

Counseling God's Way

VI. Counseling Session Guidelines

Lesson 23 - Counseling Session Guidelines

By

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[Matthew 10:8](#)

All right, let's pray.

Lord, we look back over these many visits together with much thanksgiving. As we approach our last time of gathering we just ask You in these visits to bless us, to speak to us, to counsel us, and build us up. We thank You for Your faithfulness when we call upon Your name and seek after You, Lord, You speak to us and reveal Yourself to us. We come with thanksgiving and humbling ourselves before You, Lord, admitting again tonight how much we need You. We ask You to undertake on behalf of each one of us. Give us ears to hear and eyes to see and just speak to us, Lord, and reveal Yourself. We look to You as our Wonderful Counselor and ask You to counsel us on this great subject of Biblical counseling. And we ask You to do glorious things in our lives, our thinking, our perspective, our equipping, even now. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Conclusion

The Counseling Situation. We'll look primarily at counseling session guidelines. And what we are thinking about in this time of study are those moments, whether formal or informal, scheduled or spontaneous, whether it is just a part of our general ministry to the body of Christ, or it is our major calling and gifting, that time when one person sits down with another. It's certainly can fit the situation with two or three or four gathered together in a counseling situation. But so often it is one sitting down with one, face to face, all the way from a counseling appointment to a cup of coffee in a neighborhood home, to lunch, to after a church service. I mean, it's totally flexible, adaptable. The counseling situation, when God brings two or more together to counsel through one to the other and usually to one another.

Counseling Session Guidelines: The first issue is "A Proper Personal Walk."

Ephesians 4:1,

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you are called.

Let's keep adding verses and then reflect on them.

Ephesians 5:1-2,

Therefore be imitators of God as dear children, And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

Ephesians 5:8,

"For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light."

A little side note there, there is another verse that speaks of who we are in Christ. "You are light in the Lord." All hinges on that last phrase. Take that last phrase out and the first part is not true.

You are light—not quite! But you are light in the Lord. He is the light of the world. He makes us the light of the world. And any light shines forth it must be Him. So many verses in the New Testament speak of who we are in Christ, because of who He is. But the point here is that we are to walk as children of light.

Ephesians 5:15,

See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise.

A proper personal walk is really a primary issue if we want to be used of the Lord in any counseling situation, used of God to counsel God's way. We cannot walk any way we want to, any way the flesh would or the natural mind, then all of a sudden remember, oh that's right! Brother so-and-so, sister so-and-so, they were going to get together with me in about a half an hour here. And all of a sudden expect to be a vessel fit to be used.

Healthy, valid, effective living, spirit ministry flows out of a proper personal walk. It is not something we turn on and off because now we are going to be with someone. Now we're going to have to function in ministry. We are always with the Lord. He is always with us. We may not always be aware of that. And the more we walk as these verses tell us—walk worthy of the calling, walk in love, walk as children of light, walk wisely. As we're walking with God in the way that He has ordained, the way that pleases Him, the way that He's called us, that's when we are usable in the hands of the Lord.

A walk is kind of a clear picture, one step after another, after another, after another. It is issue after issue, day after day, opportunity after opportunity, challenge after challenge, and impossibility after impossibility. Just step by step by step by step, things keep coming our way. But in it all we are to be relating to the Lord in a spiritually appropriate way, light, love, wisdom. And as we are walking rightly with the Lord, we are having the basic issue of preparation being taken care of day by day.

Sort of like 2 Timothy 4:2, "Be instant in season *and* out of season." This is a call to those who are to preach the Word. There is wisdom there for all of us in every aspect of ministry and certainly in the counseling ministry, which can arise like that with a phone call or a couple of sobs. What's going on? They tell you and boom, you are the counselor.

I found the wisdom of seeking God to be instant in season and out of season as a preacher and teacher. Way back it took my every thinking, waking moment to think I was half prepared to teach at the end of a week, once a week. And I didn't realize that sometimes you'd have three minutes notice. Two minutes notice. Five seconds. "Hey, Brother Bob, what's on your heart today? Why don't you come and share." So, even the teaching ministry can sometimes just almost explode before you spontaneously.

But hardly any ministry, like the counseling ministry, has its spontaneity and unpredictability. We want to be walking rightly with the Lord. And then out of that godly walk, we are available to be used any step along the way. So you don't want to think about principles, procedures, ideas and a certain place, time and appointment. Yes, that all may fit in somehow in it. But it may be much more spontaneous than that and much more unpredictable. And whether it is predictable or not it's not, "Well, you know, I just walk according to the flesh a good part of the week, but four or five hours before ministry I kind of start shaping up." I mean, that is no good. That is not a proper personal walk.

The walk God has called us to is a step-by-step, day-by-day, one step after another all the way, until we are face to face with Him. That is a proper personal walk with love and light and wisdom. And certainly in all of that we want to be people who are in the Word and walking by the Spirit and praying much and in body life, which we saw as the very setting and means by which God counsels.

Not only a proper personal walk, but it takes a Biblical perspective on counseling. That's a big issue because there are all kinds of cultural, religious, folkloric, humanistic perspectives on counseling floating everywhere and they are rampant in the church world. We want a Biblical perspective on counseling. We want to think about the counseling ministry from God's point of view.

Psalm 119:41 isn't directly about counseling ministry, but it has some great implications for counseling ministry, and this the very point.

"Let Your mercies come also to me, O LORD—Your salvation according to Your Word."

So much of the counseling ministry is sharing the mercies of God with people, ministering the great salvation of the Lord to people. Remember salvation is much bigger than new birth and forgiveness of sins. Hebrews 2:3, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation." Our salvation is so great. We too often think of it in terms only of being saved from things, from sin, from the world, and from hell. And praise the Lord those are important aspects of salvation. They are kind of the initial introduction. But salvation, the delivering work of God, the rescuing work of God, is salvation from and through and unto. All along the way He wants to save us from hell for heaven, from sin to righteousness, from self to Christ, from the enemy to the Father. It's always from and to. And then all along the way it is salvation through, the saving work of God delivering us day by day, sustaining, guarding and guiding.

"Let Your mercies come also to me, O Lord, Your salvation." If we're crying out for the mercies of God and His salvation to come to us, that's what we want to pass on to other people in counseling ministry, the mercies and saving work of God. But it is "according to Your Word," not according to tradition. Not according to the ecclesiastical party line. Not with what is politically correct or religiously correct, but "according to Your Word."

This phrase appears often in Psalm 119. I've studied it a few times. It's quite an insightful adventure to just trace that phrase through Psalm 119 and be reminded of all the things that God wants to take place in our lives according to His Word. That is being in-line with the insight, precepts and patterns, but also by means of the resources there. "According to Your Word," in line with the patterns but also by means of the resources, the enablement that is there in His Word.

According to Your Word, Lord, that's how we want to minister in counseling. Counseling is the Lord as Counselor. Counseling along the path of discipleship and hastening and developing the process of sanctification. That is counseling according to God's Word.

So as we think about sitting down and ministering face to face with folks in a counseling situation, these guidelines that we have gone over quickly here, because we're going to spend most of our time on the next arena, but these two we have gone over quickly are really the most critical. Because as we get into these aspects of sort of a flow of a session, I believe these are Biblical valid and sound. But if we are not walking rightly with the Lord and if our general

perspective on counseling is not God's, it is not Biblical, then it doesn't matter how well we think we have learned from the Word to minister one on one. The heart is already taken out of it. We are just off into another technique and we don't want to do that. We want our counseling ministry to be a living reality flowing from a living relationship with God, giving us a perspective of life on the whole situation and then let it come out in the parts and pieces that God has revealed in His Word are so appropriate. So, though we haven't spent a lot of time on proper personal walk and having a Biblical perspective on counseling, these are just fundamental to what we are looking at in this unit of study. The proper personal walk, that's all about the whole Christian life and living in Christ. Then the Biblical perspective on counseling, that's what this whole course has been about. So we are just touching lightly on two things that are enormous. And really we want them to be the fundamental ground we stand on and then I think it is increasingly beneficial to consider this next arena where we'll spend most of our time.

That is, the flow of a session. I put in parenthesis, unfolding aspects. It is the flow of a session or the unfolding aspects of a counseling session. I really, prayerfully sought the Lord on the terminology there. I was asking God to guard my communication and thinking and the thinking of those I was studying with from any kind of formulistic approach to counseling. We have listed there, eight aspects of a counseling situation that we could think of in that way. But I would not want to entice anyone to counsel by the numbers. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight—that's how we do it! And then you are sitting there with someone that the thing is a living and spontaneous spiritual happening. And this person is pouring out their heart and you're, "No hold it, hold it. You're on five, I'm on three." Sure, we wouldn't say that but sometimes we can behave that way.

In fact this is one the concerns that I have with some very good Biblical literature on counseling that is out. Now, when I say good material, I mean major, minor portion of the literature in the so-called Christian or religious counseling field. I believe it takes enormous discernment from God not to get swept up in the abundant waterfall, overflow of production of books on the counseling scene, often sold under the heading of self-help literature. This ought to send the church running and screaming, you know. "Protect me from that, Lord." Instead they hit the top on the best seller list of the Christian community. Self-help. It is condemned by its very title. How can our number one problem become our number one help? Self-help? We learned that straight from the world. You know, that is a big thing in the world. Do it yourself, it is cheaper. Counsel yourself, it's cheaper. Help yourself. Maybe self won't have to die, you know.

It takes a lot of discernment out there because there are all kinds of books and some over the names or with forwards by well-known names, or endorsements on the back of the jacket by names that you obviously know love the Lord. And if you don't know the author you can tell who is recommending it. "Hey, these people love the Lord, this must be okay." There is more to it than, "Hey, we just all love the Lord.

Oh praise God, we should love the Lord and want to grow in love with the Lord. But there is also truth and righteousness and right and wrong. And there is man-centered teaching and there is Christ-centered teaching. And there is literature that feeds the flesh and there is literature that crucifies the flesh that the life of Christ might come forth. And it is hard to find in most Christian or religious bookstores. Some are Christian. Some are more kind of religious because they just sell whatever will be bought. Whatever sells they stock in many places. And that is one thing we can ask God to give us is increasing discernment, because hurting people go looking for books like this.

I taught this class at one of the Bible College campuses and one young brother, after a few weeks into the course, started bringing me books. "What do you think of this book?" Yeah, that is one of the ones we were warning about without giving titles or authors. "Yes, that's one." He said, "I was thinking so." He said, "Two years ago this was my great hope." And it started going on. Every week thereafter he brought me some books. By the time the course was over I had a huge box from just that one student. And I think the last class he brought like twelve books. They all work together in integrative psychological Christian Biblical counseling, which is hard even to say that all together. It is such an oxymoron. You know, those terms do not go together.

It takes great discernment and we should ask the Lord to give us great discernment. And friends that we are ministering to—for many discernment has kind of slipped off the back burner even in much of the church world. And I spend a lot of time with pastors and in pastors' homes and leaders' homes in churches around the country and I am amazed at the books I come across. Out there on the coffee table or in the den, you know. These books proliferate and too few leaders are stopping to evaluate their message by the Word of God. So we want discernment on it.

But out there is some wonderful Biblical writing in the arena of counseling. It is just not that easy to find. It is not that popular. It doesn't sell that much so it isn't stocked everywhere. But there are some good things out there and good Biblical input from CCEF, the Christian Counseling Education Foundation, down in San Diego. BCF, the Biblical Counseling Foundation, The Self Confrontation Manual out in Rancho Mirage, the Palm Desert area. And you know books by Dr. Jay Adams and NANC, the National Association of Nouthetic Counselors, NANC. They are around, they are just not that easy to find because they aren't popular and they aren't big money makers.

But some of those I have a concern that they too easily can be taken and used in a formulistic manner. And the more data and the more detailed and the more procedural and the more A, B, C, D, the more easy it is to get kind of laid under the letter of the law and be counseling by the letter instead of by the Spirit. You can be able to point right to chapter and verse and say, this is valid. Yes, that's fine. By the Spirit of God you are using it. So I've prayed for the Lord to give me some terms that at least to some extent guard against formulistic letter of the law, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H approach to counseling. And then you have to grind everyone through that procedure and that is the only way it works. You can get very boxed-in and really quench the Spirit of God. And some of those wonderful resource books, which have tremendous Biblical data on counseling issues, sometimes underestimate greatly the work of the Holy Spirit in the counseling ministry, which we have spent some time about along the way. But it is easy to understate the importance.

See, Jesus was the Wonderful Counselor. He is that now, but He is not visible among us. But the Holy Spirit is another Counselor. In John 14:16, "I'll give you another Counselor, just like Me." And the Holy Spirit now carries on that counseling ministry of Jesus the Wonderful Counselor.

So, there is the flow of a session, the unfolding aspects, all of these may not appear in this order. They don't have to be in any or every counseling situation. But I have noticed through the years, so often, these issues unfold in importance or in progress of communicating with someone very much like this. So though it is not a pattern to follow, it's a pattern you often find yourself in, you know. So that is why they are listed and that is why they are in this order. This is not an exhaustive list, but I think it is significant. What we have tried to do in this course is take significant things that we can cover in a reasonable amount of time, that can have major impact on our personal discipling and counseling ministry. And I believe that these eight issues are another segment like that. This doesn't cover everything that needs to be known or will ever

happen in a counseling situation. But these eight issues are very basic, they are critical, and you find them happening or need to happen time and time again.

So, The Flow of a Session; Unfolding Aspects. The first is prayer—

Philippians 4:6,

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

This is a general word for just the Christian life and walk. As one paraphrase puts it: "Don't worry about anything; pray about everything." That catches the heart of it, doesn't it? That is for the entire Christian life for every believer. But oh!—the implications for the counseling ministry. The more one counsels and the more God uses someone, you realize you are going to be ministering one to one with someone, they are often coming to you for help with anxiety. And I've noticed that in anticipating, wanting or wondering if God might use me to help them, it is easy to get anxious. You know, what is this all about? What am I going to say? Am I going to be able to help them? Do I even know what this is going to be about? Do I even know anything from God on this subject? You know, all those kinds of anxieties. And sometimes if you know a little bit about what the whole issue is ahead of time, then you are really set up for an anxiety session, you know because they catch you at church, "Oh, can we go to lunch Tuesday?" Yeah, I'd love to get away. "Good, because..." and they tell you the "because" and you've got forty-eight hours of anguish you know, waiting. They are going to look for my help.

Be anxious for nothing. Then, what is the option? In everything, pray. And I would say, pray as you are approaching the session with someone before. When you sit down together, pray together about the time together. Prayer.

This is another issue that is too easy to underestimate in the counseling ministry. It is too easy to think: problem—resolution, pain—providing comfort, Perplexity? "Ah, I'll bring this great insight." Well, that is all a spiritual potentiality in the counseling situation. But, even if that comes to bear, it is generally related to prayer and seeking God. And even if there is an insight given it is not just, "okay, now go do it." You still need to be prayerfully going out with that truth or insight. It is too easy to underestimate the place of prayer in the personal counseling ministry. Plus, prayer is appealing to the Wonderful Counselor Himself, you know. It just goes perfectly with Counseling God's Way.

Second is to listen. One of the Proverbs says, "What a foolish thing it is to give an answer before you listen, before you have heard the issues" (Proverbs 15:28 paraphrased). Listen. There we can just put the entire chapter of John 4. You recall that? The woman at the well? Jesus who is the Wonderful Counselor was ministering to the woman at the well.

Listening is an important, valid, Biblical Christ-like aspect of counseling God's way. Counseling God's way is not ramming the Word of God down people's throats. Now, we have spent a lot of time pouring out a lot of Scripture in this course. And I believe that is the issue for equipping us and for helping others. But we don't want to get a misconception that we are just, waiting for that person to get there and just ram that Word down their throat.

We do want to be ready to share what God has given us, but also we want to listen. For a few reasons and one is, look at John chapter 4. Here is the Wonderful Counselor, the Creator of all, the One who made this woman, and He is listening. And He didn't even need to, in order to find

anything out. If He who knew all things did some listening, how important is it for you and me? Is it going to be appropriate for us to listen when we do not know all things and do not know every heart? Plus listening is just one way to show Christ-like caring. The Lord was so gentle and so concerned for this woman. Oh, He brought right up front the issues that needed to be raised. But it is a fascinating chapter to read when you pray and think about Biblical counseling. Here is the Wonderful Counselor, one on one. It is just a wonderful chapter to pray in and think in and ask the Lord to enlighten us in.

And certainly one thing you see here, the caring, loving, attentive listening that the Son of God, come in the flesh, gave to this woman. How much more us? Listening is so right. And for us especially, we not only want to show the loving care of paying attention. It is one of the great ways to show people the love of God. Just listen.

Think of all the listening God does. Oh my goodness! There are so many things that, if we were God, we wouldn't even want to hear. God is a great listener. And we want to counsel God's way—listening is an important ministry to people. It just shows love. It just shows you care. Listening like the Lord Jesus does here, like God has shown to do throughout His Word, as people are crying out in prayer around the world, throughout the ages. God is a great listener.

But in listening, not only listening to the obvious issue or problem or concern, but listening more profoundly. And I don't mean that in any kind of humanistic psychological way. Well, I hear them saying this, but I know what they are getting at. It is not that kind of listening. I am talking about listening for deeper spiritual priorities than maybe they are raising. But you are sensing maybe, by what is said or isn't said, or even more important to address than even why they came to see you.

And that's the next issue, number three, that relates to that kind of listening. And I've called it "Saved?" The Scripture there is Matthew 28:19. Saved?

Through the years as the Lord has had me sit with thousands of folks, a couple of things the Lord has taught me to do is pray before, pray with if you can at the beginning to just focus both hearts on the Lord. And then while you are listening, keep praying. In fact I have found in most counseling situations, if you really listen you end up praying. It is just like, Whoa, Lord! And you can do a lot of heavy duty praying in a few minutes of listening. Three minutes, five minutes, ten minutes, fifteen minutes of listening, and you can learn a lot too and hear a lot. But you can do a lot of praying. And often, when ministering one to another, there's a lot of reason to pray in fifteen minutes of counseling conversation that was stirred by someone burdened or hurting or needy. And I like to be listening and praying. I am praying that I will hear, praying that I will understand, praying that I will be available and sensitive, praying the Lord will show me this—Lord, is this person saved?

And I'm particularly talking about counseling with someone that you don't absolutely know. And of course only God absolutely knows this issue. But you might not have any testimony or confirmation or insight there, whether they are a professing Christian or not. Or what their relationship is with the Lord, depending on how deep the relationship prior. And say, "Lord, is this person saved?"

Remember Matthew 28:19 is our Scripture. "Go therefore, and make disciples of all the nations." That is the one great command to all of the church throughout all of the church age. That is what we are to be about the business of doing all the time. Becoming more of a follower of the Lord, which is what a disciple is—and helping others to do the same.

Discipleship is what it is all about. Discipleship isn't a study program. It is a life pursuing a person and the Person is Christ and we are the pursuers. That is discipleship. And that is what the whole life here on earth is about. It is not about all other kinds of things. Those other kinds of things are either appropriate aspects of discipleship, or things a disciple should be free from. You know, that's where all the rest of the stuff fits in.

Jesus came to make disciples, to call out followers of Himself. And then He left and said, "In My name go do the same thing. Keep following Me and help others. Follow Me and call others to do the same."

And our counseling ministry, we saw early on, must be seen in that context. Discipleship isn't one thing and counseling another. Discipleship is the life of the whole church all the time. Counseling is one way to disciple. I like to think of counseling as discipling someone around some felt need or stirring or yearning or desire or emptiness or thirst. Something that would just cause a person to reach out for help. What do they need? It is a word of counsel from God through us that will disciple their lives.

Saved? That's what I like to ask when I'm counseling someone. "Lord, is this person saved? Do they know You? No matter why they came, Lord, if they aren't saved I know what the number one priority for that session is." It is their salvation, not their discomfort, their heartache or their perplexity. Not that those are unimportant at all. God cares about those matters and we should too. But that is not number one priority. What if you give twelve-eight answers for twelve perplexing issues and the person came and went unsaved? Oh, great help! For what, just to kind of muddle through another day with a false hope of having it more together? In a sense they are worse off than when they came.

Saved? With a question mark, "Lord, is this person saved?" Have they begun to be a disciple? Have they even started on the discipleship path?

Folks have said, "Bob, how do you counsel an unsaved person?" Basically, it is one word: evangelism. That is what they need, which is the first aspect of discipleship. Hearing the Good News of the Savior, and then that they might know Him as Lord and Savior and then begin to follow Him. And that following is the other aspect of discipleship. Is this person saved?

I don't know, the Lord may have let me be an instrument of sharing the Gospel and leading more people to the Lord in counseling ministry than maybe any other single means through all the years I have walked with the Lord and ministered and served. And I believe the Lord wants that right up front in our minds. It is because if this person doesn't know the Lord, that is exactly where the Lord wants to start.

Let me tell you a story. When I was still pastoring a lady came to me one day and said, "Pastor, can I meet with you?" My daughter..." (She pointed her out and I knew her because she'd been in the church a while, a spiritually vivacious, hungry young gal around twenty or so.) "My daughter is engaged to that young man." And I said, "Yes, yes, I know that. I've sat down and talked with them." She said, "I'm really concerned about that and I'd like to talk to you." I said okay and we arranged a time. We met together later in that week and she brought her boyfriend. Her husband left her many, many years before. And my, at that time assistant pastor John, sat down with us. He and I often sat together. I invited him very regularly to sit with me in counseling sessions. Which, by the way, I think is a great way to counsel and it is a great way to learn counseling ministry too. And so the four of us sat down.

And I asked if I could pray for us all and we had a good time of prayer. Then I asked this dear lady to share her heart some. And I began to listen to her and pray for her. And as she was sharing, I was hearing some important things. She was saying, you know, "My daughter is flighty and impulsive. This young man is irresponsible and in debt." And I forget a few other things she thought she had discerned. And I acknowledged them. I said, "You know, if those situations describe those two, I can see why you're concerned. You have valid concerns." And I acknowledged that, but I kept praying and listening. I was not only listening to why she came, what was on her mind, I was listening to hear an answer from the Lord to my prayer, which I began to pray for this gal. "Lord, show me if she knows You." I had just seen her a few times at church. She was very new to the church. I had hardly anything but maybe just met her briefly. So I didn't know where she stood. I knew where her daughter stood. She was definitely born again and full of the Spirit of the Lord. Yeah, a lot of, you know immaturity, but she had a lot of life and a lot of hunger and zeal and a lot of growth going on.

So I'm saying, "Lord, does she know You?" Well, as she's describing the problem, I'm noticing a real absence of the Lord, being referred to or mentioned. And though it seemed she was a concerned mother, it seemed like it was a very earthbound, human, horizontal kind of concern. And I said to her, "Could I share some things with you that might help you?" And she said, "What are they?" And I said, "Well, let me ask, do you have the Lord in your life to help you through this?" And it was just like that [snap] her face and her response. I forget her words. I can remember her face. It was like the Lord was saying to me through her, "I don't know what you're talking about." And so it was like, "Thank You, Lord. I know right where You have us now, what the priorities are." And I said, "Could I share some things with you so that you can see how to have the Lord in your life, not only to deal with issues like this but all of life for time and eternity." She goes, "Oh, okay, yeah. Tell me."

And I had my Bible there, which I always do. And I just opened it and I started reading. I didn't comment on any verses. I just started reading. I just ask the Lord to guide me through a lot of salvation verses. I read in John and Romans and 1 John. I read some of the classics, John 3:16 and John 14:6 and 1 John 5:11-13 and Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23. And I just kept reading all these salvation verses. And as I'm finishing one I am just depending on the Lord to bring to mind other ones. I don't know how many minutes I was doing that, but I read quite a few and I hadn't commented on one of them. I am still just turning pages and reading. We were sitting at this big round conference table in this room. And I heard, "Thud! Boo-hoo, boo-hoo!" It was just the reading of the Word of God about sin and the need of forgiveness and salvation and Christ, the way, the truth and the life. She just collapsed on her forearms and was weeping.

I said to her, "Wow, it sounds to me like you sense a real need for what God is offering here in Christ."

"Oh yes, yes, yes."

And I said, "Well, why don't we tell the Lord about that? Talk to Him in prayer."

She said, "I don't know how to pray."

So I offered to help her. I said, "I love to pray. And I'll be glad to lead you and we'll talk about these things that have touched your heart. I'll just pray to the Lord as though it's you and what I think the Lord is wanting to hear in light of His Word. And if it expresses your heart, you just go ahead and say it to the Lord. And if it doesn't express your heart you just be silent and then I'll ask the Lord to lead us on to other issues."

And everything I prayed, she just said right to the Lord. Well, I realized that somewhere during that time of praying that this woman had been born again! Salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ.

And it was obvious that she was trusting her soul and salvation and was repenting of her sins and looking to Christ for life. And I realized all of a sudden that I was praying here with a new sister in the faith! So I turned the prayer to thanksgiving and all of that. And then, at the end of the prayer, she was sitting across the table from me and we had our heads bowed. And we looked up and I looked straight at her and her face was beaming. She came in like a facial thunder storm, ready to rain and really concerned. Now she was just beaming with joy and peace.

She spoke first and said, "So this is what those two kids are so excited about! Isn't that great?" I said, "Yes, yes." Her boyfriend was there and I turned to him and I said, "Where do you stand in all of this?"

He said, "You know two weeks ago I gave my heart to the Lord like that, but I didn't know how to explain it to her."

Oh man, there was big hugging and tears and another time of rejoicing!

A little side note. I am very—I don't know the right word—grieved, irritated, perplexed, or perturbed, at this professionalized fifty minute counseling session approach that has come to the church world with church staff and Christian psychological counselors and all. I mean, God can certainly work in five minutes, but I don't see any rushed relationship there in John 4 with the woman at the well. The Lord even extended the session for her to go get some folks and bring them back for some of their own.

So we were together a couple of hours, and do you know we never again returned to the subject that she came in to talk about. After we had celebrated her boyfriend's new salvation, she pops up to him, "Oh momma doesn't understand this. We've got to tell her. Oh, aunt so and so doesn't understand...." She is just going right down the clan. It was an evangelist in the making right there. And as the weeks begin to roll by, we get reports of mother and daughter out evangelizing the clan. That is what we are talking about here. Listening and determining whether they are saved? Because if they aren't that's God's number one priority for that person.

The interesting thing is, she came in wanting me to kind of step in and be sure this engagement was broken off. I did not do that, though I did agree to pray for her, them and talk to them more. And it ended up that they did—I don't know the right word here either—terminate, postpone, bring an interlude to their engagement. Then one of them went off to Bible College up at Twin Peaks. And then six months later the other one went there. And then they eventually got engaged and married. And it definitely was at least a matter of timing that this gal was sensitive to.

That's what we're talking about. Saved? Because the Lord wants that person to be a follower. No matter why they came, He is using whatever motivated them, so that He can either get them on the path of discipleship or as we'll see in just a moment, if they are believers He wants to move them on down the path of discipleship.

Let's take a break right here, shall we? And then we'll pick up with the rest of this after a break.