

# **Counseling God's Way**

## **III. Counselors and Their Equipping**

### **Lesson 11 - Vital Issues for Counseling**

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[Matthew 10:8](#)

Let's pray,

*Lord, we seek You tonight as the Wonderful Counselor. We ask You to counsel us and equip us and give us Your warnings and just shape us and mark us in ways that will make us useful in Your hands, Lord. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

We are continuing in the section of our course called “Counselors and Their Equipping.” Concerning who is to do counseling, of course it is all of us in general, but the gifted in particular and especially those growing and maturing and having the Lord work in their lives. These are the ones the Lord will use more and more in the arena of personal ministry.

Now in this visit together, there is a very special time of equipping. In these two sessions that mark tonight's study, we're going to look at vital issues for most counseling situations. We're going to look at about twenty key passages or so, from the emphasis placed on the Lord's guidance. Some passages that have a personal testimony in them from my own life and walk with the Lord, as well as something the Lord taught me over twenty years ago now through these passages concerning the counseling ministry. And it has much to do with being equipped to minister. I believe that the issues we'll look at tonight are so vital that if we're letting the Lord work these matters in our lives and through that let the Lord equip us to share them with others, I think we'll be quite amazed how much more equipped we'll be to work in one-on-one ministry, even just through these passages.

Now I don't want to infer in any way that these fifteen or twenty passages contain everything anyone ever needs to know for personal ministry, discipling or counseling. But on the other hand, I would not want to in any way understate the significance of them either. I believe through these passages, in themselves and the lesson they teach us, that there is an insight into being equipped to minister to others that can really be life changing, or life marking.

Let me tell you a couple of stories that set our framework of thinking in this arena. Well over twenty years ago now, the Lord sent my way a series of counseling encounters. I don't remember the exact number now, eight, ten, or twelve. The number doesn't matter, but it was more than two or three. And it seemed like every one of these people or couples were facing things so perplexing that at each case I was literally baffled as to what to share with them. I had been pastoring for some years and I didn't then and don't now have a total grasp on all of the Word of God, but even much less then. But I still had taught it for years, so you'd think I'd have some things to share. But you know life can get pretty impossible. You know, people can face things that just absolutely paralyze and stagger them, bind them, blind them, and perplex them. You know, life can sometimes look like a bowl of spaghetti. But the spaghetti is made out of steel, and it's all wound in there, and it's like where's the end? And well, what's the difference if I knew? What am I going to do with it? How do you budge it? How do you untie it? How do you straighten it

out? And they [the counselee] would say, “Here’s my situation,” hoping I’d have a chapter, verse and “Well, here’s what God says.” But instead it was like, “Oh man. Maybe there’s no help for you.” That’s the way I felt time after time after time.

And with the first person that came I almost didn’t share anything. I almost just said, “You know, why don’t we both surrender, not to God, to circumstances. There’s no way out.” But the Lord, I believe, rescued me and I believe that person and others who were going to come my way. The Lord stirred my heart with that first person, even though I felt I had nothing to share. I just began to share some verses the Lord stirred on my heart that seemed directly to have nothing to do with the dilemmas they were facing. And in a specific way didn’t. But they were verses that God had deeply touched my life on. And I just began to share them, and then I prayed for them. With the first person I was amazed, they went off amazingly encouraged, astoundingly encouraged. They looked at me as though I was some kind of Solomon. It’s like, “Lord, what is happening here? Boy, the power of Your Word, the sufficiency and effectiveness of it!”

Then the next person came. Again, I was baffled. I wasn’t quite as quick to, you know, just shout surrender. There’s nothing wrong with saying, “Hey, I don’t know what to say.” But don’t disqualify yourself too quickly in an impossible dilemma. And God really taught me something through these encounters.

So I shared with each person things that seemed to have nothing to do with exactly what they were wrestling with, but some other things that God had touched my heart with deeply through the years. And it kept going like that for eight, ten or twelve folks, over a week or two period. I’ll never forget the overall impact and perspective on it. With person after person and their impossibilities, I had no chapter or verse, to tell them, “Hey when that happens look what God says. Here’s the path. Do this. Step that way. Stay away from that, you know.” And every time those people went away blessed, strengthened, encouraged, and more properly focused in the direction they should be. And all I did was share with them as the Lord stirred my heart some of the very passages we’re looking at tonight. These are passages that have been used in sometimes a revolutionary way by God in my own life. They were encounters with God that have been real signposts along the pilgrimage with Him.

And those are the two context setting issues about these passages. One, God has touched my life deeply through these. These have been personally and absolutely vital issues in pressing on to know the Lord, in not fleeing and hiding or quitting or being buried forever in doubt or perplexity. I just passed these along to others. And I’ve learned through the years that if you hear something that you can’t imagine who on earth would have a specific word for them, let alone yourself, don’t disqualify yourself too quickly. Ask God to give you a list of vital issues that are life-changing, life-giving, life-building in your own walk with the Lord. And whenever you’re with someone who is really hurting, seeking or struggling and what they share is a total bafflement to you, don’t believe for a moment you still don’t have anything to share. You do. And maybe some of these very issues are already vital issues in your life, and this will just be confirmation to you tonight. Maybe some of these things might be your first encounter with some of these

issues, but they might become vital in your walk with the Lord. Or this may stir other passages as you look back on your pilgrimage. “Oh yeah, back there God spoke to me through this passage. Oh, that was vital.” Listen, it will be vital to a bunch of other people too.

Let the Lord build up a spiritual reservoir of these kind of issues, which just equips us all the more to be ready to share something with anyone. The more I have walked with the Lord through the years, taught the Word and ministered personally in counseling and discipling, I have seen the issue isn't having all the answers for everyone's questions. It's just being willing, being open, and letting God use us to share something of the Lord and the kingdom of heaven that can help in their time of need whether it's specific or general or somewhere in between. Because it is the Lord and His Word that gives life and it isn't having all the answers. It's just being more and more used of God to point to the One who does have all the answers ultimately. So that's what we're looking at in these studies. Vital issues appropriate for virtually every counseling situation.

As those who share counsel and as those who seek counsel these are vital issues we all need to learn, like first, learning to rely on God's resources not our resources. In 2 Corinthians 3:5, we find the first vital issue, and we'll look at a number of passages that is the issue of God's resources not ours.

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God.

In a counseling ministry where we're giving to someone, this is a critical, vital issue. No, we're not sufficient of ourselves to think that anything we're going to need to give that person is going to source in us. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but—there's more to the story. Our sufficiency is from God. What those people need, some of it, God will supply perhaps through us. And God becomes our sufficient resource to minister to that person.

When people come to us in dilemmas that just blow your mind and it's like, “Oh, I'm wasting their time sitting here listening. I have nothing to share. Don't be too sure. They're as overwhelmed in it as you are in hearing it, and even more so. And you know what? They're probably buried under this thought, they are going to have to be adequate to bear up under or get on out of it. That is not the truth. From God's perspective they aren't sufficient in themselves to consider that anything they need to cope with, to deal with, to understand, to get free and move on, is going to come from their own resources. I have marveled through the years, how just that in itself has brought an astounding peace and hope to people, as they see their circumstances overwhelming their adequacy. Just to hear this vital issue: “Hey, it doesn't hinge on your sufficiency. God doesn't believe that what you need can source, any of it, from your own resources. So don't put that load on your shoulders.” It's a matter of God's resources not ours. It takes the load off their shoulders, thinking they have to produce, and lets them begin to rest in the sufficiency that comes from God alone. It's a vital issue. A matter of God's resources not ours. This one issue is so vital in counseling I couldn't even begin to enumerate the times God has

had me share it through the years or the unbelievably diverse circumstances into which I have shared this verse.

Here's another one. It's so familiar and too many believers don't turn to it in a time of perplexity. They say, “Proverbs 3:5-6? How can that help me? I've read that 48 times already. I need something new and fresh and deep and profound.”

Well, try this on for size once more. These verses have become a vital issue in my life in so many times and ways I couldn't tell you. I've gone to these two verses through the years when my heart was broken, my eyes were blinded, circumstances were binding, and all wisdom seemed long used up. And every time I have gone to these verses in such a time, God has reminded me that in this matter of wisdom and guidance, it's again a matter of His resources not ours.

Listen to these:

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart.” (Proverbs 3:5). Listen, when you're sitting with someone in a dilemma beyond description, I'll guarantee you this is a vital word for them to hear.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart.” Put your dependence on the Lord with everything within your being, because everywhere inside there's a temptation to try this or try that. Manipulate this or scheme that or maybe it's just hopelessness. “Hey, trust in the Lord with all your heart, with everything within you.”

“...And lean not on your own understanding” (Proverbs 3:5). Boy, that is a vital issue. It seems like the greater the dilemma gets, the harder we lean on our own understanding. I've got to understand this thing and straighten it out. We start leaning hard on the understanding and it's kind of like the broken reed of Egypt. You know, you lean on it and you know, a little reed growing by the river bank. You can't lean too heavy on that, especially a broken one. Lean not on your own understanding. There are all kinds of things all the time that go beyond everyone's understanding, except God's. What a vital issue to share with folks. So what do you do then?

“In all your ways acknowledge Him...” (Proverbs 3:6). In all your ways, in every aspect of what you're facing. Well you've got 37 impossible aspects to a totally complicated dilemma. Okay, let's just take them one at a time. And in every one of those ways just acknowledge Him. “Okay Lord, You see this. You're the Lord. You see this one? You're able. You see this one? It's under Your authority. You see this one?” You know, just acknowledge Him right in all your ways. Oh, the liberation! The peace and the stirring hope. In all your ways acknowledge Him. “You're the Lord. You're my God. You're my life. You're my Master. You're my Shepherd. You're my strength. You're my wisdom.”

Just acknowledge Him. And look where it leaves you. “...And He shall direct your paths” (Proverbs 3:6).

More and more through the years I have preferred to send folks off with this in their heart rather than the best wisdom I could offer, even if I could back it up with Scripture. Now it's not an either-or, sometimes you can do both. But I'd still rather send them off with this working in their life than the best specific word of wisdom I had for that moment because this will deal with every dilemma yet ahead. That timely word of wisdom may not come up again in their life, as critical or needful.

What would you rather have, all the answers in all your understanding beyond what man ever had? Or would you rather have this promise, God is directing your path? See where this leaves you. These are powerful verses. I think they're so under-used in personal ministry. “Proverbs 3:5,-6? Oh man, everybody knows those.” We're not talking about a memory contest. We're talking life and death.

Most of us don't need to hear some great new thing we never heard before. Most of us need to be reminded of and taken deeper in what we already know. That's our greatest ministry to each other, the ministry of reminding. When we spend any time in the family in the Word with the people of God, our greatest ministry is reminding each other, not finding some great new thing nobody ever heard.

Vital issues locked up in these two verses. I mean, hardly anyone could come our way but that we could minister life to them out of just these two brief passages we've looked at already. That's how vital they are.

Here's another one. Isaiah 40:29-31,

He gives power to the weak. And to *those who have* no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary and the young men shall utterly fall, But those who wait on the Lord shall renew *their* strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint.

So often when we're with someone in an impossible situation and they're seeking a word of counsel, they are so aware of their own weakness, their lack of might. They're ready to faint. That's the common thing when it's impossible, the dilemma. It's like, “Oh I quit.”

Well, look at this. God gives power to the weak. You feel weak? You qualify. So far, so good! To those who have no might, He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary and the young men shall utterly fall. I can remember when I was eighteen or twenty-one or you know. Going at things endlessly, it seemed like. Who needs rest? Just go! Well, that strength runs out someday too.

Isaiah 40:31, “But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.” Well one of the vital issues for people in impossible dilemmas is to learn in a fresh new and deeper way what waiting on the Lord is all about. We're not talking sitting in a rocking chair. You can sit in a rocking chair by the flesh just as well as by the Spirit. Just sitting in a chair, waiting on the Lord, doesn't mean you're waiting on the Lord. Even if you say you

are. God knows. God knows. That's all that matters. Waiting on the Lord is just not letting time pass. Those who wait on the Lord—sure there might be a passage of time involved—but as the time passes our expectations are being set on the Lord.

There is a great synonym for this word wait, in fact some places in the Old Testament it is translated “hope in.” But those who hope in the Lord, look what happens for them. “They *shall* renew their strength. They *shall* mount up with wings like eagles. They *shall* run and not be weary. They *shall* walk and not faint.” Sounds pretty certain, doesn't it? There's not a might, a maybe, or a possibly in there. We hope in Him and here are the consequences, renewed strength.

I like this next one. “Mount up with wings like eagles.” A lot of people who come with a dilemma seeking counseling, they are buried under the circumstances. They desperately need spiritually to mount up with wings like eagles. They need to be enabled to get up above it. Look down on it from God's perspective. Not be smothered under it. But even as all the circumstances are piled on them, spiritually, they're viewing it from God's viewpoint. A heavenly perspective is mounting up with wings like eagles, above the circumstances, soaring into heavenly places with the Lord.

And those people shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. These are vital issues to share with people. Vital issues for most counseling situations. I often find, even when God gives me a very specific chapter, verse, or word for someone in a situation or even a dilemma, it's still tremendously valuable to add on some of these bigger, general issues that are needed to keep going on every day, whether they have an answer or not.

Here's another one, 1 Samuel 17:47. This is David speaking to Goliath, “Then all of this assembly shall know that the Lord does not save with sword and spear, for the battle is the Lord's and He will give you into our hands.”

Then verse 48 says, “...David hurried and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.”

Hold that in your mind, you might even want to hold your finger there too. And let's also read with it 2 Chronicles 20:15. Before we read verse 15, I want to read one other verse in the chapter, here Israel is surrounded by three other nations coming against them. They are facing really bad circumstances.

2 Chronicles 20:12,

Oh, our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that has come against us, [now look at this] nor do we know what to do, but our eyes *are* on You.

Then verse 2 Chronicles 20:15, the Spirit of the Lord stirred Jehaziel, and he stood and said,

Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, king Jehoshaphat! Thus says the LORD to you: ‘Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God’s.’

Here in 2 Chronicles 20:15 we read, “...the battle *is* not yours, but God’s.” In 1 Samuel 17:47 David said, “...the battle *is* the LORD’s.”

That’s the vital issue. The battle is the Lord’s. Every Christian is on the battlefield and is in spiritual warfare all the time. It just varies in degree, kind, intensity and our awareness of it. But it’s always there. Here are two of the Lord’s servants, King David and King Jehoshaphat, right on the physical, literal battlefield. Visible pictures for us of our unseen warfare days of the church. What’s the truth here? The battle is the Lord’s not ours.

It’s not how hard or how straight we punch or throw the javelin or how impressive our footwork or whatever else. The battle is the Lord’s, not ours. Victory in walking in it hinges on the Lord, His faithfulness, His ability, not ours.

And it’s amazing that this truth appears with these two kings of Israel. David knew exactly what God wanted him to do and at what point the victory was going to be enjoyed, and he ran at the enemy. All he had was a pouch, five stones and a sling. It turned out that one stone was plenty. But he said, “I come to you in the name if the Lord.”

Jehoshaphat was surrounded by three nations. He didn’t run at the enemy. He ran and hid and cried, “Help!” To most people he looked like a whimper, you know. This was a leader who is going to walk in victory. Yeah. Israel went out from the word of Jehaziel. The battle is the Lord’s and not theirs. And God even said, “You won’t have to fight. Just stand and see the salvation of the Lord.” God turned the enemies, the nations, one upon the other. And it was all over. It took them days to carry away the spoil. Wow, what a warrior Jehoshaphat is! What a tactician. No, he was just honest and humble before God. “We don’t have any power, Lord, against them. In fact, we don’t even have a clue how to approach it.”

So on the surface, it looks very different. You might say, “Oh that’s how you get victory. David. Man, you gotta know what to do and have the guts to go do it.” No, you missed the point. “Oh, here’s the key, Jehoshaphat. You kind of fall back and act like you don’t know what to do and it just happens.” Not the point!

The point is the same in both battles. In both situations the children of God enjoyed the victory of God by standing on this truth: “The battle is the Lord’s and not ours.” It is a vital issue to share with people in a dilemma. When they’re embattled by circumstances all around, some will counsel, “Well, if you want to get out of the mess you’ve got to take charge of your life. Get a grip on yourself. Find a life. Manage a life. Make it happen. Be a David!” That’s not the key at all! Anybody can strive in the flesh like that, even the world, as well as a carnal Christian. Some might say, “Oh no, the key is passivity. Jehoshaphat! And folks with plans and ready to take action—slow down here

now. The key is...and all of a sudden the key is timing. And go or don't go, or take action or inaction, aggressive or passive. No, none of that's the key.

Here's the key. Here's the vital issue. The battle is the Lord's. Not ours. And it's the same whether we know exactly what God would have us do, or whether we are totally buried in confusion. It doesn't change. Isn't that fantastic? This is still a vital truth: The battle is the Lord's, not ours.

I think you can see what a vital issue that is for someone who's just surrounded by circumstances that embattle. And there's strife and fear or helplessness. What a vital issue. Brother, the battle is the Lord's!

And if someone knows what they should do, and what God would have them do, still encourage them. The victory doesn't lie in your certainty. The victory lies in your Lord. Put all your hope in Him, as you step out there. And He'll show you His victory.

Others who don't have a clue and no power, they don't know what to do—the truth is still the same. Hey, it doesn't hinge on your tactics or your strength. It hinges on this: The battle is the Lord's. If you don't have a clue and you're totally weak, you know what? God may give you a Jehoshaphat victory this time. “Stand still and see the salvation of the LORD,” (Exodus 14:13).

And God didn't send us out to make people Davids or Jehoshaphats. He sent us out to encourage one another to believe this truth. Whether you're a David or Jehoshaphat or if you vacillate back and forth between the two and you have a warfare strategy disorder or something, you don't know if you're a David or Jehoshaphat. Well it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter if you change every other day. As long as this doesn't change—you know the battle is the Lord's.

It's a vital issue. You can share it with almost anyone embattled by any dilemma or circumstance.

Here's another one. Jeremiah 32:17,

Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by  
Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard  
[difficult] for You.

Oh what a vital issue that is when everything looks too difficult for you. There's more to it. Jeremiah 32:27,

Behold I *am* the LORD, the God of all flesh [that is, all mankind]. Is there  
anything too hard for Me?

In one statement there's the truth that God is the Creator of all. Can't He handle our little dilemma? Oh yeah, but we're not talking stars and planets here. My problem is people.

Well, let's flee to verse 27, “Behold I *am* the Lord, the God of all flesh. [*I'm in charge of all humanity. There is no one on the face of the earth that I cannot exercise My sovereign authority over. Now, let Me ask you*] Is there anything too hard for Me?”

I mean, this is a vital issue. People all the time face things that are too hard for them. And they're out looking for other people or other programs or maybe other places to work it out in. Nothing is too difficult for the Lord. That's the issue. We might look around and see 50 things too difficult for us. And God's calling us right in the middle of all of them. What do you do? In the name of the Lord, with faith in the Lord, just walk where He leads. Relying on this, I can't handle any of this. He can handle all of this. This is all too much for me. But none of it is too much for Him. I mean, it's a vital issue.

And again, I love to share things like this in counseling because say you help someone sort out the spaghetti bowl of their current predicament and they watched how you did it. What are they going to do the next time the bowl is given to them and it is wrapped 47 different ways? It doesn't matter how that bowl is wrapped. It doesn't matter how that spaghetti curls. It doesn't matter how much there is, how tightly it's wound. Is there anything too difficult for the Lord? I mean, this can just take you through anything, any vital issue. All of this is really having to do with God's resources, not ours.

There are couple more areas that are related to all of this, but yet this is really a more specific and another issue in itself. And that is the matter of looking to the Lord. In seeking counsel, in giving counsel, we not only want to learn more and more to depend on God's resources and not our own, His wisdom, His adequacy, His strength, His victory in everything, we also then, must be learning to look to the Lord.

Like Hebrews 12:1-2,

...Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher [perfecter] of our faith.

The Christian life is definitely like a race. And it's not an indoor 60 meter race. It's an outdoor marathon. Really, I would liken it more to a cross country steeple chase. It's not only long, but there are all kinds of obstacles to jump over. And some of the obstacles you think you're doing well, you're right up over it and step and move along. When you come down, there is a big pool of water you splash in and you've got to deal with that unexpectedly, on the rebound.

We're called to run with endurance the race that is set before us and the Christian life takes tremendous endurance, far beyond what man has. Far beyond what religious excitement would provide. Far beyond what emotional hype would suffice, far beyond that.

How do you run the race of the Christian life? It is by fixing our eyes on Jesus. When the race gets tough, the temptation is to look everywhere but Jesus. Look at the track, which represents the circumstances. Look how others are running. “Why can't I run as well as

they are?” It’s not a contest between us and them. It’s just between us and us. We don’t need to be looking at them or at a couple who stumble. “Well, you know, maybe I’m not doing so bad.” What a false encouragement that is! Whether others are doing great or lousy doesn’t affect our growth with the Lord, or our progress down the track.

Fixing our eyes on Jesus is focusing on Him or locking in on Him. It is a word that speaks of really turning away from other attractive or distracting things. And just hone in on Him, fixing our eyes on Jesus. Giving attention to Him and not looking at self. How’s this for a Christian race, huh? Just wonderful, I’m going to hang around till I see the splat, you know. That is a good way to fall, by watching your own stride. Here comes a little hurdle, you know. Boom! Even if it looks like you’re making progress, who’s going to get the glory anyway? “Hey, look at this stride, you know. Is this a Christian stride or what?”

We are to be fixing our eyes on Jesus, not on self, not on circumstances, not on others. Not on our past. How many Christians are out there running the race of life, looking back at their past and thinking back there are the answers to the hurdle that’s just coming up ahead. I mean, it’s a fantastic picture. It just speaks a million things. It’s so simple. How do we run it? There’s only one way to run it, by fixing our eyes on Jesus.

He’s the author and perfecter of faith and He’s the one who gave us new life and put us on the track. We are born again through faith in Jesus Christ. Well, He’s not only the author of faith, He’s the perfecter of faith. How did He author it? He revealed Himself to us as the faithful one who could save us. The Spirit of God convicted us. Yes, He is who He said He is. Yes, He did what He said He did. Yes, you’ll find life in His name. And we did an astounding thing. We believed and put our faith in Him. He authored faith in us. Not in kind of an arbitrary way, but relationally, personally, and revealing. He spoke to us. Faith comes by hearing. “Come unto Me all who are weary and heavy laden.” People talk about faith as a leap into the dark. Well it isn’t really. It’s a leap out of the dark into the light. Even if it were—when we hear the voice there calling us to jump into His arms—you know—“Oh yes, Lord!”

But then He perfects faith. We keep looking to Him. We keep learning of Him. We keep following Him. We keep seeking Him. And the more we see of Him, what happens to faith? The more we see of Him the more faithful He appears. So we do an amazing thing. We put our faith in Him.

So He authors it and then keeps perfecting it, if we keep our attention focused on Him. This is a vital issue, looking to the Lord.

Luke 10:38-42. Looking to the Lord,

Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and

said, 'Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.'

Don't you know Martha was expecting to hear these next words out of Jesus' mouth? "Oh yeah, Mary, come on. There's work to be done. I mean, get in there. You can't be lounging around out here at My feet. I mean...."

You know naturally that's what she expected to hear. She must have been totally blown away when, instead of turning to Mary and kind of "Come on, get with it, you know. Can't expect everybody else to do the work," instead He goes, "Martha, Martha you are worried and troubled about many things." And here's the mind-blower, "But one thing is needed."

Oh what a vital truth this is for many counseling situations. In a dilemma of a perplexity, it looks like there are 50 necessary things. Well, Jesus didn't say there aren't many important things. And He didn't say there aren't a thousand urgent things. He just said there's one needful thing, one essential thing.

"One thing is needed and Mary has chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Mary was sitting at the feet of Jesus, receiving His word. We can only live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. She was finding life there. It doesn't mean she never went in the kitchen, but the more her heart was at Jesus' feet, she could go into the kitchen without being distracted with her much service, from Luke 10:40.

It's not that we never go in the kitchen. But if we don't live at the feet of Jesus, the kitchen will be a drag, a frustration, a place to gripe about everybody else that isn't in there helping us.

But to apply it to counseling situations of a thousand kinds, so many people seeking counsel do not personally or at least practically believe there's one necessary thing. Or if they think there's only one necessary thing, they're not thinking of the same one Jesus is. They're thinking, "I've got to change this thing! I've got to get out of this thing. I've got to be able to handle this thing. I've got to get this thing accomplished." None of those are the necessary thing.

Living life with our heart at the feet of Jesus, certainly has an application for what Mary was doing, the interpretation. She was sitting there receiving. And it is good for us to do that day by day. But since it's the one necessary thing, there are times you can't specifically do that. Say you're in a hospital and they're coming in every five minutes and poking you and opening your mouth and turning you over. You don't tell the doctor, "I'm sorry, I'm having my quiet time." You need to be able, right then and there, to let your heart be at the feet of Jesus. You are just abiding in Him, looking to Him, resting in Him, hoping in Him. You are counting on Him and letting Him speak words of Spirit and truth, which are life to our hearts.

One necessary thing and this is a vital issue. So many people in dilemmas are totally distracted. Often the last thing they think of is specifically, literally sit down and have a quiet time at the feet of Jesus, or whatever they're in, rest in the Lord right then. Call upon His name right then on the firing line.

I don't know how many times in the middle of teaching I have sensed, “Oh Lord, I need You right now, while all these folks are right here waiting for a word from You,” and we're like halfway through the message and it's just hitting me. “Oh Lord. I need my heart right at Your feet. Give me words of life right now.” One of the benefits, I guess, really of having such a weak voice is that you have to minister to it every now and then. It's amazing how much you can pray about while you take one swig of water and just have a little quiet time, a little mini quiet time. It is a little “get-my-heart-at-the-feet-of-Jesus” moment, which I like to do it when my throat isn't even scratchy.

One more, let's jump down to Colossians 1:27-29. Those of you who know our ministry,” Living In Christ Ministries,” these are the theme verses for our ministry.

To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.  
Him we preach....

What's our message? A Person. Not politics. Not psychology. Our message is a Person. Him we preach. Who is He?—Jesus the Christ, who is come to live in us and in us as our hope of glory.

Him we preach, warning every man, teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

The message that matures is the message of Jesus Christ. This is why I have at times taught studies entitled, “Proclaiming Christ to Christians.” We had that on our ministry table and still have some on the ministry table this week at the pastors' conference. And a pastor's wife came up and looked at that. I could see the wheels turning. She goes, “Could you explain that title to me? You aren't talking about evangelizing Christians, are you?” I said, “That's a good question.” And I said, “No.” But I said, “As much as the unsaved need to hear of Christ to be saved, the saved must hear of Christ in order to grow.” I said, “If we don't proclaim Christ to each other, who He is, what He's done, what He provides, who He is to us, who we are in Him, we can't grow.” And it was kind of funny. You could just see the lights going on, like, bing, bing! Yes! She said, “Yes! Okay! Yes.”

And often when people are seeking a word of counsel, what the Lord wants us to share with them maybe is this vital issue that Christ in them is their hope of glory. When people get in situations where they need a glorious hope—not only a hope of heaven someday assured in their heart again, which is the ultimate interpretation and I believe exegesis of that phrase—but the implication and application, wherever there needs to be glory in the sense of the way the New Testament uses the word. Whether it's heaven above, glory to

God now, or glorious things happen that only God could do. What's your hope of those things? Christ lives in me. Christ lives in you.

And boy people, many times in counseling situations, the vital issue they need to be reminded of is if they know the Lord, the Lord of glory, Who can do glorious things for them and can take them to glory above and can work in glorious ways now and can bring glory to God—all of that—He lives right in them. In other words, we are looking back to the Lord.

The world is so close but so far. They say, “You've got it in you. You know you do! You know it's all there.” Well, not quite. But in this sense, He's in us. We've got all we need right there. Not reaching in our flesh, but looking to the Lord who lives in us.

It's a vital issue. I mean, I've seen through the years just these verses totally change a person's walk through a dilemma. And they went off like I had literally emptied their bowl of spaghetti for them. I didn't. I just reminded them, “You need a big hope right now, don't you? I know you're saved. I've seen that. You've shared that. Your hope of glory lives in you.”

These are vital issues for Counseling God's Way.