind of mushy and emotional about. Oh, it can do that to your heart, but it's more than that. It is not just a nice sentimental theme song of the faith. The cross is not just something to stick on top of the church building, or hang in the sanctuary, or put on a lapel, or paste on a bumper. And surely if a person knows the message of the cross and wants to use it any of those ways, God will be pleased and probably praised as well. But the cross is not for those purposes primarily. That is sort of a secondary, derived use out of it.

Remember what the cross was in the first century. It was an instrument of death, an instrument of execution. It was where the worst kind of criminals got the most complete kind of justice. It was an execution instrument. To bring it more in a contemporary term, if Jesus had arrived during our lifetimes He might have said something like, "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his electric chair and follow Me." It sounds so strange to hear it, but that is exactly what it sounded like to everyone in the first century. Take up the cross to follow You? The cross? Death! My cross? My death? Yes, those are the terms of discipleship.

No to self! Just to remind us that self is not the hope. Whether it is our righteousness—they are filthy rags. Or whether it is resources for living—it is inadequate. And once self is brought to attention with that, it is okay. Now to the cross!

It is not only no to self, but death to self. Basically by faith we take up the cross of Jesus Christ. And believe the Word of God that tells us elsewhere, Romans 6 and other places, which we will get to later in the course, but believe that when Christ died on that cross, He was dying where we should die. We deserve that. That cross should have been ours. We should have been the ones judged and separated from the Father. But instead He went in our place. And not only were our sins paid for, but there was death to self. It was a place for self to come to an end, embracing by faith the purpose and the full work of the cross of Jesus Christ.

And as we take up the cross daily it can be increasingly an end of my will, my resources, my life, my glory. And notice it is daily. Take up his cross daily is saying no to self. Take up the cross daily. This is not just a crisis moment, where we meet Jesus and this is how we get started. After that we kind of lighten-up a little. Oh they are great things to lighten up the load and lighten-up life. But the terms do not lighten up, just the implication of what happens after that. It shines brighter and brighter. Day by day it is no to self and death to self.

Now think of this for a moment. In light of humankind in general, your own life perhaps in particular, and our very culture as an example, it is right at this point that the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the call to discipleship collides head-on with man and culture. We look here, right now, at the first of a number of umbrella clichés. A cliché is a saying used by people that generally captures the significant truth of a matter and just settles all issues. Again I think of the classic American religious cliché—"God helps those who help themselves." How many religious debates in America have foolishly been settled with that cliché? I think you must do this. I think you must do that. Well, I think you ought to do that. Oh, I think you ought to do this then. Then somebody pipes up, "Listen, remember, God helps those who help themselves." And virtually everybody will go, "Oh yeah, yeah." Okay, next subject.

I love to think of someone coming to the Lord, learning enough of the Gospel of salvation that they humble themselves before the Lord and cry out for forgiveness of sins and in repentance believe in the Lord Jesus. They are born again and babe in Christ, but they are not totally ignorant. They have this one Bible verse already to start off on. God helps those who help themselves. Can't you just see them, you know... "I'll start there. Where is it, now? Where is it?" Months go by, maybe a year or two. "I could have sworn it was in there." In fact, I've run across people in the last six months in as diverse places as Hungary and California, relatives arguing with Christian relatives—that's in the Bible. I know it's there! Including a priest over in Hungary who was convinced it was there. He was trying to tell a Christian worker that they were way off base. And praise God, this young person gave that priest some time to find it and he couldn't. It is not there.

What I like to picture too is the dawning of understanding and even the countenance that might respond, "Oh my goodness! Not only is it not there, the opposite is there!" God helps those who finally admit they cannot help themselves. See God is opposed to the proud. Those who think they can help themselves—"Hey, I can handle it. Thank You, Lord." God is opposed to that. He not only doesn't help, He is in opposition to that path of life. No way to progress that way.

On the other hand, He gives grace to the humble. Those who admit they cannot help themselves. Those He forgives and assists, both.

Well, in the Christian counseling field, in the counseling life of the church world, there are all kinds of clichés about counseling and what is right and what is wrong and how to do it and how not to do it. We are going to look through this course at a long string of umbrella clichés, I've called them, because an umbrella provides shelter and protection. And all of these clichés seem to provide—though it seems to me totally meager and ineffective shelter—it seems to offer enough protection for tons and tons of humanistic, self-centered, psychological thinking in the counseling mentality and ministry of the American church. We are going to compare all these umbrella clichés. You have probably heard all of them. In fact I would be amazed if you haven't used most of them. I did. I'm just guessing you are kind of the same. But when we shine the light of the Word of God on these umbrella clichés, much to our amazement they are so full of holes, how can you hide any thinking like this underneath them?

Here is one—now we all know, they say, that everyone's problems are all related to low self-esteem. So if you're going to help someone get out of their problems, you've got to help them raise their self-esteem level.

The world is pretty much sold on that, though here and there you see a crack in their armor. No shocker there though. Where else is the world going to turn? They mostly don't believe in God or they think that God helps those who help themselves.

But here is the shocker, the church of Jesus Christ has bought into it heavily over the last ten or twenty years. Thirty years ago, Dr. J. Vernon McGee warned us heavy-duty about psychological teaching. He was the first one from whom I heard the phrase, "the psychologizing of the faith," which became the title of one of our books, the one that I wrote last year. The first time I ever heard that phrase was by Dr. McGee not long after I was a Christian.

The shocker is that the church has bought into it. He warned and said if we don't watch out, so-called psychological thinking and counseling and teaching will displace Bible teaching in our pulpits and on Christian radio. It has almost totally happened on Christian radio which more and more would have to be called religious radio. And it has seeped into the pulpits almost as far, but not quite praise God, but disastrously too far.

Self-esteem. If you are going to help people, you have to help them raise their self-esteem level because all their problems are related to a low self-esteem. It is almost like the wisdom of the day.

Think about it for a moment though. Think about how that cliché and that approach to counseling relates to the basic message of Jesus Christ, what He came to do and what He said. "If anyone would come after Me let him deny himself." Not esteem himself. Esteem means to hold in high regard. Self-esteem, learn to hold yourself in higher and higher regard. Jesus says, if you want to follow Me, say no to yourself, not yes to yourself. And if you want to "follow Me, take up your cross." Embrace My cross as your cross, which is your confession that you desire death to your self-life, to any life you could produce on your own through your best effort or best behavior or best religious zeal.

What a collision this is with man, his flesh, and our culture. Now think how serious this issue is. If self-esteem thinking was only five or ten degrees off the path of discipleship, think how serious that would be. What an error that would be. Every year you walked that five or ten degree path off course, every year you are further away from what the Lord called you to. If it were just five or ten degrees off course, it is a path to disaster. But of course the shocker is, it is 180 degrees off course! If the call to discipleship is north, the call to self-esteem is south! Every step is completely in the opposite direction. That's how serious it is.

This truth of discipleship is the opposite of self-esteem theology and self-esteem counseling. Self-esteem permeates our culture. It is flowing into the church like a flood of polluted water. It came from humanistic psychologists. It did not come from Bible study. We will see along the way some astounding confessions of that. For Counseling God's Way we've got to watch out for this self-esteem approach to counseling.

Some folks have wondered what is left if you say no to self and death to self? Well, what is left is everything God ever intended for us and it is all caught up in three simple words that finish this verse—"and follow Me." Everything God has for us is in those three simple words. Look how many words it took to clear the roadblock. Why does the Lord pound so hard on self?—no to self, death to self? It is because that's exactly what prevents people from following Him. They are on their own path.

They are resting in their own righteousness. They are satisfied with their own will. Hey, they are out to get their own glory. That is exactly what keeps people from following Jesus Christ. The obstacle to discipleship is the ugliest four letter word in the world—S E L F. And yet we have turned it, in our culture, into something to esteem, not crucify. "There is a way that seems right unto man, but the end thereof is destruction." (Proverb 16:25)

"Follow Me." Christ, our forgiver, follow Him. Folks say, "Oh, you think it can all be caught up in those three words 'and follow Me'? If you knew how many wrongs I'd done, how many things I have to make right, how many tons of forgiveness I need, you could never make it that simple." It doesn't matter if you need a pound, a ton, or a universe of forgiveness, it is all found in Jesus Christ. Follow Him and find that forgiveness.

Someone else says, "Oh, I've made so many mistakes in the past, my thinking was so bad, I need all kinds of education and at least ten or twelve years of therapy." How about a simpler route? Just say no to self, death to self. Lord, I want nothing left but this one option, following Jesus.

Colossian 3:11 says that He is our "all in all." If we are following Him, we won't find out we missed something. We will find out we found everything!

"And follow Me," our Forgiver, our Life Giver. Oh, but I need so much counseling. Oh, you're blessed! His name is Wonderful Counselor. Get after Him, quick, quick! And you won't even have to make an appointment and there won't even be a bill. Wow! This is too good. "And follow Me." Follow the One who is Christ our hope, our all in all, our life. Colossians 3:4 calls Him, "Christ who is our life."

People say, "Oh man, I'm so devastated. I'm coming out of the pits, the gutter of humanity. I need to find a life!" Christ is your life. You want a life? Follow Him.

Discipleship truth must be the counsel we seek and it must be the counsel we give others. Our counseling must be that which deals with self. "No to self or death to self"—it is therefore opening up the path of discipleship by removing the obstacle that keeps people from pursuing after Jesus.

If our counseling is not in that direction, it's not counseling God's way. If others are offering counsel to us that is not like that, it is not counseling God's way.

Someone called us from out of town the other day and wanted us to know about some family counseling ministry. And we sent off for the brochure they were offering and I got a chance to look at it today. It comes highly recommended by some good men. If I mention any of their names you would just about flip and say it has to be right. I opened the thing up and it was just packed with human wisdom and self-indulgent principles, and left brain and right brain and no brain. I couldn't even believe that a Bible teacher would make half the statements in that article. I was just, well, my blood was boiling in just three or four minutes of glancing through it. It was a heartbreaker.

There is an awful lot of counseling out there. And this man is probably one who really loves the Lord Jesus Christ. I don't question that. And if he didn't, I'm not his judge anyway. All we are called to do is measure the message with God's message. Evaluate the methods with God's methods. We are responsible to do that. We are demanded to do that and in doing it, it was a heartbreaker.

The practical application of this is enormous. I have told this story many times and every time it reminds me of the practical importance of this. I sat with a couple who had been married thirty-five years, and they seemed to have a troubled marriage. I knew the wife was a believer. I didn't know about the husband. I sat down with them one night after church and they wanted some help. We sat down and before we even hit the seats on the chair, the husband just ripped into his wife. He fully knew why the marriage was a mess. She did this. She failed in that. She could not do this. She always nagged. She, she, she...on and on it went. He was quickly exhausted, praise God, and quieted down. And man, she just counter-punched a knockout blow. She didn't even bat an eye. She had heard all that before. Who cares...and she just shredded him. Then that moment you dread—not always, but often—they turn and look at you. "Well, come on, help us. Our favorite program is on in fifteen minutes!" Thirty-five years this has been going on.

I was doing a few things I love to do and have learned to do through the years in counseling. It was very Biblical. I was listening and I was praying. And so often, and certainly in this case, if you do one, the other is an automatic. If you listen, you'll be driven to prayer. And I was listening and praying. And the third thing I was doing is I was asking the Lord to bring to my mind any Scriptures that they needed to hear. We'll talk much about this down the road. That's the moment I'm always yearning for, cause that is when the Wonderful Counselor gets in on the conversation. And only one verse came to my mind. It was Luke 9:23, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me." You say, "What does that have to do with marriage counseling, especially a thirty-five year disaster." I'll tell you what it has to do with it. It hit the issue right on the head. I opened my Bible and I said, "Yeah I'd like to read you something." I read it and I turned to the man and I said, "Would you mind going back through all of your evaluation of this marriage and its problems, but only do it in light of this verse." He about choked. Turned kind of pale, you know and started fumbling. I'm thinking, *God just shut your mouth!*

The point is, in so many troubled marriages, if not all of them the issue isn't she nags all the time and he won't share a thing. Or he leaves his clothes everywhere and she never cooks. Big deal with that stuff, and if it needs to change it is not going to change by harping on it with each other. And it certainly is not going to happen in the favorite American Christian counseling approach of going to talk to the pastor and see which one can get him on their side. Just straighten out the wrong person, you know. That's so typically the approach. It is so vain. It is so self-centered.

The problem in marriages like that is really, I think, as simple as this verse. There is too much self and there is too little discipleship. Let either one of those catch a vision of discipleship—start saying no to self and death to self—that home will start to come alive. Let two troubled partners catch a vision of discipleship—no to self, death to self—you'll watch a miracle remake of that home by God Himself. Because while they are following Jesus, He is making them what He wants them to be. They are not working on each other. They are not putting their hope in each other. They are following Jesus Christ. And while they follow Him, instead of self, He is changing them into what He wants them to be.

This is a critical issue. The practicality of it, the implications of it are enormous. Years on, early in counseling, I never would have turned to a verse like that. I'd have started out number one on a list of a hundred. Okay, let's start working some of these things out. You won't be half done when the Lord comes. No matter if He comes when you are ninety-nine. There is no hope in that direction, especially in a disaster zone.

But here is one thing that can be working on all those issues simultaneously in both people—No to self, death to self. Just get on with what the Christian is all about. Just put all your time, energy, and attention pursuing after Jesus Christ. He will change you. It will bless your mate. It will change your home.

Following Jesus and denying self is what discipleship is. And discipleship must flavor our counseling or it is not counseling God's way.

Another way to say discipleship is receiving Jesus and being built up in Him. Colossians 2:6-7, "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving."

How did we receive the Lord Jesus Christ? In repentance and saying no to self, death to self, and saying, "I'm wrong, Lord. You're right. I'm unrighteous; You're righteous. I'm guilty; Can You forgive me?" No to self. Death to self. Following Jesus! We received Him by faith through His grace at work, with all of our hope in Him, not in us. Well, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord so walk in Him. Live the Christian life the same way you received the Lord. Grace. Faith. No hope in self. All hope in Him. And in that path just get firmly rooted and built up in Him, established in the faith. And trust in Him.

Another way to say that is in 1 Peter 1:23 and then 1 Peter 2:2. "Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever." We are born again through the seed of the Word of God. The seed of the Gospel got planted in our hearts through a message, a tape, a testimony, a tract. It was watered with prayer and conviction of the Spirit, and it germinated in faith and life as the Word of God was the life-bearing seed of God giving us life in Christ.

Then what? Be built up in the Lord. Grow up. 1 Peter 2:2, "As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the Word that you may grow thereby." The Word that was seed then with life in it becomes to the newborn milk to nurture that life.

Another way to look at discipleship is living for Jesus and obeying Him as Lord. I think your outline says John 13:13 NLT. And Luke 6:46 NASB. Jesus says, "You call Me Teacher and Lord and that is right because I am." It is good to call Jesus Lord. But in Luke it says, "Why do call Me Lord and not do what I say?" Why do you say Master, then go off and run your own life? That is not discipleship.

Then Romans 14:7-9 and 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, basically call us to no longer live for ourselves, but to live for Him who died and rose again on our behalf. You see, living for self that is the problem. Discipleship means no longer living for self, but living for Him. We have seen already and we will see many other places, the living for Him is not by self-effort or self-resource, but still it is a life dedicated to Him. We will see more and more about how that is to be done. But discipleship is not living for self, but living for the Lord Jesus Christ.

In conclusion, here is one more umbrella cliché. Often folks say, "Well at least people are getting some help out there as they go to the clinics and the therapists. And after all, there is some Christian out there doing it."

When I hear people say at least they are getting some help out there, I always want to ask, "But is it God's help, God's way?" Listen, someone can go to a therapist and sit down and talk about

themselves for fifty minutes, hand over ninety dollars and go off feeling great. Why? People love to talk about themselves. They get a perverse encouragement out of it. -

"And so I had to pay ninety dollars, small price!" Minor cost for doing what you like to do.

And many people say, "Oh this is encouraging me."

"To what, the cross?"

"The cross, no, I'm starting to feel better about myself."

"Well, I'm so sorry to hear that. You are getting ripped off, you know. You are paying someone to point you south when the Lord is calling you north. That's how serious it is."

Is the counsel you are getting strengthening your self-life or nailing it? If it's strengthening it, it's diminishing your discipleship. If it's nailing it and setting you free from it, leaving you where you only have one option more and more: "I've got to follow Jesus for everything," then it is helping you.

When we seek counseling God wants to disciple us in these ways: denying self and following Jesus, receiving Jesus, being built up in Him, living for Jesus, obeying Him as Lord and Master, and receiving life from Him.

When others seek counsel from us, God wants to work these same matters in their own lives, as individuals and churches. Oh, let's pray that this will be a part of what counseling is for us, that we will see that it is directly tied into discipleship. Amen!

All right, let's take a break and we'll come back and continue with "Counseling and Sanctification."