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TRAINING ARMY CHAPLAINS TO PROVIDE
BIBLICAL COUNSELING TO SOLDIERS
WITH POST-TRAUMATIC
STRESS DISORDER

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TRAINING ARMY CHAPLAINS TO PROVIDE
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STRESS DISORDER

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PREFACE

This project would not have been possible without the love and support of other people. First, I would like to thank the faculty at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for providing the opportunity for me to study biblical counseling. I'm especially thankful for the support of the faculty in granting me the additional time that I needed to complete my project without penalty. I would also like to thank Dr. Stuart Scott for his support in teaching me how to apply the wisdom of Scripture to the problems and issues of life.

I am particularly thankful for the three chaplains who volunteered to enroll in the PTSD training seminars: Robert, Jason, and Barry. Without their assistance the project would have never become a reality.

I would like to thank my wife, Jennifer, for her love and support. During the past six years of study and four different moves in the military, she has faithfully stood beside me along the journey. I would also like to thank my parents for their never ending love and encouragement.

I am most grateful to Jesus Christ for granting me the gift of eternal life and for His willingness to use me in His service. All thanks and glory to God!

Clinton A. White

Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington

May 2013

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of the project was to train chaplains to utilize the sufficiency of Scripture to provide ministry to soldiers who have experienced the effects of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Goals

The project attempted to accomplish four goals. The first goal of the project was to teach chaplains to understand the sufficiency of Scripture. Many chaplains have been trained in their seminary education and in the chaplaincy to use an integration model of counseling. As a result, many chaplains do not understand the concept of the sufficiency of Scripture. Many do not understand that the Scriptures are sufficient for addressing all of the problems and issues of life (2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:3-4). The project intended to help chaplains to understand that the Scriptures are sufficient for dealing with all of the problems of life.

The second goal of the project was to help develop a positive attitude among chaplains toward biblical counseling. Although some chaplains are very open to biblical counseling, many chaplains have a negative attitude toward biblical counseling. The negative opinion may be due to various reasons including a lack of understanding of biblical counseling, negative perception, or a lack of understanding the sufficiency of

Scripture. One of the desired goals of the project was to help chaplains to change the negative opinion toward biblical counseling.

The third goal was to teach chaplains to counsel victims of PTSD with the sufficiency of Scripture. The current training that is available for chaplains to counsel soldiers with PTSD is based on an integration model. Rather than relying upon the principles of psychology, chaplains need to be trained how to use the Scriptures to counsel PTSD. My goal was to train chaplains to rely upon the Scriptures to counsel soldiers with PTSD. In addition, I enlisted and trained a group of chaplains to provide counseling for PTSD. Two different training seminars were conducted over a six-week period to train two different groups of chaplains to counsel soldiers with PTSD. During the seminar they were equipped with the resources to provide biblical counseling to victims of PTSD.

The fourth goal of the project was a personal goal that I would learn how to best minister to victims of PTSD. The number of soldiers who have experienced the symptoms of PTSD is increasing and will continue to increase with ongoing combat operations. As a result, chaplains are being called upon more often to provide ministry to those who are suffering from the tragedies of war. My personal goal was that as a result of the project I would learn how to effectively provide ministry to soldiers with PTSD.

Context

For the past eleven years I have served on active duty in the Army as a chaplain. My current assignment is at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington. The base is located in the beautiful Pacific Northwest near the city of Tacoma. The joint base is comprised of Fort Lewis and McChord Air Force Base. The installation was first

established as Camp Lewis in 1917 and was named in honor of explorer Meriwether Lewis who was the leader of the famous Lewis and Clark Expedition to the Pacific Northwest.¹ Fort Lewis and McChord Air Force Base were consolidated into a joint base in 2010 as a result of the recommendation of the Base Realignment and Closing Commission. The joint base is the third largest Army installation with a total population of 104,888. There are 40,351 military personnel who are assigned to base along with 54,537 family members and 10,000 civilian employees.²

I currently serve as the garrison Family Life Chaplain at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington. Family Life Chaplains receive additional training in counseling and provide a wide range of ministries to the garrison or division where they are assigned. In order to become a Family Life Chaplain I completed the fourteen-month Family Life Chaplain Training Program at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. As part of the training program, I completed an intensive 48-hour Master of Arts degree through Webster University and conducted nearly 400 hours of counseling.

While serving as a Family Life Chaplain I have the opportunity to provide ministry to military personnel and family members at the Family Life Center. The Family Life Center is located in Four Chaplains Memorial Chapel and has a staff of six personnel that assist in providing ministry to the community. My responsibilities include training chaplains in pastoral counseling skills, conducting relationship building seminars, and providing counseling to service members and their families.

¹Military Installations, "Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington," Military Installations [online]; accessed 15 October 2012; available from http://www.militaryinstallations.dod.mil/pls/psgprod/f?p=132:CONTENT:0::NO::P4_INST_ID,P4_INST_TYPE:5050,INSTALLATION;Internet.

²Ibid.

Rationale

With the increase in the number of PTSD cases among service members, a tremendous need exists to provide biblical counseling to soldiers who are suffering from the effects of combat. Since September 11, 2001 more than two million service members have deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan and many of those have experienced multiple deployments.³ The Army estimated that more than 107,000 soldiers have been deployed three or more times.⁴ During eleven years of combat and multiple deployments, the military has witnessed an increase in suicides and invisible wounds such as PTSD and traumatic brain injury.⁵

The prevalence of PTSD among veterans is estimated to be between ten to eighteen percent.⁶ Between the years 2000 and 2011 there were 76,176 soldiers in the Army who were diagnosed with PTSD.⁷ In that same time period, there were 800,000 veterans who were diagnosed by the Veteran's Administration as having PTSD.⁸ Sadly,

³American Forces Press Service, "Obama: Improve Mental Health Access, Care for Military, Vets," *American Forces Press Service*, 31 August 2012, [on-line]; accessed 16 October 2012; available from <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=117706>; Internet.

⁴Gretchen Gavett, "VA to Hire Almost 2,000 Additional Mental Health Staffers," *PBS Frontline*, 20 April 2012, [on-line]; accessed 16 October 2012; available from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/foreign-affairs-defense/woundedplatoon/va-to-hire-almost-2000-additional-mental-health-staffers/>; Internet.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Brett T. Litz and William E. Schlenger, "PTSD in Service Members and New Veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars: A Bibliography and Critique," *PTSD Research Quarterly* 20 (2009): 3.

⁷Fox News, "Army: PTSD Treatable; Some Diagnosed Return to War," *Associated Press*, 23 March 2012, [on-line]; accessed 16 October 2012; available from <http://www.foxnews.com/health/2012/03/23/army-ptsd-treatable-some-diagnosed-return-to-war/>; Internet.

⁸Fox News, "Man's Best Friend Helps Soldiers With PTSD," *Fox News*, 6 March 2012, [on-line]; accessed 16 October 2012; available from <http://www.foxnews.com/health/2012/03/06/mans-best-friend-helps-soldiers-with-ptsd/>; Internet.

it is estimated that less than half of the veterans with PTSD will get the help that they need.⁹

As the number of PTSD cases increases, the Veterans Administration (VA) has been struggling to keep up with the growing demand for services. Since 2007 the VA has experienced a thirty-five percent increase in veterans who have sought mental health care and have increased their mental health staff by forty-one percent.¹⁰ The VA currently has 20,600 mental health employees on staff.¹¹ In order to keep up with the increasing demand for mental health care, the VA is seeking to hire an additional 1,900 mental health care professionals by June 2013.¹²

The Army has also been struggling to keep up with the increased demand for mental health care. Since 2001 the Army has increased its civilian behavioral health workforce by 169 percent.¹³ During the past five years the Army has more than doubled the number of civilian behavioral health care providers by hiring 1,985 health care professionals. That number includes 819 social workers, 510 psychologists, and 73 psychiatrists.¹⁴

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Steve Vogel, "Shinseki: VA May Need More Mental Health Workers," *Washington Post*, 8 May 2012, [on-line]; accessed 16 October 2012; available from http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/federal-eye/post/shinseki-va-may-need-more-mental-health-workers/2012/05/08/gIQAbgaqAU_blog.html; Internet.

¹¹Gavett, "VA to Hire Almost 2,000."

¹²American Forces Press Service, "Obama: Improve Mental Health Access"

¹³Joe Gould, "Civilian Psych Staff Doubled Since 2007," *Army Times*, 22 March 2012, [on-line]; accessed 16 October 2012; available from <http://www.armytimes.com/news/2012/03/army-civilian-psych-staff-doubled-since-2007-032212/>; Internet.

¹⁴Ibid.

As government agencies strive to keep up with the growing demand, there is also a lack of effective treatment options available to assist persons with PTSD. According to the Veterans Affairs, “There is no single best treatment, but some treatments are quite promising, especially cognitive-behavioral therapy.”¹⁵ The Journal of the American Medical Association states that the mental health field “lacks validated treatment options despite a tremendous and growing demand for therapy.”¹⁶ A recent panel of the Institute of Medicine reviewed approximately two hundred studies of therapies that are used to treat PTSD. In their study they failed to find sufficient evidence to validate the efficacy to recommend most of the current treatment options.¹⁷

Although the mental health system has failed to find a single best treatment for PTSD, the Bible provides hope and healing for PTSD victims. The only hope for sufferers of PTSD is found in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Throughout human history people have suffered from the effects of trauma and war. The Bible provides hope and healing for those who suffer. Through the work of Christ and the sufficiency of Scripture, victims can overcome the effects of PTSD.

Definitions and Limitations

The definition that was used for PTSD is from the National Center for PTSD: “Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is an anxiety disorder that can occur following the experience or witnessing of a traumatic event. A traumatic event is a life-threatening

¹⁵Jessica Hamblen, “Treatment of PTSD,” Veterans Affairs [on-line]; accessed 30 June 2008; available from <http://www.ncptsd.va.gov>; Internet.

¹⁶Bridget Kuehn, “Scientists Probe PTSD Effects, Treatments,” *Journal of the American Medical Association* 299, no. 1 (2008): 23.

¹⁷Ibid.

event such as military combat, natural disasters, terrorist incidents, serious accidents, or physical or sexual assault in adult or childhood.”¹⁸ People with PTSD tend to experience three different types of symptoms. The first set of symptoms involves reliving the trauma in some way such as becoming upset when confronted with a traumatic situation. The second set of symptoms involves staying away from certain places or people that remind the person of the trauma. The third set of symptoms includes feelings of being on guard, irritable, angry, or startled easily.

The definition of “biblical counseling” that was used in the project is, “a system of counseling that relies upon the sufficiency of Scripture to address all of the problems and issues of life (2 Pet 1:3-4).” Biblical counseling seeks to follow the biblical commands to exhort, teach, reprove, correct, and admonish one another (2 Tim 3:16-17). The fundamental purpose is to effect character change using the Word of God through the power of the Holy Spirit. The goal of biblical counseling is to help believers to become more like Christ in their desires, thinking, and behavior.

One limitation of the project was that the duration was limited to fifteen weeks. During the project, two seminars were conducted to train chaplains how to counsel biblically in the area of PTSD. Each seminar was conducted over a six-week period with the goal of instructing chaplains to use the authority of Scripture when counseling soldiers with PTSD. Both pre-project and post-project questionnaires were used to measure the results of the project. Because the project was only fifteen weeks in duration, some long-term results could not be measured.

¹⁸Jessica Hamblen, “What is PTSD?,” Veterans Affairs [on-line]; accessed 30 June 2008; available from <http://www.ncptsd.va.gov>; Internet.

A second limitation of the project involved the individuals who were permitted to participate in the training seminars. Due to the limited scope of the project, the participants were limited to chaplains who had some interest in learning how to use biblical counseling when working with soldiers with PTSD. Everyone who participated in the training seminars volunteered to be in the program.

CHAPTER 2

THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL RATIONALE FOR COUNSELING SOLDIERS WITH PTSD

This chapter addresses the biblical and theological issues related to counseling victims of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. The most common counseling issues that are addressed include anxiety, fear, anger, and developing a biblical perspective of suffering. In order to address the issues related to PTSD, biblical counselors must be equipped with the resources that God has provided in Scripture.

Biblical Perspective of Suffering

Biblical counselors must help soldiers with PTSD to develop a biblical perspective of suffering. Charles Hodges notes, “Whether it was because someone sinned against them or they sinned themselves, they still need a different understanding of that trouble because if they never come to a godly view of trouble, they will never be able to view what is happening in their life the way God does.”¹ Believers with PTSD need to understand that suffering is often the result of living in a sin-cursed world that has been ravaged by the evil actions of other people.² C. S. Lewis observes, “When souls become wicked they will certainly use this possibility to hurt one another; and this, perhaps,

¹Charles Hodges, “Helping People Labeled with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder” (CD of session held at the annual conference of the National Association of Nouthetic Counselors, 2006), Sound Word CD N0631.

²Jerry Bridges, *The Gospel for Real Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2003), 13.

accounts for four-fifths of the sufferings of men.”³ Soldiers with PTSD have often experienced suffering as a result of the sinful actions of other people on the battlefield.

The greatest example of suffering is found in the story of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Christ’s death on the cross with its intense physical agony while bearing God’s wrath for the sins of the world was the greatest calamity to ever come upon a human being.⁴ John Piper notes, “And let us not forget that his death was no ordinary death. First of all, it was death on a cross, one of the most excruciating forms of execution ever devised. But even more, it was a death in which he bore the wrath of God.”⁵ Christ can sympathize with suffering people because he endured suffering on the cross. He also provided the example of how to endure suffering. Peter wrote, “For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in his steps” (1 Pet 2:21). Jesus Christ provided the perfect example of how to face trials and suffering.

God demonstrated his love for the world by the giving of his Son at Calvary. When people experience suffering, they may begin to question God’s love for them. But, Jerry Bridges observes, God’s love will never fail:

Any time that we are tempted to doubt God’s love for us, we should go back to the Cross. We should reason somewhat in this fashion: If God loved me enough to give his Son to die for me when I was his enemy, surely he loves me enough to care for me now that I am his child. Having loved me to the ultimate extent at the Cross, he cannot possibly fail to love me in my times of adversity.⁶

³C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (New York: HarperOne, 2001), 86.

⁴Jerry Bridges, *Trusting God* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1988), 175.

⁵John Piper and Justin Taylor, *Suffering and the Sovereignty of God* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2006), 185.

⁶Bridges, *Trusting God*, 140.

Romans 8:39 states that nothing “will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” God’s love that was demonstrated on the cross will never fail. Robert Mounce writes, “There is absolutely nothing that can ever drive a wedge between the children of God and their Heavenly Father.”⁷ However, although God’s love cannot fail, sin will always hinder a believer’s communion with the Lord (1 John 1:9).

Purpose of Suffering

Scripture teaches in Romans 8:28-29 that God will use both the good and bad situations in the believer’s life to bring about their ultimate good for his glory:

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose.²⁹ For whom he foreknew, he also predestined to become conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren.

The good that is referenced in this passage is God’s purpose for believers which is conformity to the image of his Son. The process of being conformed to the Son’s image may involve trials and suffering in the life of the believer.⁸ The good that God works in the lives of his children is not necessarily for their comfort or happiness, but conformity to Christ in ever-increasing measure.⁹ Paul is not saying that God prevents his children from experiencing things that can harm them. He is rather attesting that the Lord takes all that he allows to happen to his children and turns those things ultimately into blessings.¹⁰

⁷Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, New American Commentary, vol. 27 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 192.

⁸Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 427.

⁹Bridges, *Trusting God*, 120.

¹⁰John MacArthur, *Romans* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996), 473.

When believers face trials and suffering, they may not feel God’s love working in their life. Believers may persist in thinking, as the world does, that happiness is the greatest good. Therefore, people tend to evaluate their circumstances in terms of whether or not they produce happiness. Believers must understand that God’s goal for their life is growth in holiness. God orchestrates circumstances in the life of his children to produce greater holiness and growth in Christlikeness.¹¹ After all, God is far more concerned about the believer’s holiness than he is their happiness (Rom 8:28-29).

Through suffering believers can learn spiritual lessons that they otherwise would not have been able to learn. For example, through suffering people can grow in kindness, sympathy, humility, compassion, patience, and gentleness. Most importantly, God can use suffering to bring people closer to himself.¹² Peter writes, “And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you” (1 Pet 5:10). Believers can experience greater faith and Christlikeness as a result of suffering.

Another benefit of suffering is that believers will be better equipped to provide ministry to other people who are hurting (2 Cor 1:3-11). After all, suffering is an important prerequisite to ministering to hurting people.¹³ People are often more open to receiving help from people who have experienced adversity. For example, Jesus Christ suffered and can therefore sympathize with those who also suffer (Heb 2:16-18; 4:14-16). Soldiers with PTSD can be used by God to minister to other people who are hurting.

¹¹Jerry Bridges, *Transforming Grace* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1991), 225.

¹²MacArthur, *Romans*, 478.

¹³Piper and Taylor, *Suffering*, 121.

Sovereignty of God

Soldiers with PTSD must grow in their understanding of the sovereignty of God. Growing in the knowledge of God's sovereignty is essential for gaining a biblical perspective of suffering. John MacArthur comments,

You will never know all the benefits of the power of suffering until you realize that a sovereign God is providentially ordering everything for your good and his glory. Once you come to accept that God is in control of all things, you will be that much better prepared to deal with whatever hardships and sufferings he may choose to send your way.¹⁴

When people experience suffering, they may feel like God is not in control of the affairs of their life. People may wonder, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" They may even question the love and sovereignty of God. But, the Scriptures proclaim that God is sovereign and that he is supreme over all things. The psalmist wrote in Psalm 33:10-11, "The Lord foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations." Every event that occurs in the life of the believer is under the sovereign control of God. There is nothing so small or trivial that can escape the attention of God's sovereign control and nothing is so great to be beyond his power to control it.¹⁵

God is in control of all of the events that take place in the believer's life, both the good and the bad. When adversity strikes, God is never taken by surprise or unaware of what is happening in the person's life. God is in control of the adversity and orders the affairs for his glory and the believer's good. Jerry Bridges notes, "The sovereignty

¹⁴John MacArthur, *The Power of Suffering: Strengthening Your Faith in the Refiner's Fire* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook Publishing, 1995), 116.

¹⁵Bridges, *Trusting God*, 40.

of God is often questioned because man does not understand what God is doing. And, because he does not act as we think he should, we conclude he cannot act for our best.”¹⁶ When adversity occurs, the believer must remember that God is sovereign and that he is in complete control of all of the affairs of their life (Ps 121:3-4; Eph 1:11).

People may question why God doesn’t stop certain tragic events from happening in the world. Warren Wiersbe notes that God can “prevent school buses from getting involved in fatal accidents. He can stop airplanes from crashing. To be fair, you and I must confess that nobody knows how many times God has done these things. All we know about are the times when he did not.”¹⁷ God allows tragedies to happen and sometimes for reasons that may never be known. However, there are also times that God has prevented tragedy that people do not see. Believers must trust in God’s sovereignty.

Having confidence in God’s sovereignty is crucial to trusting him. Jerry Bridges comments, “If there is a single event in all of the universe that can occur outside of God’s sovereign control then we cannot trust him. His love may be infinite, but if his power is limited and his purpose can be thwarted, we cannot trust him.”¹⁸ God is in control of all of the affairs of life, even if one cannot see how God is working in a particular situation (Jer 29:11; Lam 3:38). John MacArthur observes, “We can rest assured that even if we do not see or understand the reason for a particular instance of adversity and are caught off guard, God is not.”¹⁹ God is completely sovereign.

¹⁶Jerry Bridges, *Is God Really in Control?* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2006), 35.

¹⁷Warren Wiersbe, *Why Us? When Bad Things Happen to God’s People* (Grand Rapids: Revell Books, 1985), 135.

¹⁸Bridges, *Trusting God*, 37.

¹⁹MacArthur, *Power of Suffering*, 16.

The sovereignty of God is actually a comforting thought when living in a world of evil. Although God may allow evil to occur, he does not allow it to take total control. He will permit it to spread only so far as he should allow (Eccl 7:14). Believers can therefore find comfort in God's sovereignty. Although everyone will experience adversity in life, believers can trust in the sovereign hand of God. Bridges observes,

That which should distinguish the suffering of believers from unbelievers is the confidence that our suffering is under the control of an all-powerful and all-loving God; our suffering has meaning and purpose in God's eternal plan, and he brings or allows to come into our lives only that which is for his glory and our good.²⁰

Even when believers cannot understand why they are suffering, they can rest assured that God is in control and is working out everything for their good (Rom 8:28).

Many people seem to believe in a God who is in control of the major events of life, but is less concerned about the smaller affairs of life. But, the Scriptures teach that God is in control of even the smallest events of life (Matt 10:29–31). Jesus taught about the sovereignty of God during the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6. D. A. Carson comments,

Jesus assumes his heavenly Father sovereignly watches over each sparrow and each flower and argues from the lesser to the greater: if God cares for even these things—surely of relatively little account on the eternal and cosmic scales of things—should we not trust him to provide men and women, made in his own image, with all that we need?²¹

Believers can find comfort in knowing that there is no detail of their life that is too insignificant for their heavenly Father's attention and there is no circumstance so big that he cannot control it.

²⁰Bridges, *Trusting God*, 32.

²¹D. A. Carson, *How Long, O Lord? Reflections on Suffering and Evil* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006), 216.

Goodness of God

In order to develop a biblical view of suffering, people with PTSD need to gain a biblical understanding of the goodness of God. Jerry Bridges comments on God's goodness, "The Bible affirms both his sovereignty and his goodness with equal emphasis. References to his goodness and lovingkindness, like his sovereignty, appear on almost every page of Scripture."²² In 1 John 4:8, the apostle John proclaimed that "God is love." Psalm 145 speaks of God's "abundant goodness," being "rich in love," and "good to all." God is both sovereign and good.

The most convincing evidence of God's love is his giving of his Son on the cross. John writes, "This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him" (1 John 4:9). The greatest proof of God's love is the cross of Jesus Christ. Any time believers are tempted to doubt God's love for them, they should look to the cross of Jesus Christ and remember how much God loves them. They should reason, Bridges notes, "If God loved me enough to give his Son to die for me when I was his enemy, surely he loves me enough to care for me now that I am his child."²³ God's love and faithfulness will never fail.

When adversity strikes, people are often tempted to question God's love and goodness. They may question why God would allow them to suffer or to experience a particular trial. But, even when questions arise, believers must rest in the assurance of God's love and faithfulness. God is faithful and has promised in Hebrews 13:5, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

²²Bridges, *Is God Really in Control?* 96.

²³Bridges, *Trusting God*, 140.

Biblical Response to Suffering

The believer with PTSD must be taught how to properly respond to suffering. Charles Hodges states, “Biblical counseling looks at a situation and says that even if someone sins against you, you are supposed to respond in a biblical way.”²⁴ No matter how much a person has suffered, they cannot evade their responsibility as Christians by pleading that their case is unique.²⁵ According to 1 Corinthians 10:13, “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.” The trials that are related to PTSD are not unique and God will hold believers accountable to his Word.

Soldiers with PTSD must understand that the goal of counseling is not to feel better. The goal is to glorify God and serve other people (Matt 22:36-40; 1 Cor 10:31).²⁶ The believer will need to focus on Christ in their suffering and grow in their relationship with him. Jim Berg writes, “The only lasting and satisfying answer to life's problems will always be in increased intimacy with Jesus Christ. Any solution that does not put Jesus Christ center stage will be ineffective.”²⁷ Jay Adams says to those who suffer, “There is no trial into which God calls you that is beyond your ability to withstand. Instead of saying ‘can’t,’ you should say, ‘I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.’”²⁸

²⁴Hodges, “Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.”

²⁵Jay Adams, *Christ and Your Problems* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1971), 1.

²⁶Hodges, “Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.”

²⁷Jim Berg, *When Trouble Comes* (Greenville, SC: BJU Press, 2002), 32.

²⁸Adams, *Christ and Your Problems*, 23.

The person with PTSD can trust in the power of Christ to enable them to live in a way that is pleasing to God. They need to study the Scriptures to deepen their relationship with Christ and their understanding of God's Word. Through the daily study and meditative reading of the Word of God, they will draw vast comfort from its pages.²⁹ The Bible also provides direction for living for Christ and it contains the solutions to all of the problems of life (2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:3-4). When Jesus said in Matthew 4:4, "Man does not live by bread alone, but by all the words that come from the mouth of God," he was giving the key to solving all of the problems of life. Their solution is found in following the Bible which sustained and guided Christ successfully through the deepest trials of his life.³⁰ God's Word is sufficient for life and godliness (2 Pet 1:3-4).

Believers can also glorify God by choosing to trust him, especially during times of difficulty. People can trust God even when they don't understand what he is doing or why he has allowed adverse circumstances to occur in their life. God is glorified when believers can say with Job, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 3:15).³¹ God receives glory when his children choose to trust him by faith. David found comfort in the fact that God was sovereign in his life, "But I trust in you, O Lord; I say, 'You are my God.' My times are in your hands; deliver me from my enemies and from those who pursue me" (Ps 31:14-15). He continued to trust in the Lord in the midst of adversity, believing that the Lord would ultimately vindicate him.³²

²⁹Carson, *How Long, O Lord?*, 224.

³⁰Adams, *Christ and Your Problems*, 8.

³¹Jerry Bridges, *The Joy of Fearing God* (Colorado Springs: WaterBrook Press, 1997), 225.

³²Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 421.

People who suffer should be encouraged to pour out their heart to God in prayer. Edward Welch comments on the importance of prayer,

An initial surprise to many people, and a gloryweight in itself, is that God actually encourages those who suffer to speak honestly to him. Why is this a surprise to many sufferers? Sufferers tend to feel alone and isolated. They often think that God is very far from them.³³

In the midst of pain, people may feel alone and believe that no one else has experienced the same pain. But it isn't true. Jesus Christ has felt such pain and understands human suffering. Believers can cry out to God in prayer because, “we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Heb 4:15). He is able to sympathize with suffering people. Therefore, “let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb 4:16).³⁴

Believers should choose to worship God even during times of adversity. When the initial disaster struck Job, he fell to the ground in worship and said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised” (Job 1:20-21). Edward Welch notes, “After the most horrifying of losses, this is Job’s first response. He worshiped God. The weight of God’s glory was more than that of his own suffering.”³⁵ He humbly acknowledged that God in his sovereignty had given and he had a right to take away.³⁶

³³Edward T. Welch, “Exalting Pain? Ignoring Pain? What do we do with Suffering?” *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 12 (1994): 9.

³⁴Piper and Taylor, *Suffering*, 185.

³⁵Welch, “Exalting Pain?,” 9.

³⁶Bridges, *Trusting God*, 208.

Biblical Perspective of Anxiety

Anxiety is a common problem among those with PTSD. For those who struggle with anxiety, the Bible offers hope and healing. Paul wrote in Philippians 4:6, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” The Greek word for anxious (μεριμνᾶτε) means “to be pulled in different directions.” From the spiritual point of view, anxiety is wrong thinking (the mind) and wrong feeling (the heart) about circumstances, people, and things.³⁷ Anxiety often has physical symptoms such as sleep problems, biting fingernails, stomach cramps, and headaches. These symptoms serve as warning signs that people are succumbing to anxiety.³⁸

Anxiety is both sinful and unnecessary. It is a waste of time because anxiety will never cause something to happen or keep it from happening. In Matthew 6:28-29 Jesus said, “And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin.” Worrying about food does not put it on the table and neither does worrying about clothing produce more clothes. In fact, the majority of problems that people worry about, they have little or no control over the situation.³⁹ Worrying about problems and situations in life is useless and unnecessary.

One of the reasons why people become anxious is due to unbelief. John MacArthur writes, “Anxiety is blatant distrust of the power and love of God.”⁴⁰

³⁷Warren W. Wiersbe, “Philippians 4:6,” in *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1989).

³⁸Wayne Mack, *Down, But Not Out* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2005), 47.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 27.

⁴⁰John MacArthur, *Anxiety Attacked* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1993), 3.

In Matthew 6:30 Jesus said, “But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will he not much more clothe you? You of little faith!” One of the reasons why believers worry is because they lack faith in God and his promises. They do not believe that God will provide for their needs as he has promised or that his grace is sufficient for every need. Therefore, the lack of faith results in anxiety.⁴¹

When believers worry, they also question God's sovereignty because they do not believe that he is really in control. A.W. Pink defines the sovereignty of God, “To say that God is sovereign is to declare that he is the Almighty and the owner of all power in heaven and earth. No one can defeat his plans, prevent his purpose, or resist his will.”⁴² Worry is a serious problem because it is an attempt to usurp the sovereignty of God. When people are anxious, it is often because they think that events are out of control and they feel responsible for changing the outcome of the events. Anxiety is the result of questioning the sovereignty of God. Wayne Mack writes, “In essence, we are aspiring to be God and frustrated because we are not.”⁴³

Biblical Solutions for Anxiety

The Bible offers hope to those who struggle with anxiety that is often associated with PTSD. In Philippians 4:4-9 Paul gave instruction regarding how to address the sin of worry:

⁴¹Mack, *Down, But Not Out*, 55.

⁴²Arthur W. Pink, *The Sovereignty of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1984), 8.

⁴³Mack, *Down, But Not Out*, 30.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! ⁵Let your forbearing spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. ⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things. ⁹Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

The first step for overcoming the sin of worry is to “rejoice in the Lord always” (v. 4). Warren Wiersbe observes, “Whenever we find ourselves worrying, our first action ought to be to get alone with God and worship him. Adoration is what is needed. We must see the greatness and majesty of God! We must realize that he is big enough to solve our problems.”⁴⁴ Rather than worrying about problems, believers are to rejoice and trust in the Lord. Even when circumstances are troubling, Christians can thank God for his blessings such as the gift of salvation, forgiveness of sin, and the spiritual blessings in Christ (Eph 1:3). Believers should rejoice in the Lord at all times because he is the only sure, reliable, unwavering, and unchanging source of joy.⁴⁵

Paul says in Philippians 4:5, “Let your forbearing spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near.” The Lord is near both to hear the cry of the believer’s heart and to give them strength. Because of God’s presence, believers should not be fearful or anxious. However, when believers face trials, they often seem to forget what they know about God. They may lose their confident trust in him, spiritual stability, and self-control.⁴⁶ Although believers may feel alone at times, the Lord is always present and he is watching

⁴⁴Wiersbe, “Philippians 4:6.”

⁴⁵John MacArthur, *Philippians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001), 273.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 277.

over his children. Paul wrote, “Let your forbearing spirit be known to all men.” When facing troubles, believers can still live in a way that glorifies God (1 Cor 10:31). They should let the Bible decide how they are going to act rather than how they feel about a particular situation.⁴⁷

Philippians 4:6 commands, “Be anxious for nothing.” Paul and the Philippians had ample reason to be anxious since Paul was in prison and the others were threatened with persecution. Paul is speaking from personal experience and he knows that God is greater than all their troubles.⁴⁸ The Bible clearly teaches that worry is an act of disobedience against God. In Matthew 6:25-34 Jesus said three times, “Do not worry.” Wayne Mack writes, “This was not intended to be a suggestion to follow when-or if-we feel like it; this was given as a command!”⁴⁹ Charles Hodges comments,

There are a couple of really good things when it is a command. One is that if we break that command, it is sin. It’s not a disease I can repent of sin, I can’t repent of disease. I can confess sin, I can ask God to forgive me, and then I can ask him for the power to live in a biblical way.⁵⁰

Christians are not to be anxious about any circumstance that they may encounter in life. They should rather entrust themselves to the almighty God who loves and cares for them.

Rather than worrying about the problems of life, Christians should take their concerns to the Lord in prayer. Philippians 4:6 says, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made

⁴⁷Hodges, “Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.”

⁴⁸Ralph P. Martin, *Philippians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 43 (Dallas: Word Incorporated, 2004), 245.

⁴⁹Mack, *Down, But Not Out*, 23.

⁵⁰Hodges, “Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.”

known to God.” Because God cares for his people, they can cast their anxiety on him. Peter wrote, “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you” (1 Pet 5:7). Jerry Bridges notes, “His care is not conditioned on our faith and our ability to cast our anxiety on him; rather, it is because he does care for us that we can cast our anxiety on him.”⁵¹ God wants his children preoccupied with him, not with the mundane, passing things of this world.⁵² God desires that his people should cast their burdens on him. Wayne Mack asks the question, “Why should we carry a burden that someone else is willing to bear? This is an excellent question—one that many believers should spend more time thinking about—because, as believers, we all have Someone who is willing to carry our burdens!”⁵³ David said in Psalm 55:22, “Cast your burden upon the LORD and he will sustain you.” Jesus Christ said, “Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt 11:28). Paul had learned from personal experience that the way to be anxious about nothing was to be prayerful about everything.⁵⁴

Philippians 4:7 states, “And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” When the exhortations of verses 4-6 are heeded, “the peace of God” will flood one’s troubled soul. Every child of God has peace with God through justification, but the peace of God relates to the inner tranquility of a believer’s walk with God.⁵⁵ Ralph Martin writes,

⁵¹Bridges, *Transforming Grace*, 229.

⁵²MacArthur, *Anxiety Attacked*, 5.

⁵³Mack, *Down, But Not Out*, 62.

⁵⁴Martin, *Philippians*, 245.

⁵⁵John F. Walvoord, “Philippians 4:7” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1985), 664.

The Greek word for guard (φρουρεῖν) is a military term picturing God's peace as a detachment of soldiers standing guard over a city. Philippi in Paul's time housed a Roman garrison. Thus the metaphor would have been easily understood: God's peace, like a garrison of soldiers, will keep guard over our thoughts and feelings so that they will be as safe against the assaults of worry and fear as any fortress.⁵⁶

God's peace results from following the biblical instruction regarding worry rather than a person living according to their feelings. God gives the promise of peace to those who are worried, but it only applies to those who follow the instruction that is presented in Scripture.

The last step in dealing with the sin of worry involves a change in the way a person thinks about their problems in life. In Philippians 4:8, Paul wrote,

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.

Paul lists six elements that are essential for a wholesome thought life and each one is introduced with the word "whatever." The phrase "dwell on these things" introduces the important truth that spiritual stability is a result of how a person thinks.⁵⁷ People with PTSD must experience a change in their thoughts in order to overcome the sin of worry. Christians who are worried should start thinking about things they can do something about rather than spending their time thinking about the problem.⁵⁸ Through the application of Philippians 4:8 and by taking "every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor 10:5), Christians can renew their minds so that they will not be overcome by the sin of worry.

⁵⁶Martin, *Philippians*, 247.

⁵⁷MacArthur, *Philippians*, 285.

⁵⁸Hodges, "Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder," CD.

Conclusion

The solution for worry is found in prayer and thanksgiving, which gives to God every harassing burden and trusts him to take care of the worrisome matters. The believer must place their trust in the Lord and his sovereign care in every circumstance of life. Secondly, the person must fill their mind with good thoughts that are true and praiseworthy rather than worrying about the problems that they have encountered in life. By putting into practice the principles that are taught in Philippians 4:4-8, believers can experience peace through the presence of the God of peace.⁵⁹

Biblical Perspective of Fear

People with PTSD commonly struggle with sinful fear. Although fear can be a normal response to certain situations in life, it is sinful when it keeps a person from being obedient to God or when it keeps them from living for God's glory.⁶⁰ Lance Quinn defines sinful fear as "a lack of trust in God the creator who is the sustaining sovereign of the universe."⁶¹ Sinful fear is always the result of a lack of faith. Wayne Mack writes, "How you respond to frightening circumstances reveals something about your faith in God. When you panic, when you are overwhelmed with fear, you are demonstrating a lack of faith, a lack of trust in God and in Jesus Christ."⁶²

⁵⁹Martin, *Philippians*, 255.

⁶⁰"Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder," Mt. Carmel Ministries [on-line]; accessed 19 May 2009; available from http://www.mtcarmelmin.org/newsletter/oct_2004-2.pdf; Internet.

⁶¹Lance Quinn, "Counseling the Fearful" (CD of session held at the annual conference of the National Association of Nouthetic Counselors, 2004), Sound Word CD N0437.

⁶²Wayne Mack and Joshua Mack, *Fear Factor* (Tulsa: Hensley Publishing, 2003), 35.

Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 1:7, “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” People who suffer from PTSD primarily fear not being safe. For example, when a car backfires, they may hit the ground or run because of fear. Soldiers with PTSD think that they have been robbed of their safety and their primary motive is often to remain safe.⁶³ They may adopt a victim mentality or be primarily concerned with serving self. The solution is for the person to turn from the motive of serving self to glorifying God and loving other people (Matt 22:37-40).

Another cause for sinful fear is the fear of man. Proverbs 29:25 states, “Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe.” One of man’s greatest fears is man himself. Edward Welch writes, “However you put it, the fear of man can be summarized this way: We replace God with people. Instead of a biblically guided fear of the Lord, we fear others.”⁶⁴ Sinful fear occurs when people fear other people more than they fear God. As a result, they allow other people to control them. Therefore, the first task in overcoming the fear of man is to grow in the fear of God. The person must repent of their sin of fear and actively put their faith in the Lord.

One of the effects of sinful fear is that it produces irrational thinking. For example, some people will not drive over a bridge because they are fearful that it will not support them. However, thousands of vehicles drive over that same bridge every day and it has never broken under the pressure.⁶⁵ Christians are not to be controlled by irrational

⁶³Hodges, “Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.”

⁶⁴Edward T. Welch, *When People Are Big and God Is Small: Overcoming Peer Pressure, Codependency, and the Fear of Man* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1997), 14.

⁶⁵Mack and Mack, *Fear Factor*, 20.

thinking because they have been given a “sound mind” (2 Tim 1:7) and can think holy thoughts (Phil 4:8). John MacArthur comments on the definition of a “sound mind,”

σωφρονισμοῦ has the literal meaning of a secure and sound mind, but it also carries the additional idea of a self-controlled, disciplined, and properly prioritized mind. God-given discipline allows believers to control every element of their lives, whether positive or negative.⁶⁶

Christians do not have to allow their circumstances and feelings to dominate their life.

They can live according to truth and be controlled by sound biblical thinking.⁶⁷

The opposite of a spirit of fear is a spirit of love. That is why John wrote, “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear” (1 John 4:18). Fear and love are opposites. People who are dominated by sinful fear are self-centered. When a person is thinking of themselves, they will naturally be afraid. However, when their eyes are on God and other people, fear is cast out. For example, a mother may be afraid of water, but if she sees her baby drowning, fear disappears and love compels her to dive in to save her child.⁶⁸ When a Christian is faced with a frightening situation, they should reflect on God's love and remember that nothing can separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:38-39). Love for God and other people will drive out sinful fear.

Christians who struggle with sinful fear need to grow in their fear of God. People with PTSD need to replace their fear of past experiences by placing their trust in God, knowing that he is in control.⁶⁹ Wayne Mack comments on developing holy fear,

⁶⁶John MacArthur, *2 Timothy* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996), 18.

⁶⁷Mack and Mack, *Fear Factor*, 21.

⁶⁸Ibid., 19.

⁶⁹“Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.”

In order not to fear, you must begin to fear. But the Scripture is clear: The only way to overcome sinful fear is to develop holy fear. Develop a holy fear of God, and you won't be plagued by a sinful fear of man or anything else.⁷⁰

The emphasis in Scripture is “when I am afraid, I will trust in you” (Ps 56:3). Scripture assumes that believers will be fearful at times. What is important is where God’s children turn to when they are afraid.⁷¹ People with PTSD can rest assured that when they fear the Lord they are traveling down a path of safety. When a person fears the Lord, they will fear nothing else: “The fear of the Lord leads to life, so that one may sleep satisfied, untouched by evil” (Prov 19:23).⁷² God is the proper object of godly fear and it is his majesty that this fear always causes the eye of the soul to be upon.⁷³ In order to overcome sinful fear, Christians must grow in their fear of God.

The counselee should be taught how to grow in the fear of the Lord. They need to know that the regular, prayerful, and personal exposure to Scripture is the most effective means of growing in the fear of God.⁷⁴ Believers need to study, memorize, and be exposed to the teaching of God’s Word if they are going to grow in the fear of the Lord. In Deuteronomy 4:10 the Lord connects hearing his Word with learning to fear him: “Assemble the people before me to hear my words so that they may learn to revere me as long as they live in the land and may teach them to their children.” The individual must grow in their understanding of Scripture if they are to grow in the fear of the Lord.

⁷⁰Mack and Mack, *Fear Factor*, 139.

⁷¹Edward T. Welch, *Running Scared* (Cincinnati: New Growth Press, 2007), 69.

⁷²*Ibid.*, 200.

⁷³John Bunyan, *The Fear of God: What It Is and What It Is Not* (Goodyear, AZ: Diggory Press, 2007), 83.

⁷⁴Bridges, *Joy of Fearing God*, 122.

In addition, they will need to turn to God in prayer to cast all of their anxiety on him. The counselee must learn to place their trust in God at all times. One of the means for believers to grow in the fear of the Lord is through prayer. The counselee should also be instructed to surround themselves with other believers who can serve as an example and encouragement to them as they grow in fear of the Lord. Accountability with another believer is very helpful for overcoming sinful fear.

Biblical Perspective of Anger

Anger is a common problem among those who suffer from PTSD. The person could be harboring anger or bitterness because of their circumstances or the anger could be directed toward the persons who perpetrated the traumatic event.⁷⁵ Regardless of the reasons for the anger, the Bible offers hope for those who struggle with angry emotions and behavior.

Anger Defined

Robert Jones defines anger as the “whole-personed active response of negative moral judgment against perceived evil.”⁷⁶ Anger is an activity that involves the entire person. The Bible makes it clear that anger is not something that is inside the person, but it is something that they do.⁷⁷ Scripture also addresses the many emotional, cognitive, volitional, and behavioral aspects of anger. Although anger can take various forms, it always involves beliefs, feelings, actions, and desires.

⁷⁵“Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.”

⁷⁶Robert D. Jones, *Uprooting Anger: Biblical Help for a Common Problem* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2005), 13.

⁷⁷David Powlison, *Anger: Escaping the Maze* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2000), 2.

The definition of anger states that it involves a negative moral judgment against perceived evil. People become angry when they perceive some action, object, situation, or person to be evil or unjust. The perceptions may be accurate or inaccurate. However, anger is a negative moral judgment because it always opposes the perceived evil. Angry persons cast negative mental votes against unjust actions and they determine that all offenders must change, be punished, or be removed.⁷⁸

Anger can take the form of either sinful or righteous anger. David Powlison writes, “Anger can be utterly right, good, appropriate, beautiful, the only fair response to something evil, and the loving response on behalf of evil’s victims.”⁷⁹ Righteous anger is unselfish and is based on love for God and concern for others. When Jesus cleansed the temple in John 2:13-17, he demonstrated righteous anger toward sin. Jesus was always angered when the Father was maligned or when others were mistreated, but he never became selfishly angry.⁸⁰ His anger was always righteous.

Anger can also be sinful, bad, inappropriate, ugly, and completely destructive.⁸¹ The kind of anger that people often experience is almost always sinful. Although anger can be godly and constructive, it can also be ungodly and destructive.⁸² Anger can be either righteous or sinful. The way in which a person can determine if they

⁷⁸Jones, *Uprooting Anger*, 16.

⁷⁹David Powlison, “Anger Part 1: Understanding Anger,” *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 14 (1994): 40.

⁸⁰John MacArthur, *Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996), 185.

⁸¹Powlison, “Anger Part 1,” 42.

⁸²Wayne Mack, *Anger and Stress Management God’s Way* (Amityville, NY: Calvary Press, 2007), 22.

are experiencing sinful anger is when it becomes the dominant feature of their life or when they are being controlled by their anger.

Although people often direct their anger toward other people, they can also become angry with God. Anger against God is always sinful because it accuses God of wrongdoing. God's ways are always perfect and just (Ps 145:17; Matt 5:48). Robert Jones comments on the reason why people become angry with God,

Notice that we accuse God of not doing what (actions or inaction) he should do, or not doing it in the way (manner) he should, or not doing it when (timing) he should. In short, we want what we want when we want it, and when God does not deliver, we judge him.⁸³

To be angry with God is to perceive some wrong in God or to apprehend some evil in his ways. Anger toward God is also based on selfish motives. David Powlison writes, "If I believe that God exists to give me what I want, I will burn when he doesn't deliver."⁸⁴

Anger at God is always sinful.

Angry people will either reveal or conceal their anger. Individuals can choose to either express or hide their angry emotions and behavior. Revealing anger consists in various ways that people let others know and feel their anger. Various methods include loud voices, sharp tongues, undeleted expletives, flying fists, slammed doors, and walking out of meetings.⁸⁵ However, concealing tactics try to hide the anger from other people. The behaviors include the tone of voice, cutting edge in the words, glitter in the eyes, agitation, and disgust.⁸⁶ Both concealing and revealing responses to anger are sinful.

⁸³Jones, *Uprooting Anger*, 115.

⁸⁴Powlison, "Anger Part 1," 46.

⁸⁵Jones, *Uprooting Anger*, 79.

⁸⁶*Ibid.*, 78.

Analysis of Anger

James 4:1-3 reveals both the cause and the consequences of sinful anger. James begins in verse one by asking two questions, “What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?” Verse one consists of two rhetorical questions. The second question is constructed to be answered in the affirmative.⁸⁷ The source of their anger was not from other people or circumstances that they encountered, but from the heart. Jesus taught in Mark 7:20-23 that anger always comes from the heart:

That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man.²¹ For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries,²² deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness.²³ All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.

The root of all sin is in the human heart. When the Bible speaks of the heart, it refers to the three main operations of the inner man: mind, affections, and will.⁸⁸ The heart is the wellspring of all thoughts, words, and actions: “For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander” (Matt 15:19). Ken Sande describes the process of conflict in the heart,

When we feel we cannot be satisfied unless we have something we want or think we need, the desire turns into a demand. If someone fails to meet that desire, we condemn him in our heart and quarrel and fight to get our way.⁸⁹

⁸⁷Ralph P. Martin, *James*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol 48 (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 144.

⁸⁸Elyse Fitzpatrick, *Idols of the Heart* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2001), 93.

⁸⁹Ken Sande, “Getting to the Heart of Conflict,” Peacemaker Ministries [on-line]; accessed 19 May 2009; available from http://www.peacemaker.net/site/c.aqKFLTOBIpH/b.958147/k.4979/Getting_to_the_Heart_of_Conflict.htm; Internet.

Sinful anger arises from sinful beliefs and motives in the heart. Proverbs 4:23 warns, “Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.” Elyse Fitzpatrick writes, “We must continually battle the competing loves in our heart. Every day we have to choose whom we will love most: God or ourselves (and the gods we create).”⁹⁰ James 4:2-3 provides an analysis of the heart of anger:

You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. And you are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. ³You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

Anger is the result of unmet ruling desires of the heart. Selfish and covetous hearts generate conflict. The problem with the desires of the heart is that they tend to rule over the believer. Desires can become sinful and idolatrous, not because they are sinful in themselves, but because they are desired inordinately.⁹¹ A good desire can become an idolatrous lust. The best evidence that a Christian desires something more than God is their willingness to sin against God, either in order to get what they want or because they cannot get what they want. A common sin that results from inordinate desire is anger.⁹²

In verse three, James teaches that anger comes from selfish motives: “you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.” James warns against praying to indulge personal pleasures. The sinful heart seeks to please itself more than to please God. Robert Jones asks the question, “How can we determine whether our desires are sinful?” He writes,

⁹⁰Fitzpatrick, *Idols of the Heart*, 100.

⁹¹Lou Priolo, *The Heart of Anger: Practical Help for the Prevention and Cure of Anger in Children* (Amityville, NY: Calvary Press Publishing, 1997), 105.

⁹²*Ibid.*, 107.

One obvious answer is when we desire a sinful object, i.e., when the item itself is forbidden. To want something that is intrinsically evil or explicitly forbidden is, of course, sinful. But James's insight is more profound. A desire can also be sinful when it is inordinate or selfish.⁹³

Therefore, it is possible for a person to desire a legitimate object too much and allow it to rule over the heart.

Strategies for Change

The first step for dealing with sinful anger is to take responsibility for the angry behavior and identifying it as sin. Sinful anger is wicked, displeases God, and is damaging to all relationships in life.⁹⁴ Henry Brandt writes, “Strife, malice, hatred, anger, outbursts of wrath, dissension, and contention are works of the flesh—of the sinful nature (see Galatians 5:19-21; Colossians 3:8). They are sin, and that’s good news, because there is a divine solution for sin.”⁹⁵ God provides hope and healing in Christ to those who struggle with sin.

Believers who struggle with sinful anger must confess their angry behavior before God and other people who have been affected by their anger. They must begin with confessing their sin to God and seeking his forgiveness (Ps 51:4; 1 John 1:9). Confession of sin must always begin with God. Then, they must go to each person whom they have offended to confess their sin, humbly seek forgiveness, and attempt to reconcile the relationship that was damaged by sin (Matt 7:3-5).⁹⁶

⁹³Jones, *Uprooting Anger*, 51.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*, 89.

⁹⁵Henry Brandt, “How to Deal with Anger,” *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 16 (1997): 29.

⁹⁶Jones, *Uprooting Anger*, 90.

After confessing their sins before God and other people, they must trust in the promises of God as revealed in the Scriptures. Robert Jones observes,

You must receive the fresh promises that Jesus Christ gives you. You must rest in his provision of forgiving and enabling grace. Jesus died for hotheads, even for hotheads who repeatedly blow their anger. The righteous anger you deserved for your sinful anger was poured out in full fury on Jesus the Lamb.⁹⁷

Believers must rest in God's enabling grace and the hope that is available in Christ. If the anger is the result of being sinned against, believers need to know that God is a just God who will punish sin and vindicate his people (Deut 32:35; Rom 12:19; Heb 10:30). They need to trust in God's perfect justice who will condemn the guilty and vindicate the righteous in his own perfect time.⁹⁸ The believer should also follow the example of Christ by "entrusting himself to him who judges righteously" (1 Pet 2:23). Jesus Christ entrusted himself to his heavenly Father and left the fate of his tormentors in the hands of God who is the righteous judge.

Individuals who struggle with sinful anger must take specific steps to replace angry behavior with Christlike words and actions. If the person tends to be an anger-revealer, they will need to take active steps to develop self-control, godly speech, and develop skills in biblical peacemaking and problem-solving.⁹⁹ They will need to learn to speak in a way that is truthful, kind, and beneficial. The person should also study the Scriptures to help them learn to put on Christlike behavior. Passages such as Proverbs 12:18; 16:32; 25:28; 29:11; Matthew 5:21-26, and Ephesians 4:25-32 can be very helpful.

⁹⁷Ibid., 91.

⁹⁸Robert D. Jones, "Helping Others Deal with Their Anger," *The Biblical Counselor*, August 2006, 2.

⁹⁹Ibid.

People who are anger-concealers should take specific steps to develop godly behavior change such as practicing attitudinal forgiveness, proactive God-pleasing speech, developing skills in biblical peacemaking, and problem solving.¹⁰⁰ Passages of Scripture such as Leviticus 19:16-18, Ephesians 4:25-5:2, and Luke 15:25-30 can be particularly helpful for anger-concealers in developing Christlike changes in behavior. The person must learn to redirect their anger energy in order to take the biblical steps that are necessary to develop godly behavior.¹⁰¹

Another strategy for overcoming sinful anger involves dealing with problems on a regular basis. Ephesians 4:26-27 says, “Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger.” God has commanded that believers should deal with problems that they have with people every day. Wayne Mack observes, “What often happens when there is a problem between people is that they not only allow the sun to go down on it, but they allow many moons to go down as well.”¹⁰² Scripture admonishes believers to take care of problems that they have with other people on a daily basis rather than waiting to address the issues at a later time.

Angry people must understand that they have the power in Christ to control their anger (Prov 16:32; 29:11; 1 Cor 10:13). Wayne Mack comments,

In all places, and at all times, we must recognize the fact that as Christians indwelt by the Holy Spirit we do have the power to control our anger. We must realize that when we fail, it's by choice. God has given us the power to obey him in this matter of anger.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹Jones, *Uprooting Anger*, 95.

¹⁰²Mack, *Anger and Stress Management*, 40.

¹⁰³Ibid., 46.

Christians have been given the power to obey God's commands (Phil 4:13). Regardless of the circumstances, believers do not have to respond to anger in a sinful way. They can choose to respond to anger in a manner that glorifies God (1 Cor 10:31).

The final strategy for developing Christlike change is for believers to examine the reasons for their anger. Whenever someone becomes angry, they should stop to evaluate the reasons why they became angry. Although believers can experience anger for many reasons, it is often related to pride and selfishness. People become angry because they want to have their own way, they want to control people, or they want to control the situation. When they are not able to accomplish their agenda, they become angry (Prov 13:10; James 4:1-3).¹⁰⁴ Wayne Mack notes, "By taking the time to evaluate why we are becoming angry can be a helpful way of identifying our sinful, idolatrous motives and promoting conviction of sin and repentance."¹⁰⁵

Conclusion

Believers must trust in the finished work of Christ and his strengthening power to overcome sinful anger or any other sin in the Christian life. Jerry Bridges notes,

Just as we by faith look to Christ for our righteous standing before God, so by faith we are to look to him for the enabling power to live the Christian life. This power comes to us as a result of our vital or living union with him. Jesus referred to this union in John 15:1-5 when he called himself the vine and us the branches. Through that metaphor he was teaching us that just as the branches derive their life and nourishment from the vine, so we are to receive our spiritual life and power from him.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 47.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

¹⁰⁶Jerry Bridges, *The Gospel for Real Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2003), 162.

Christians are to abide in Christ by faith. They are to actively rely on Christ for the enabling power that is necessary to wage war against sin and to put on the positive virtues of Christlike character. Jerry Bridges observes, “Paul waged war against indwelling sin, and he worked hard in ministry, but he did both in dependence on Christ and the power that comes through a living union with Him.”¹⁰⁷

Summary

Soldiers with PTSD have usually been exposed to trauma on the battlefield. The traumatic events that they have experienced are classified in Scripture as trials, sufferings, and afflictions. The believer must learn to develop a biblical response to trials and suffering if they are going to grow and change to become more like Christ (Rom 8:28-29). They need to be able to see their pain through God’s eyes rather than relying on their own interpretation of the trauma. They must learn to live according to God’s commands rather than their feelings. Through biblical counseling, the believer can learn to respond to suffering, anger, anxiety, fear, and other issues related to PTSD in a manner that glorifies God (1 Cor 10:31). The counselee must develop a godly response to their emotional pain and suffering. Responding to suffering in a biblical way will produce much more than the ability to cope and survive, but it will produce hope in the lives of those who suffer.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

THE THEORETICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR COUNSELING SOLDIERS WITH PTSD

This chapter addresses the theoretical and sociological issues related to counseling victims of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Mental health professionals have worked to define the symptoms and develop various treatment strategies to reduce or eliminate the symptoms of PTSD. The most common therapies include psychotropic medications, Cognitive Behavior Therapy, and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing therapy. These treatments will be analyzed to determine the efficacy of the most popular therapies that are available for PTSD.

Definition of PTSD

Post-traumatic stress disorder can be defined as an anxiety disorder that occurs after a traumatic event in which the individual experiences the threat of serious injury or death and the person's response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror.¹ For many individuals PTSD represents a common psychiatric response to a variety of extreme psychological stressors.² The most common symptoms of PTSD include flashbacks,

¹Terri Tanielian and Lisa Jaycox, "Invisible Wounds of War: Psychological and Cognitive Injuries, Their Consequences, and Services to Assist Recovery," Rand Corporation, 335 [on-line]; accessed 20 December 2009; available from <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG720>; Internet.

²Michele A. Schottenbauer et al., "Nonresponse and Dropout Rates in Outcome Studies on PTSD: Review and Methodological Considerations," *Psychiatry* 71 (2008): 134.

anger, anxiety, hypervigilance, nightmares, and depression. In approximately 50 percent of cases PTSD is considered chronic and persists for at least one year after the trauma.³

A distinction must also be made between Combat Operational Stress Reaction (COSR) and PTSD. COSR is also referred to as battle fatigue and involves any response to battle stress that temporarily renders the soldier unable to temporarily remain on duty.⁴ The effects of the trauma are temporary and individuals will normally make a full recovery without professional psychiatric treatment.

In patients with PTSD, comorbidity is also very common. Comorbidity can be defined as two or more psychological conditions that occur simultaneously.⁵ The most common comorbid conditions include depression, anxiety disorders, substance abuse, and other axis II disorders.⁶ Research indicates that 88 percent of men and 79 percent of women with PTSD are diagnosed with at least one other mental disorder.⁷ The presence of comorbid conditions complicates the treatment of PTSD. Tanielian and Jaycox note the challenges of treating individuals with comorbid conditions,

Individuals with co-occurring mental, medical, and substance use disorders have been shown to have more severe symptoms, require more specialized treatment, have poorer outcomes to treatment, and experience more disability in social and occupational functioning than individuals with one condition alone.⁸

³Michelle L. Van Etten and Steven Taylor, "Comparative Efficacy of Treatments for Post-traumatic Stress Disorder: A Meta-Analysis," *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy* 5 (1998): 126.

⁴Tanielian and Jaycox, "Invisible Wounds of War," 335.

⁵Ibid., 125.

⁶Rebekah Bradley et al., "A Multidimensional Meta-Analysis of Psychotherapy for PTSD," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 162 (2005): 214.

⁷Tanielian and Jaycox, "Invisible Wounds of War," 125.

⁸Ibid.

Risk Factors for PTSD

The majority of people who are exposed to traumatic stress do not develop the symptoms of PTSD. For many people who have been exposed to trauma, post-traumatic distress is a normal and transient reaction from which complete recovery can be expected. However, a minority of individuals who have been traumatized do not recover, but develop clinical problems such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.⁹

Several risk factors can influence the development of PTSD in individuals such as pre-event factors, event factors, and post-event factors. Pre-event factors exist before the trauma and include age, gender, trauma history, family instability, and a lack of social support.¹⁰ Event factors are present during the trauma and include geographic nearness to the event, level of exposure, personal meaning of the event, and the existence of a persistent threat such as combat.¹¹ Post-event factors include those that exist after the traumatic event such as the absence of social support, self-pity, and inability to find meaning in suffering.¹²

The most important risk factor for preventing the development of PTSD is social support from family and friends. Studies indicate that strong social support, both before and after a trauma, can significantly reduce the odds for developing PTSD.¹³

⁹Matthew J. Friedman, Terence M. Keane, and Patricia A. Resick, *Handbook of PTSD: Science and Practice* (New York: Guilford Press, 2007), 11.

¹⁰Mary Beth Williams and Soili Poijula, *The PTSD Workbook: Simple, Effective Techniques for Overcoming Traumatic Stress Symptoms* (Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, 2002), 5.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 6.

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³Mark Goulston, *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder for Dummies* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishing, 2008), 37.

Within the military, unit cohesion and social support among unit leaders has been found to be directly associated with fewer mental health problems among military personnel.¹⁴ In contrast, studies suggest that a lack of social support and the existence of additional life stressors are important predictors of post-trauma psychopathology.¹⁵

One misconception about PTSD among veterans is that it occurs only among those who have been directly exposed to combat. However, individuals in non-combat roles who have been exposed to severe trauma are also at risk for developing PTSD. For example, doctors and nurses who work in hospitals can be traumatized by the injuries they treat, the grief of losing their patients, and the guilt they feel over not being able to save every life.¹⁶

Diagnostic Criteria for PTSD

The diagnostic criteria for PTSD is presented in the fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV-TR) that was revised in the year 2000.¹⁷ The following criteria have been extracted from the DSM-IV-TR.

Criterion A: Stressor

The person has been exposed to a traumatic event in which both of the following have been present:

¹⁴Friedman, Keane, and Resick, *Handbook of PTSD*, 312.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Goulston, *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder for Dummies*, 37.

¹⁷National Center for PTSD, "DSM-IV-TR Criteria for PTSD," National Center for PTSD [online], accessed 3 February 2010; available from <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/pages/dsm-iv-tr-ptsd.asp>; Internet.

1. The person has experienced, witnessed, or been confronted with an event or events that involve actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of oneself or others.
2. The person's response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror.

Criterion B: Intrusive recollection

The traumatic event is persistently re-experienced in at least one of the following ways:

1. Recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the event, including images, thoughts, or perceptions.
2. Recurrent distressing dreams of the event.
3. Acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring.
4. Intense psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event.
5. Physiologic reactivity upon exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event.

Criterion C: Avoidant/numbing

Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and numbing of general responsiveness as indicated by at least three of the following:

1. Efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings, or conversations associated with the trauma.
2. Efforts to avoid activities, places, or people that arouse recollections of trauma.
3. Inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma.
4. Markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities.
5. Feeling of detachment or estrangement from others.
6. Restricted range of affect.
7. Sense of foreshortened future.

Criterion D: Hyper-arousal

Persistent symptoms of increasing arousal indicated by at least two of the following:

1. Difficulty falling or staying asleep.
2. Irritability or outbursts of anger.
3. Difficulty concentrating.
4. Hyper-vigilance.
5. Exaggerated startle response.

Criterion E: Duration

Duration of the disturbance is more than one month.

Criterion F: Functional significance

The disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

Symptoms of PTSD

The primary symptoms of PTSD include flashbacks, avoidance, anger, depression, sleep disturbances, substance abuse, and survivor guilt.

Flashbacks

A flashback is defined by Williams and Poijula as a “memory of the past that intrudes into the present and makes the past seem as if it is actually occurring in the here and now.”¹⁸ Flashbacks normally involve sights or sounds and they may also include

¹⁸Williams and Poijula, *The PTSD Workbook*, 51.

smells, tastes, or sensations of touch.¹⁹ The occurrence of a flashback generally cannot be predicted. Flashbacks may include memories of entire traumatic events or it may involve only partial scenes of the trauma.

Whenever a flashback occurs it feels like the person is re-experiencing the trauma all over again. Although the person does not black out, dissociate, or lose consciousness, they do leave the present time temporarily. The entire nervous system becomes involved when the person experiences a flashback. The nervous system becomes hyper-aroused when the individual is exposed to traumatic triggers.²⁰ The most common triggers among veterans include fireworks, cars backfiring, people screaming, helicopters, popcorn popping, or the smell of human waste.²¹

In order to cope with flashbacks, Williams and Poijula suggest that the person should look for ways to get the traumatic memory outside of their head and into the world around them.²² The veteran is encouraged to express the memory through writing, talking, or drawing. *The PTSD Workbook* recommends additional ways that veterans can cope with flashbacks including repeatedly blinking the eyes, deep breathing, clapping the hands, or washing the face with cold water.²³ The person may also find it helpful to identify specific triggers in order to help them to be better prepared for future occurrences of flashbacks.

¹⁹Goulston, *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder for Dummies*, 45.

²⁰Williams and Poijula, *The PTSD Workbook*, 51.

²¹Bridget C. Cantrell and Chuck Dean, *Down Range: To Iraq and Back* (Seattle: WordSmith Books, 2005), 38.

²²Williams and Poijula, *The PTSD Workbook*, 54.

²³*Ibid.*, 56.

Avoidance and Isolation

Individuals will often isolate themselves from social relationships and activities in an effort to avoid re-experiencing the traumatic stressors. Emotional numbing occurs when a person emotionally withdraws from a conversation, situation, person, or trigger that reminds them of a traumatic event.²⁴ Paulson and Krippner write, “This ‘numbing’ often is carried to extremes, leading one to avoid responsibilities, even important ones relating to marriage, children, long-term employment, and close friendship.”²⁵ Dave Grossman comments on the process of emotional numbing,

In an effort to control your bubbling and boiling emotions, you shut them off, or at least you think you do. The reality is that you build a wall around them. Your fear and anxiety still bubbles and boils, but now they are walled in. You cannot shut down just the bad emotions, so you try to shut them all down.²⁶

Many combat veterans must work hard to allow other people to get close to them. Cantrell and Dean suggest that veterans subconsciously build a firewall around them as a self-protective mechanism to prevent emotional pain.²⁷ In order to recover, veterans should tell their loved ones about their emotional firewall. Other people need to know that it is there and why it exists. The person must make a conscious effort to slowly allow loved ones to get close to them.²⁸ The process may take time, but hopefully it will become a healthy exercise as the veteran learns to reconnect with family and friends.

²⁴Cantrell and Dean, *Down Range*, 39.

²⁵Daryl S. Paulson and Stanley Krippner, *Haunted by Combat: Understanding PTSD in War Veterans Including Women, Reservists, and Those Coming Back from Iraq* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007), 16.

²⁶Dave Grossman, *On Combat: The Psychology and Physiology of Deadly Conflict in War and in Peace* (Millstad, IL: PPCT Research Publications, 2007), 284.

²⁷Cantrell and Dean, *Down Range*, 101.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 103.

Anger

Issues related to anger are common among survivors of trauma. Irritability and outbursts of anger represent one of the diagnostic criteria in the DSM-IV-TR for PTSD. Veterans with PTSD frequently report anger as one of their most troublesome problems and is often the issue that prompts them to seek treatment.²⁹ Individuals with PTSD often project their angry emotions onto other people, events, or circumstances. Williams and Poijula comment, “When a traumatic event has knocked your socks off and there is no explanation that makes sense as to why the event happened, your anger may erupt.”³⁰ The anger may take various forms including fits of rage, yelling, throwing objects, punching walls, or kicking the dog. Research has shown that veterans with PTSD are at greater risk for issues with anger, hostility, aggression, general violence, and physical abuse than those without the disorder.³¹

Anger has been described as a signal emotion.³² It can be useful in warning of a threat to a person’s well being or of actual danger. Anger can also be harmful and destructive. The person must choose how they are going to respond to their anger. In order to deal with anger in a constructive way, veterans can workout, take a long walk, practice deep breathing, meditate, get plenty of rest, and eat a balanced diet. These techniques may help the veteran to change anger into something that is helpful.

²⁹National Center for PTSD, *Iraq War Clinician Guide, 2nd ed.* National Center for PTSD, June 2004, 71 [on-line]; accessed 2 February 2010; available from http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/ncmain/ncdocs/manuals/nc_manual_iwguide.html; Internet.

³⁰Williams and Poijula, *The PTSD Workbook*, 88.

³¹National Center for PTSD, *Iraq War Clinician Guide*, 70.

³²Williams and Poijula, *The PTSD Workbook*, 90.

Depression

Individuals with PTSD may also struggle with the symptoms of depression. Mark Goulston estimates that “as many as 50% of people with PTSD have enough symptoms to warrant a second diagnosis of depression.”³³ The symptoms of depression include apathy, inability to concentrate, hopelessness, insomnia, profound sadness, feelings of worthlessness, and lack of interest in people or activities.³⁴ Many treatment options are available for those who suffer from depression. Mild forms of depression can usually be treated with psychotherapy while more severe forms of depression may be treated using a combination of psychotherapy and medications.³⁵

Individuals who are depressed can also practice self-care to help alleviate the symptoms of depression. The person may find it helpful to listen to peaceful music, read a book, exercise, spend time with friends, walk, or adopt a hobby. People who are depressed should be encouraged to take part in some form of activity rather than lying around the house all day. Cantrell and Dean observe, “As strange as it may seem, just getting yourself up and out of bed, taking a shower and setting yourself on a time schedule will do wonders to get you up and motivated.”³⁶

Sleep Disturbances

Many veterans with PTSD experience difficulty with sleep problems such as nightmares and trouble falling asleep. After experiencing a traumatic event, many

³³Goulston, *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder for Dummies*, 53.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵National Center for PTSD, *Iraq War Clinician Guide*, 193.

³⁶Cantrell and Dean, *Down Range*, 40.

people experience problems with nightmares. The duration of the nightmares may be temporary or they may continue for a long period of time. The nightmares may involve a feeling of helplessness or re-experiencing the trauma.³⁷ The person may even experience the same feelings of fear, helplessness, or rage that they encountered during the traumatic event.³⁸

In order to avoid experiencing the nightmares some veterans may try to stay awake at night. Other people may feel the need to stay awake to protect themselves from danger. Cantrell and Dean comment on the difficulty of sleep that is often experienced among veterans,

Many combat veterans stay awake as long as they possibly can. For them, sleep means another night back in combat. They are preparing for a night of patrols, breaking down doors, and searching for weapons. They do this until daybreak; living every hour of darkness on complete alert.³⁹

Some veterans will do most anything to avoid falling asleep at night. They may watch television, drink coffee, consume alcohol, or take pills to stay awake. One veteran said, “That is why many of us stay awake as long as we possibly can. ‘Awake’ equals control- ‘sleep’ equals no control.”⁴⁰ The irony is that by attempting to maintain control of the night, veterans will experience other problems due to lack of sleep. They may experience trouble with fatigue, irritability, poor concentration, or depression.

The primary treatments that are available for sleep disturbances are psychotherapy and medication. Although medication is the most common treatment,

³⁷Ibid., 88.

³⁸National Center for PTSD, *Iraq War Clinician Guide*, 198.

³⁹Cantrell and Dean, *Down Range*, 88.

⁴⁰Ibid., 91.

many talk therapies are also available to assist patients who have difficulty sleeping at night. In addition to treatment, patients can also practice self-care through regular exercise, limiting naps during the day, decreasing the consumption of alcohol, maintaining a regular bedtime schedule, and eliminating caffeine in the evening.⁴¹

Guilt

Trauma survivors may struggle with feelings of guilt for various reasons. The individual may feel like they are responsible for the trauma or they did not do enough to avert the tragedy. The person may also experience survivor guilt. Williams and Poijula define survivor guilt as “the guilt that comes from the belief that your actions or non-actions during a traumatic event may have caused or could have prevented the death, injury, or mistreatment of others.”⁴² Veterans may experience survivor guilt if they escaped death or injury while another person died.

Mark Goulston observes, “Guilt is one of the biggest stumbling blocks on the road to healing because it plants the toxic thought, ‘I don’t deserve to recover.’”⁴³ The person places the blame on themselves for the outcome of an event that was ultimately out of their control. Through therapy, the veteran can begin to understand that their survival is an achievement and not a reason for shame.⁴⁴ The therapist may also help the veteran to understand that some things should be left in the hands of God.⁴⁵

⁴¹National Center for PTSD, *Iraq War Clinician Guide*, 198.

⁴²Williams and Poijula, *The PTSD Workbook*, 110.

⁴³Goulston, *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder for Dummies*, 149.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 151.

⁴⁵Cantrell and Dean, *Down Range*, 43.

Substance Abuse

Alcohol and drug use are highly prevalent among veterans with PTSD. A study of Vietnam veterans indicated that up to 75 percent of veterans with PTSD met criteria for substance abuse or dependence.⁴⁶ Victims of PTSD often use alcohol or drugs to self-medicate to help suppress the painful memories of the trauma. Goulston comments,

Rates of alcohol dependence and drug use are sky-high in PTSD. That's not surprising, because the disorder causes a mountain of anxiety, pain, and heartache. When you feel bad, you need relief-and it's easy to fall prey to a temporary form of numbing that causes far more problems down the road.⁴⁷

There are numerous reasons why veterans choose to use drugs or alcohol. First, drugs and alcohol can be used to numb the feelings of anxiety, fear, helplessness, loneliness, or anger that often accompanies PTSD. Victims of PTSD often find it difficult to get close to people in social settings. Drinking or drug use can help a person to relax and connect with other people. Finally, veterans may choose to use alcohol or drugs in an effort to combat insomnia or nightmares.⁴⁸

Although alcohol or drug use may provide temporary relief for the symptoms of PTSD, it can also create additional problems for the veteran. The *Iraq War Clinician Guide* notes, "Substance abuse adds to the problems caused by PTSD and interferes with key roles and relationships, impairs coping, and impairs entry into and ongoing participation in treatment."⁴⁹ Drugs and alcohol can harm relationships, increase the risk

⁴⁶Tanielian and Jaycox, "Invisible Wounds of War," 134.

⁴⁷Goulston, *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder for Dummies*, 55.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹National Center for PTSD, *Iraq War Clinician Guide*, 35.

for becoming an alcoholic, decrease job performance, and increase the feelings of helplessness by as much as tenfold.⁵⁰ If the person becomes dependent on drugs or alcohol, they may need to seek professional help. Treatment options include outpatient therapy or inpatient programs that are designed specifically to treat substance abuse.

Clinical Assessment

A variety of measures have been developed to assess PTSD symptoms. The process of assessing PTSD may include a clinician-administered diagnostic interview, self-report psychological questionnaires, and psychophysiological measures.⁵¹ The most widely used assessment measure is the PTSD Checklist that is a seventeen-item questionnaire that was developed at the National Center for PTSD. Respondents are asked to rate the degree to which they experienced each symptom on a scale from one (not at all) to five (extremely) during the past month.⁵²

There are two versions of the PTSD Checklist. The civilian version (Appendix 1) applies to symptoms that have been experienced as a result of any lifetime stressful event. The military version (Appendix 2) applies to individuals who have experienced a military related traumatic event.⁵³ A diagnosis for PTSD is generally based on whether an individual reports having the requisite severity and number of symptoms indicated on the PTSD Checklist.

⁵⁰Goulston, *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder for Dummies*, 121.

⁵¹Friedman, Keane, and Resick, *Handbook of PTSD*, 282.

⁵²Tanielian and Jaycox, "Invisible Wounds of War," 37.

⁵³Friedman, Keane, and Resick, *Handbook of PTSD*, 290.

Treatment for PTSD

The primary treatments available for PTSD include pharmacotherapy, Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT), and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy. Although these treatments are promising, Robertson et al. notes that “there is no gold standard treatment program for PTSD, nor has any particular treatment approach received universal acceptance among clinicians.”⁵⁴ In addition, a panel that reviewed almost two-hundred studies of therapies for PTSD did not find sufficient evidence of efficacy to recommend most of the current treatments.⁵⁵ To date, there is no single treatment that is completely effective in the treatment of PTSD.

The length of treatment can vary between three months to two years or longer. For mild PTSD, treatment can normally be completed in three to six months. Individuals with additional psychiatric problems may require treatment for at least one year or longer.⁵⁶ Healing from PTSD occurs when the person is able to have some control over their memories, manage their emotions, and related symptoms. Williams and Poijula observe, “Healing occurs also when you are able to control your own behavioral responses. To be healed means you are able to take care of yourself emotionally, physically, interpersonally, and spiritually.”⁵⁷

⁵⁴Michael Robertson, Leanne Humphreys, and Rebecca Ray, “Psychological Treatments for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: Recommendations for the Clinician Based on a Review of the Literature,” *Journal of Psychiatric Practice* 10 (2004): 106.

⁵⁵Bridget M. Kuehn, “Scientists Probe PTSD Effects, Treatments,” *Journal of the American Medical Association* 299 (2008): 23.

⁵⁶Jessica Hamblen, “Treatment of PTSD” Veterans Affairs [on-line]; accessed 30 June 2008; available from <http://www.ncptsd.va.gov>; Internet.

⁵⁷Williams and Poijula, *The PTSD Workbook*, 198.

Pharmacotherapy

A variety of medications have been prescribed for PTSD including Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs), Serotonin and Norepinephrine Reuptake Inhibitors (SNRIs), Tricyclics, MAO inhibitors (MAOIs), and anti-anxiety medications.⁵⁸ The most commonly prescribed medications include Prozac, Luvox, Paxil, Zoloft, Celexa, and Effexor.⁵⁹ Clinical trials have shown that pharmacological therapy has beneficial effects in many patients with PTSD. Psychotropic medications have been widely prescribed to veterans for the treatment of PTSD. Both the Veteran's Administration and the military frequently prescribe psychotropic medications to patients with PTSD. A study that was conducted in 2008 found that 80 percent of veterans were prescribed psychotropic medications for the treatment of PTSD.⁶⁰

Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) have emerged as the treatment of choice among medications prescribed for PTSD. The most common SSRIs include sertraline, paroxetine, fluoxetine, fluvoxamine, and citalopram. Matthew Friedman notes, "Treatment results with SSRIs are especially exciting because these medications appear to be broad-spectrum agents that ameliorate all three symptom clusters of PTSD."⁶¹ SSRIs have been effective in treating both the core symptoms as well as other conditions such as anxiety disorders and depression which commonly co-occur with PTSD. These

⁵⁸Goulston, *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder for Dummies*, 172.

⁵⁹Tanielian and Jaycox, "Invisible Wounds of War," 364.

⁶⁰Dragica Kozaric-Kovacic, "Psychopharmacotherapy of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder," *Croatian Medical Journal* 49 (2008): 470.

⁶¹Matthew J. Friedman, "Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Among Military Returnees From Afghanistan and Iraq," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 163 (2006): 591.

agents may also improve the social and occupational functioning of the individual who is struggling with PTSD.⁶²

However, it must be noted that medications may not be the most effective approach for the treatment of PTSD. Goulston notes “that drugs treat only isolated aspects of PTSD. They can take the edge off certain symptoms, but talk therapy is more effective in banishing PTSD.”⁶³ While medications may help the person to feel better, they cannot change behavior. The most effective means for addressing behavioral change is through the authority and wisdom that is found in the Word of God (2 Pet 1:3).

Cognitive Behavior Therapy

Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) approaches emphasize helping the individual to change patterns of beliefs and modify harmful behavior.⁶⁴ CBT is one of the oldest therapies available for the treatment of PTSD. Marylene Cloitre notes that “behavioral therapies were among the first interventions used to treat PTSD and to demonstrate efficacy.”⁶⁵ Most cognitive therapies utilize cognitive restructuring which is a procedure that involves the identification, exploration, and revision of beliefs that are extreme, non-specific, and global.⁶⁶ CBT approaches focus on educating participants about the relationships between thoughts and emotions, exploring common negative

⁶²National Center for PTSD, *Iraq War Clinician Guide*, 172.

⁶³Goulston, *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder for Dummies*, 163.

⁶⁴Tanielian and Jaycox, “Invisible Wounds of War,” 341.

⁶⁵Marylene Cloitre, “Effective Psychotherapies for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: A Review and Critique,” *CNS Spectrum* 14 (2009): 33.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 34.

thoughts held by trauma survivors, identifying personal negative beliefs, developing alternative interpretations, and practicing new thinking.⁶⁷

CBT therapies are available in many different varieties such as exposure therapy, systematic desensitization, stress inoculation training, cognitive therapy, assertiveness training, and cognitive processing therapy. Although there are some differences among the various approaches, they all share the common goal of helping people to change their dysfunctional thinking patterns. While CBT strives to influence changes in thinking, it is only through the application of the Scriptures by the power of the Holy Spirit that believers can experience a genuine renewing of the mind (Rom 12:2).

Goulston comments on the differences in approaches to CBT, “For all their differences, these approaches offer one important message: Facing your problems is the first step in conquering them.”⁶⁸ From the cognitive theory perspective, trauma engenders changes in basic assumptions that normally underlie an individual’s experiences of life, appraisal of situations, and behavioral responses. The focus of CBT is to identify and challenge such assumptions and help rebuild a more adaptive approach to life.⁶⁹ The goal of CBT is to challenge the self-defeating thoughts and help the client to replace them with positive and productive thoughts. In addition, the therapist will help the individual to identify unproductive behaviors that stem from negative thoughts and replace them with positive behaviors.⁷⁰

⁶⁷National Center for PTSD, *Iraq War Clinician Guide*, 38.

⁶⁸Goulston, *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder for Dummies*, 153.

⁶⁹Robertson, Humphreys, and Ray, “Psychological Treatments for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder,” 111.

⁷⁰Goulston, *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder for Dummies*, 136.

EMDR

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy was developed in 1989 by Francine Shapiro.⁷¹ She discovered the procedure based on a chance observation that she made while walking through a park. She experienced some disturbing thoughts and observed that her eyes were rapidly moving back and forth in an upward diagonal. Later Shapiro began making the eye movements while concentrating on a variety of disturbing thoughts and discovered that the thoughts disappeared. She subsequently had patients replicate these eye movements by following her fingers. Shapiro's chance discovery gave rise to a new treatment approach for PTSD.

EMDR treatment involves imaginal exposure to traumatic images while systematic saccadic eye movements are produced. Saccades are typically induced by tracking a therapist's finger as it is moved rapidly from side to side.⁷² During the eye movements, the patient reports images, thoughts, and feelings that come to mind. The therapist will continue to guide the eye movements in conjunction with imaginal exposure and cognitive restructuring until the negative thoughts diminish.⁷³ Although EMDR relies upon cognitive change and eye movements to treat the traumatic memories, biblical counselors rely upon the wisdom that God has provided in Scripture to address traumatic thoughts and behavior.

Despite the apparent efficacy of EMDR, the mechanism for how it works remains unclear. Friedman et al. believe that “the theoretical underpinnings of EMDR

⁷¹Friedman, Keane, and Resick, *Handbook of PTSD*, 46.

⁷²Van Etten and Taylor, “Comparative Efficacy of Treatments for Post-traumatic Stress Disorder,” 127.

⁷³Friedman, Keane, and Resick, *Handbook of PTSD*, 367.

suggest that traumatic memories can be processed neurophysiologically with dual attention tasks.”⁷⁴ However, there still remains some uncertainty regarding what changes occur in the brain and how oscillatory movements are involved in those changes.⁷⁵ In addition, studies that have compared EMDR with and without eye movements have found no differences in treatment outcome. This discovery naturally raises the question of the role of eye movement in EMDR.⁷⁶ Despite the uncertainties of how EMDR operates, it still remains a popular treatment option for PTSD.

Additional Treatments

Additional treatments have been developed to treat PTSD including Imagery Rescripting (IR), Psychodynamic Therapy (PT), internet based treatment, and hypnosis.

Imagery rescripting. This treatment is based on the theory that imagery has a more powerful impact on positive emotion than verbal processing. Imagery Rescripting is often used in conjunction with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy in the treatment of PTSD.⁷⁷ During therapy the patient is asked to change recurrent and distressing traumatic images through a process called rescripting. The person is encouraged during therapy to replace the imagery of the trauma with mastery imagery that they have developed.⁷⁸ The treatment generally takes between eight to ten sessions to complete.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Van Etten and Taylor, “Comparative Efficacy of Treatments for Post-traumatic Stress Disorder,” 140.

⁷⁶Friedman, Keane, and Resick, *Handbook of PTSD*, 47.

⁷⁷Judith Cukor et al., “Emerging Treatments for PTSD,” *Clinical Psychology Review* 10 (2009): 4.

⁷⁸Ibid.

Psychodynamic therapy. This therapy seeks to help clients to address the unconscious thoughts that develop from a traumatic event. The therapist may also take time to explore maladaptive thoughts and behaviors that did not stem from the trauma but may impede the healing process.⁷⁹ The therapy seeks to break down the unconscious psychological defenses that develop as a result of the trauma that can hinder healing from PTSD. Treatment can typically be completed in about three months.⁸⁰

Internet based treatment. Computer and Internet based therapies have been developed for use in the treatment of anxiety disorders such as PTSD. Computer based approaches may be beneficial for those who do not have access to traditional treatments due to geographic and fiscal constraints. Computer based treatments may also serve as a viable alternative for people who are concerned with the stigma of seeking traditional mental health treatment.⁸¹

Internet and computer based treatment programs appear to be promising. In 2007 a study was conducted in a military population using a cognitive behavioral Internet-delivered program called “DE-STRESS.” The treatment involved exploration of self-monitoring triggers, stress management, in vivo exposure, trauma writing, and relapse prevention. Six months after completion of the program the treatment group had a significant decrease in the symptoms of PTSD, depression, and anxiety.⁸²

⁷⁹Goulston, *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder for Dummies*, 185.

⁸⁰Tanielian and Jaycox, “Invisible Wounds of War,” 346.

⁸¹Cukor, “Emerging treatments for PTSD,” 6.

⁸²Ibid.

Hypnosis. Hypnosis is a treatment approach that is used to suggest changes in behavior and mental processes. Typically, hypnosis is used in conjunction with other therapies and has been shown to increase the effectiveness of other approaches.⁸³ The similarity between the dissociative effects of hypnosis and PTSD makes hypnosis a promising intervention for PTSD among the mental health profession. Because hypnosis provides controlled access to memories that may be kept out of consciousness, the therapist can help the patient to reconstruct the traumatic memories.⁸⁴ In theory, hypnotherapy enables the clinician to access memories and experiences that are subject to dissociation and repression. However, the biblical means of affecting changes in thoughts and behavior is through the application of the Scriptures and the process of sanctification.

Efficacy of Treatments for PTSD

Researchers have conducted numerous studies to measure the effectiveness of treatments for PTSD. Clinical trials indicate that many treatments have had a positive effect in reducing the symptoms of PTSD. Researchers have worked to measure the rate of improvement, long-term treatment effects, non-response rates, and the dropout rate of treatments for PTSD.

Rate of Improvement

In a review of clinical studies that was published in the *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Bradley et al. found that the majority of individuals who enter treatment for PTSD will experience some level of improvement. Using author-defined criteria for

⁸³Tanielian and Jaycox, "Invisible Wounds of War," 347.

⁸⁴Robertson, Humphreys, and Ray, "Psychological Treatments for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder," 112.

clinically meaningful improvement, the study identified that 54 percent of those who completed treatment were classified as improved at the end of the study.⁸⁵ This study helps validate the effectiveness of current treatment options that are available for PTSD.

Although the effectiveness of current treatments have been validated by clinical studies, a study that was published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that some individuals experience improvement without seeking any treatment.⁸⁶ An assessment was conducted among soldiers returning from Iraq in order to identify mental health problems among combat veterans. Upon their return from deployment, soldiers were asked to complete a Post-Deployment Health Assessment (PDHA) survey. Six months after their return the soldiers completed another survey called the Post-Deployment Health Re-Assessment (PDHRA) survey. Researchers found that soldiers reported more mental health concerns six months after deployment on the PDHRA than what was reported on the PDHA. In addition, clinicians discovered that 20.3 percent of active duty personnel and 42.4 percent of reserve component soldiers met criteria for requiring mental health treatment after return from deployment.⁸⁷

The study also discovered that some patients with PTSD might improve without seeking any treatment. Clinicians identified that between 49 percent to 59 percent of individuals who had PTSD symptoms on the PDHA improved by the time they took

⁸⁵Rebekah Bradley et al., "A Multidimensional Meta-Analysis of Psychotherapy for PTSD," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 162 (2005): 222.

⁸⁶Charles S. Milliken, Jennifer L. Auchterlonie, and Charles W. Hoge, "Longitudinal Assessment of Mental Health Problems Among Active and Reserve Component Soldiers Returning From the Iraq War," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 298, no. 18 (2007): 2141.

⁸⁷Ibid.

the PDHRA.⁸⁸ Researchers noted that there was no direct relationship between treatment and symptom improvement. Charles S. Milliken et al. comments on this puzzling discovery,

The inverse relationship between mental health treatment and improvement in PTSD symptoms and the 37% improvement rate among soldiers who received three or more sessions is counter-intuitive. Even among soldiers with PTSD symptoms who were referred from the PDHA, recovery was highest among those who did not follow-up with an appointment.⁸⁹

Although people with PTSD typically improve with treatment, this study demonstrated that some persons might experience a reduction in symptoms without treatment.

In another study conducted by Bradley et al. researchers discovered that many individuals recover with little or no treatment. Across all treatment approaches, researchers discovered that approximately 56 percent of those who failed to complete treatment no longer met criteria for PTSD.⁹⁰ Researchers also identified that among those who completed treatment, 67 percent no longer met criteria for PTSD. This study suggests that individuals who complete treatment only experience an 11 percent greater chance of recovery from PTSD than those who did not complete their course of therapy.

Long-term Efficacy

Although studies have been conducted that measure the short-term effects of PTSD treatment, more research is needed to validate the long-term effects of treatment approaches. Very few studies have been conducted that measure the long-term treatment effects. Because of the nature of PTSD, a treatment that produces an initial response or a

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Ibid., 2147.

⁹⁰Bradley, "A Multidimensional Meta-Analysis of Psychotherapy for PTSD," 222.

response that holds for three to six months after termination, may or may not be an efficacious treatment for a disorder such as PTSD, which tends to be longstanding.⁹¹

The majority of studies for PTSD have only measured the immediate effects of treatment. In a review of clinical studies, Bradley et al. observe, “We could identify only two studies with follow-up data at twelve months. For studies reporting follow-up data at 6-12 months, virtually none reported the proportion of patients with sustained improvement (i.e., those who get better and remain better).”⁹² In another study, Van Etten and Taylor note that “follow-up results were not available for most treatments, but available data indicates that treatment effects for behavior therapy and EMDR are maintained at 15-week follow-up.”⁹³

Bradley et al. identified in their research that relatively brief treatments were able to reduce symptoms or render the person no longer diagnosable for PTSD in 40 percent to 70 percent of patients. However, in contrast to this positive discovery they note, “To what extent these effects are sustained beyond 6-12 months is unknown.”⁹⁴ While the short-term results of treatment are promising, more research will need to be conducted to evaluate the long-term efficacy of treatment approaches.

Researchers have discovered that some patients who receive treatment for PTSD are able to make a complete recovery. In a study that was published in the *Journal of Psychiatric Practice*, Tarrrier et al. compared Cognitive Therapy with Imaginal

⁹¹Ibid., 215.

⁹²Bradley, “A Multidimensional Meta-Analysis of Psychotherapy for PTSD,” 225.

⁹³Van Etten and Taylor, “Comparative Efficacy of Treatments for Post-traumatic Stress Disorder,” 126.

⁹⁴Bradley, “A Multidimensional Meta-Analysis of Psychotherapy for PTSD,” 215.

Exposure Therapy for patients with chronic PTSD. Researchers found that both treatments were equally effective in reducing symptoms at post-treatment, six-month, and twelve-month follow-up consultations. The study made the promising discovery that at the twelve-month follow-up, one third of the patients no longer met the diagnostic criteria for PTSD.⁹⁵

Non-response Rate

Only a few studies have been conducted that measure the rate of non-response to treatment for PTSD. Studies indicate that individuals who are treated for PTSD may not respond to the treatment they receive. The non-response rate among patients is often high in clinical trials for PTSD. Schottenbauer et al. conducted an assessment of fifty-five empirically supported treatments for PTSD. In their research they discovered that many studies reported a non-response rate among patients of greater than 50 percent.⁹⁶ For example, they found that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy had a non-response rate as high as 71 percent while EMDR had a non-response rate as much as 92 percent in some studies.⁹⁷

Dropout Rate

Many patients who begin treatment for PTSD may choose to dropout of therapy for a variety of reasons. Studies indicate that the dropout rate is often high for PTSD treatment. Cloitre notes, “The dropout rates in PTSD treatment studies are high

⁹⁵Robertson, Humphreys, and Ray, “Psychological Treatments for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder,” 112.

⁹⁶Schottenbauer, “Nonresponse and Dropout Rates in Outcome Studies on PTSD,” 135.

⁹⁷Ibid., 137.

and hover around 30 percent. This may be related to the nature of the disorder, which has a strong avoidance component.”⁹⁸ Although patients may dropout of treatment, studies indicate that psychological therapies have significantly lower dropout rates than pharmacotherapies. Psychological therapies have a dropout rate of 14 percent while pharmacotherapies maintain a dropout rate of 32 percent.⁹⁹

Summary

Mental health professionals have made great strides in developing diagnostic criteria and treatment approaches that have improved the quality of life for victims of PTSD. Despite the positive impact that PTSD therapies have made in reducing symptoms, there is still much work ahead. Schottenbauer et al. notes that “significant treatment dropout and non-response rates in studies of current empirically supported treatments for PTSD indicate that these therapies do not successfully treat all patients.”¹⁰⁰ Studies indicate that some patients with PTSD will experience improvement in their symptoms without seeking any treatment. Additional research will need to be conducted to determine the long-term efficacy of PTSD therapies, evaluate the effectiveness of innovative treatment methods, and develop more effective treatment approaches for PTSD.

⁹⁸Cloitre, “Effective Psychotherapies for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder,” 42.

⁹⁹Van Etten and Taylor, “Comparative Efficacy of Treatments for Post-traumatic Stress Disorder,” 126.

¹⁰⁰Schottenbauer, “Nonresponse and Dropout Rates in Outcome Studies on PTSD,” 135.

CHAPTER 4

BIBLICAL COUNSELING SEMINARS

The ministry project consisted of teaching two seminars to chaplains regarding how to utilize biblical counseling for issues of PTSD. Each seminar took place over a six-week period and met for two hours each week. In order to measure the effectiveness of the training both pre-seminar and post-seminar questionnaires were administered.

Challenges of Military Service

One of the challenges that I encountered in completing my project involved frequent moves and demanding assignments in the military. In the course of working on my ministry project I moved four times in a period of four years. I also encountered the unique challenge of completing two different military schools while working toward completion of my project.

While I was stationed at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky from 2005-2008 I had the opportunity to complete my first three D.Min seminars. In July 2008, just after my third seminar, I moved to Ft. Jackson, South Carolina to attend the Chaplain Captains Career Course (C4). The school is five months long and is required for all chaplains in the rank of Captain. While I was in C4 I submitted my project proposal and I completed all of the assignments for my last D.Min seminar. During this time I also had tests and written assignments that I had to complete for the C4 military school.

In January 2009 I moved to Stuttgart, Germany for a fifteen-month assignment. My tour in Germany was the most challenging assignment that I have had as a chaplain. My primary responsibility was serving as the Fund Manager for the Chapel Tithes and Offerings Fund (CTOF) that brought in almost a million dollars a year in offerings. In addition, I also served as the Panzer Kaserne community chaplain and I single-handedly served as the pastor of a chapel congregation of 120 people. Normally a team of chaplains are assigned to a chapel service. However, due to shortages in chaplains in Stuttgart, I was left to do the work without any additional assistance.

While I was in Stuttgart I maintained a very busy schedule. During the week I would normally work from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. managing the CTOF and providing ministry to the community. In the evening I would spend my time preparing sermons and lessons, or participating in chapel activities. Weekends were normally spent preparing for worship on Sunday. During the busyness of my assignment in Germany I was able to find the time to write chapters two and three for my D.Min project.

In April 2010 I moved to Ft. Bragg, North Carolina to attend the Family Life Chaplain Training Program. Part of the training included the completion of a Master of Arts degree in Community Counseling. Shortly after I arrived at Ft. Bragg the director encouraged me to complete chapter four of my D.Min project. I immediately began to work on preparing the lecture notes and training materials that I would need to conduct the training seminars. Five weeks later when I went back to the director to find out what I would need to do next to conduct the seminars, he did not remember anything about our conversation five weeks before and he was no longer supportive. For the next fourteen months I was unable to do anything to work toward completing my project.

Recruiting

In August 2011 I arrived at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington. I immediately began the process of recruiting chaplains for the two training seminars. The challenges that I encountered included the difficulty of finding chaplains who were interested in biblical counseling, frequent deployments, and busy schedules among chaplains who were not deployed.

One of the challenges that I encountered in recruiting involved finding other chaplains who were interested in participating in the biblical counseling seminars. Although some chaplains in the Army have an interest in biblical counseling, it was challenging to find chaplains who were available and willing to take part in the training seminars. For example, in effort to recruit chaplains to sign up for the seminars, I had the opportunity to advertise at a monthly training event for all chaplains on base. Out of the twenty-five chaplains who were present in the room, not one person was interested in signing up for the seminar.

Another challenge that I experienced in recruiting chaplains involved frequent and on-going deployments. Because of multiple deployments that occurred throughout the year, many chaplains were unavailable to participate in the seminars. In fact, some of the chaplains that I found who were interested in the training could not attend due to preparation for deployment.

The final challenge that I encountered was the issue of busy schedules among chaplains who were not deployed. When units deploy the chaplains who remain behind are kept very busy providing ministry to the family members and soldiers who did not deploy with the unit. In addition, they have the added responsibility of continuing to

provide support for worship services, Bible studies, chapel programs, on-call duty chaplain, funerals, and other events. Because of the demands of ministry, it was a challenge to find chaplains who were willing to take an additional two hours a week out of their already busy schedules.

Participants

I was able to recruit five people to participate in the first training seminar. Four of the participants were chaplains and one person was an associate pastor (Jeff) at a local church. Jeff was also working toward his NANC certification. One of the chaplains (Don) was able to attend the first three classes but could not complete the training because he was selected to attend a military school. Don had been giving Jeff a ride onto base. Therefore, when Don could no longer attend the training, Jeff could no longer attend the seminars as well. Further, one other chaplain had to drop out of the training due to too many competing demands on his schedule. At the end of the first seminar only two chaplains were able to complete the training.

For the second seminar I was only able to recruit one chaplain to participate in the training. I had hoped to recruit at least two other chaplains, but unfortunately I was unable to find anyone who was interested and available to attend the seminar. However, the one chaplain who could not complete the first seminar due to competing demands on his schedule, was able to come back and complete the second seminar.

Pre-seminar Questionnaire

Participants were asked to complete a questionnaire before they attended the seminar (see Appendix 2). The questionnaire consisted of twelve questions that were based on a 5-point Likert scale. The questions were designed to measure the individual's

understanding of the sufficiency of Scripture, PTSD symptoms, and counselor training to address the issues of PTSD. The pre-seminar questionnaire also consisted of six short answer questions that were designed to assess the chaplain's understanding of the sufficiency of Scripture as well as their level of training, experience, and understanding of PTSD.

The data from the pre-seminar questionnaire indicates that the participants had a strong belief in the sufficiency of Scripture (see Appendix 3). Questions 1, 4, 6, and 11 on the Likert scale section asked about the individual's understanding of the sufficiency of Scripture. The average score for all four questions was a 4.75 on a 5-point scale, where the number 5 represents "strongly agree." Additionally, the short answer responses indicate that the participants had a strong belief in the sufficiency of Scripture. Questions 1 and 6 on asked about the individual's view of the Bible's authority, inspiration, and application in counseling. The responses demonstrated the participant's belief in the authority, inspiration, and sufficiency of the Bible.

The questionnaire also asked about the individual's training and experience in counseling people with PTSD. The short answer responses on questions 4 and 5 indicate that all of the participants had some training and experience in counseling soldiers with PTSD. The average response to question 7 of 4.66 on the Likert scale indicates that the participants believe that all chaplains should be trained to provide counseling for PTSD. However, when asked to assess their level of training on question 5 on the Likert scale, the average response was only 3.33 on a 5-point scale. Further, the participants were asked to respond to statement 12 on the Likert scale, "I am prepared to counsel a victim of PTSD using only the Bible as a resource." The average response was 3.33.

The responses also indicate that the chaplains had a fairly good understanding of the symptoms of PTSD when they began the seminar. When asked on question 3 of the short answer section to describe the symptoms of PTSD, the individuals were able to list most of the major symptoms. However, when asked to scale their understanding of the causes and symptoms of PTSD on question 2 on the Likert scale, the average response was only 3.33 on a 5-point scale. Although the chaplains had a good understanding of the symptoms of PTSD, they seemed to lack confidence in their understanding of PTSD.

In summary, the responses on the questionnaire suggest that the chaplains began the training seminar with a strong belief in the sufficiency, inspiration, and authority of the Bible. The chaplains also had a fairly good understanding of the symptoms of PTSD, but seemed to lack confidence in their understanding of the symptoms. Although the participants each had some experience in counseling soldiers with PTSD, their responses indicate that they lacked sufficient training to effectively address the issues of PTSD with the authority of God's Word.

Seminars

Two training seminars were conducted that met for two hours a week for a period of six weeks. The first seminar began on May 17, 2012 and concluded on June 21, 2012. The class began with a group of five and finished with only two chaplains. The second seminar was conducted with one chaplain that began on August 23, 2012 and concluded on September 27, 2012.

Participants received a notebook during the first class that contained all of the resources that they would need for the seminar. The notebook was divided into seven sections with each section being devoted to a different seminar topic. Each section

included a copy of the lecture notes as well as additional resources such as homework assignments, Bible studies, and articles for additional reading. The notebook also served as a resource that the chaplains could use in their counseling ministry.

The seminar began in week 1 with a presentation on the principles of biblical counseling (see Appendix 4). Week 2 was devoted to a discussion of biblical counseling methodology (see Appendix 5). The first two classes were designed to familiarize the students with the basic principles and practice of biblical counseling. The introductory classes served to lay the foundation for the remainder of the seminar that focused on how to address specific issues related to PTSD.

Week 3 of class opened with a discussion of the causes and symptoms of PTSD (see Appendix 6). Particular emphasis was given to specific counseling issues that should be addressed when working with individuals with PTSD. The remainder of the class was then devoted to helping victims of PTSD to develop a biblical perspective of suffering (see Appendix 7). Victims of PTSD need to know how to respond to their suffering in a way that glorifies God.

The fourth week of class was dedicated to helping victims of PTSD to address issues of anxiety (see Appendix 8). Anxiety is a common symptom among PTSD sufferers. Week 5 was devoted to helping counselees to address anger issues (see Appendix 9). The final week of class focused on helping victims of PTSD to cope with sinful fear (see Appendix 10).

Post-seminar Questionnaire

At the conclusion of the seminar a questionnaire was administered to each participant that consisted of five short answer questions (see Appendix 2). The first three

questions asked for feedback about the strengths, weaknesses, and recommended changes for the seminar (see Appendix 11). The responses indicated that the strengths of the seminar include being very practical and applicable to counseling soldiers with PTSD. Other responses noted that the material was user friendly and the small group instruction created more interaction among the participants.

Question 2 asked about which parts of the training were least helpful. One person responded that nothing in the seminar was least helpful and they had benefitted greatly from the training. The other two responses noted that the material was too cognitive and the teaching was too didactic. When asked about recommended changes to the seminar in question 3, two people recommended the utilization of video in class to help facilitate instruction. One chaplain recommended that he would like to have more class discussion.

The last two questions asked about how much the chaplain had learned about utilizing biblical counseling for PTSD. All three participants stated in their response to question four that they were more confident to counsel soldiers with PTSD as a result of the training. When asked in question 5 about the ways in which the seminar helped them to improve their ability to utilize Scripture in counseling, the participants noted that they are more willing and confident to use the Bible in counseling. Two chaplains also stated that they had come to a better understanding of the relevance of Scripture in helping people to address issues in counseling.

Conclusion

I had the opportunity to conduct two seminars for chaplains in order to teach others to utilize biblical counseling for issues of PTSD. During the process of recruiting

participants I encountered the challenges of frequent deployments, lack of interest in biblical counseling, and busy schedules among chaplains. For the chaplains who were able to complete the seminar, the pre-seminar and post-seminar questionnaire responses indicate that they are better prepared to counsel soldiers with PTSD by utilizing the sufficiency of Scripture.

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT EVALUATION

This chapter will present an overall evaluation of the project. I will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the project along with an evaluation of the project's purpose and goals. In addition, I will discuss a few of the lessons that I have learned including what I would do differently for the project. Finally, I will reflect on some of the ways that I have grown theologically and personally as a result my work toward the project.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

The purpose of the project was to train chaplains to utilize the sufficiency of Scripture to provide counseling to soldiers who have experienced the effects of PTSD. In order to fulfill the purpose of the project, two training seminars were conducted that consisted of twelve hours of instruction over a six-week period. Based on feedback on the post-seminar questionnaire, the participants noted that they were more confident and better equipped to counsel soldiers with PTSD. The chaplains also stated that they were more competent to utilize the Scriptures in counseling. Therefore, based on responses from the participants, I believe that the purpose of the project was fulfilled.

Evaluation of the Project's Goals

The project consisted of four goals. The first goal was to teach chaplains to understand the sufficiency of Scripture. Many chaplains do not understand that the

Scriptures are sufficient for addressing all of the problems and issues of life. Therefore, I wanted to help chaplains to come to a better understanding of the sufficiency of God's Word. Based on the responses on the post-seminar questionnaires, every chaplain grew in their understanding of the sufficiency of Scripture as a result of the training seminars.

The second goal of the project was to help develop a positive attitude among chaplains toward biblical counseling. This particular goal was more difficult to achieve because all three participants began the seminar with a positive attitude toward biblical counseling. However, based on feedback on the post-seminar questionnaire, the chaplains grew in their understanding of the principles and methodology of biblical counseling as a result of the training.

The third goal was to teach chaplains to counsel victims of PTSD with the sufficiency of Scripture. I believe this goal was accomplished through the training that was provided during the two seminars. During the training the participants were provided with the resources that they would need to provide biblical counseling to soldiers with PTSD. Further, the chaplains gave feedback on the post-seminar questionnaire that they had grown in their understanding of how to utilize biblical counseling for the issues of PTSD.

The fourth goal of the project was a personal goal that I would learn how to best minister to victims of PTSD. Through my work on the project and in preparation for the seminars, I have grown significantly in my understanding of how to minister to soldiers with PTSD. I have therefore come to a better understanding of how to apply the wisdom of Scripture to the issues related to PTSD. Further, I have been able to utilize biblical counseling in my ministry to help soldiers who are struggling with PTSD.

Strengths of the Project

One of the strengths of the project is that the training on PTSD is very applicable to the ministry of Army chaplains. Soldiers will often seek counseling from a chaplain for a variety of different issues. One of the reasons that soldiers may seek help from a chaplain is due to issues related to PTSD. Unfortunately, many chaplains have not been equipped to address PTSD in counseling and the training they have received is often not based on the sufficiency of Scripture. Therefore, I believe that one of the strengths of the project is equipping chaplains to provide biblical counseling for a fairly common issue among soldiers.

Another strength of the project includes the two seminars that were conducted to teach chaplains how to address the issues of PTSD. The twelve hours of instruction that were provided in biblical counseling equipped chaplains with the training and resources to counsel soldiers with PTSD. One of the resources that the chaplains were provided was a notebook that contained a variety of resources that they could utilize when counseling soldiers with PTSD. The seminars therefore provided chaplains with the resources and instruction to provide biblical counseling for soldiers who are suffering from the effects of war.

A further strength of the project is that the training the chaplains received can be applied to counseling issues other than PTSD. The topics that were covered in the seminars include how to address the issues of suffering, anxiety, anger, and fear in counseling. Although these issues are common among victims of PTSD, they are also common concerns that are encountered in counseling. Therefore, the training that the chaplains received in addressing PTSD can be utilized in other counseling scenarios.

Weaknesses of the Project

One weakness of the project was the limited number of chaplains who were able to complete the seminars. I wish that I could have recruited more chaplains to participate in the training. Because of the prevalence of PTSD in the military and the need for chaplains to be trained to provide counseling for PTSD, I wish that more chaplains could have participated in the seminars. Due to the challenges that I encountered in recruiting, I was unfortunately unable to recruit more chaplains to participate in the training seminars.

A second weakness of the project involved the questions that were included on the post-seminar questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of five short answer questions. Because I only used short answer questions, the questionnaire lacked measurable data. If I had used questions such as Likert scale or multiple-choice questions, it would have been easier to measure the effectiveness of the training. Further, if I had used the same questions on both the pre-seminar and post-seminar questionnaire, I would have been able to more effectively measure how much each chaplain learned as a result of the seminar.

A final weakness of the seminar involved the teaching style that I used for classroom instruction. I prefer to use a teaching style that includes interaction with the students through open discussion and asking questions. However, due to the small class size, I chose to primarily use a lecture style in teaching the material. Because there were only one or two students in class, it made it challenging to try to maintain an open discussion. Although I'm not opposed to using lecture, I believe that asking questions and discussing the material can be very conducive to learning.

What I Would Do Differently

One change that I would make to the project is to modify the questionnaire. If I had to do the project over again I would use the same questions on both the pre-seminar and post-seminar questionnaire. By using the same questions on both questionnaires, it would make it easier to assess the level of learning for each participant. Secondly, I would only use quantifiable questions such as Likert scale, multiple-choice, or true and false questions. The short answer questions that I used made it more difficult to measure the data. Finally, I would remove the identifying information on the questionnaire such as name, age, and rank. The personal information was not useful when tabulating and analyzing the data. Further, the participant may not have felt comfortable giving candid feedback because their name was on the questionnaire.

A second change that I would make would be to add fill in the blanks to the lesson notes that were used in class. The lesson notes that were given to each chaplain were fairly thorough and contained a lot of material. The addition of fill in the blank lines would help encourage the student to follow along with the notes and to pay attention in class. Therefore, I believe that by adding fill in the blanks to the notes would help facilitate learning.

Finally, if I were to do the project over again I would include the use of video during classroom instruction. Although I did not use video in teaching the seminar, I believe that the addition of video would help to facilitate learning by demonstrating the process of biblical counseling. The use of video would also facilitate learning by giving the students an example of how to utilize the principles of biblical counseling that were presented in class.

Theological Reflections

As a result of preparing for the project and teaching the seminars, I have experienced growth in sanctification. As I have studied how to address the issues of anger, anxiety, suffering, and fear in counseling, I have been able to apply the principles that I have learned to my own life as well. By studying and applying the truths of God's Word to my life, I have been able to experience growth in Christlikeness. Therefore, I have had the privilege of being able to experience spiritual growth as a result of my work on the project.

I have also grown in my understanding of the sufficiency of Scripture as a result of working toward the Doctor of Ministry degree. When I first entered the program I did not know about biblical counseling nor did I understand the sufficiency of Scripture. At that time I thought that all Christian counseling relied upon the principles of psychology to help people change. I did not understand that that the Bible is sufficient for "life and godliness" (2 Pet 1:3). Through my work in the degree program I have come to understand and appreciate the sufficiency of Scripture.

Personal Reflections

One of the ways that I have grown is through the work of preparing and teaching the two biblical counseling seminars. Through the work of studying and making preparation to teach other people, I have become more grounded in the principles of biblical counseling. After all, often times the most effective way to learn material is to teach it to other people. I have certainly experienced an increase in learning the fundamentals of biblical counseling and how to address specific issues in counseling through teaching the two training seminars.

Another way that I have grown through my work on the project is that I am better prepared to counsel soldiers with PTSD. As a result of studying how to utilize biblical counseling for PTSD, I am now equipped with the resources to provide counseling to soldiers who are struggling with PTSD. I have also had the opportunity on multiple occasions to provide biblical counseling to soldiers who are trying to cope with the effects of combat.

Conclusion

I believe that the purpose of the project of training chaplains to utilize the sufficiency of Scripture to counsel soldiers with PTSD has been achieved. In addition, I believe that the four goals of the project have also been fulfilled. Through my work on the project I have grown in many ways including my understanding of the sufficiency of Scripture, growth in sanctification, and my understanding of the principles of biblical counseling. I am also better equipped to counsel soldiers with PTSD as a result of the project and my work toward the Doctor of Ministry degree.

APPENDIX 1

PTSD CHECKLIST: MILITARY VERSION

Instructions: Below is a list of problems and complaints that veterans sometimes have as a response to stressful military experiences. Please read each one carefully, then circle one of the numbers to the right to indicate how much you have been bothered by that problem in the past month.¹

	Not at All	A Little Bit	Moderately	Quite a Bit	Extremely
1. Repeated, disturbing memories, thoughts, or images of a stressful military experience?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Repeated, disturbing dreams of a stressful military experience?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Suddenly acting or feeling as if a stressful military experience were happening again (as if you were reliving it)?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Feeling very upset when something reminded you of a stressful military experience?	1	2	3	4	5
5. Having physical reactions (e.g., heart pounding, trouble breathing, sweating) when something reminded you of a stressful military experience?	1	2	3	4	5
6. Avoiding thinking about or talking about a stressful military experience or avoiding having feelings related to it?	1	2	3	4	5

¹Hospice and Palliative Care Federation of Massachusetts, "PTSD Checklist: Military Version," Hospice and Palliative Care Federation of Massachusetts [on-line], accessed 3 March 2010; available from http://www.hospicefed.org/hospice_pages/PCL-M.htm; Internet.

	Not at All	A Little Bit	Moderately	Quite a Bit	Extremely
7. Avoiding activities or situations because they reminded you of a stressful military experience?	1	2	3	4	5
8. Trouble remembering important parts of a stressful military experience?	1	2	3	4	5
9. Loss of interest in activities that you used to enjoy?	1	2	3	4	5
10. Feeling distant or cut off from other people?	1	2	3	4	5
11. Feeling emotionally numb or being unable to have loving feelings for those close to you?	1	2	3	4	5
12. Feeling as if your future somehow will be cut short?	1	2	3	4	5
13. Trouble falling or staying asleep?	1	2	3	4	5
14. Feeling irritable or having angry outbursts?	1	2	3	4	5
15. Having difficulty concentrating?	1	2	3	4	5
16. Being “superalert” or watchful or on guard?	1	2	3	4	5
17. Feeling jumpy or easily startled?	1	2	3	4	5

Scoring

There are 2 ways to calculate the score:

1. Add up all the items for a total severity score. A score of 50 or greater meets the criteria for PTSD.
2. Treat “moderately” or above (response 3 through 5) as symptomatic and anything below “moderately” (1 and 2) as non-symptomatic. Then follow the DSM scoring rule to get a diagnosis.
 - A. You need an endorsement of at least 1 ‘B’ item (questions 1-5)
 - B. You need an endorsement of at least 3 ‘C’ items (questions 6-12)
 - C. You need an endorsement of at least 2 ‘D’ items (questions 13-17)

APPENDIX 2

PRE- AND POST-SEMINAR QUESTIONNAIRE

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to evaluate your level of understanding of biblical counseling and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. This research is being conducted by Clinton A. White for the purpose of conducting research for his Doctor of Ministry project. In this research, you will answer basic questions about your philosophy of counseling and your understanding of PTSD. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

By your completion of this questionnaire, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

Demographic Information

Name: _____

Rank: _____

Age:

____ 20-30

____ 31-40

____ 41-50

____ 51-60

Denomination: _____

Circle your number of years of experience in the ministry:

1-5 years 6-10 years 11-15 years 20+

Circle your number of years of experience as a chaplain:

1-5 years 6-10 years 11-15 years 20+

Using the scale, please state your level of agreement to the following statements:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree

1. _____ I believe that the Bible is inerrant and infallible in all of its teachings.
2. _____ I have a thorough understanding of the causes and symptoms related to PTSD.
3. _____ PTSD should be treated only by mental health professionals.
4. _____ The Scriptures are sufficient for addressing all issues in counseling.
5. _____ I have received sufficient training to counsel soldiers with PTSD.
6. _____ The Bible provides hope and healing for PTSD victims.
7. _____ All chaplains should be trained to provide counseling for PTSD.
8. _____ Psychology must be utilized when counseling victims of PTSD.
9. _____ Many chaplains lack the proper training to counsel those with PTSD.
10. _____ PTSD is a significant problem among soldiers who have been deployed.
11. _____ The issues that PTSD victims experience can be addressed with Scripture.
12. _____ I am prepared to counsel a victim of PTSD using only the Bible as a resource.

Short Answer Questions

1. Please describe your view of the Bible's authority and inspiration.

2. Describe the various causes of PTSD.

3. Describe the symptoms of PTSD.

4. Please describe the level of training that you have received in counseling PTSD.

5. Do you have any experience counseling soldiers with PTSD? If yes, please explain.

6. Please explain your view of the role of Scripture in counseling

Post-Seminar Questions

1. What were the strengths of the training seminar?

2. Which parts of the training did you find least helpful?

3. What changes would you recommend to improve the training?

4. As a result of the training, do you feel confident to counsel soldiers with PTSD?

5. In what ways did the seminar help improve your ability to utilize Scripture in counseling?

APPENDIX 3

PRE-SEMINAR QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Table A1. Pre-seminar Likert scale average responses

Score	Statement
5.00	1. I believe that the Bible is inerrant and infallible in all of its teachings.
3.33	2. I have a thorough understanding of the causes and symptoms related to PTSD.
1.66	3. PTSD should be treated only by mental health professionals.
4.66	4. The Scriptures are sufficient for addressing all issues in counseling.
3.33	5. I have received sufficient training to counsel soldiers with PTSD.
4.66	6. The Bible provides hope and healing for PTSD victims.
4.66	7. All chaplains should be trained to provide counseling for PTSD.
2.00	8. Psychology must be utilized when counseling victims of PTSD.
2.66	9. Many chaplains lack the proper training to counsel those with PTSD.
4.33	10. PTSD is a significant problem among soldiers who have been deployed.
4.66	11. The issues that PTSD victims experience can be addressed with Scripture.
3.33	12. I am prepared to counsel a victim of PTSD using only the Bible as a resource.
1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Uncertain 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree	

Table A2. Pre-seminar short answer responses

Question	Key themes and frequency
1. Please describe your view of the Bible's authority and inspiration.	Authoritative (2) Sufficient (1) Divinely inspired (2)
2. Describe the various causes of PTSD.	Traumatic event (3)
3. Describe the symptoms of PTSD.	Sleep problems (2) Anger (3) Hypervigilance (2) Flashbacks (2) Depression (2) Anxiety (3) Fear (2)
4. Please describe the level of training that you have received in counseling PTSD.	Very little (2) Moderate (1)
5. Do you have any experience counseling soldiers with PTSD? If yes, please explain.	Yes (3) Limited experience (2) A lot of experience (1)
6. Please explain your view of the role of Scripture in counseling.	Sufficient for addressing problems (2) Helpful (1)

APPENDIX 4

PRINCIPLES OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING LESSON

I. Nouthetic Counseling

A. History

In 1970 Jay Adams re-introduced biblical counseling to the church when he published his book *Competent to Counsel*. He coined the term “nouthetic” to more accurately define the New Testament word for counseling. In addition, he wanted to set biblical counseling apart from other systems that claim to be biblical, but rely heavily on psychology.

B. Caricatures

- 1. Harsh and uncaring**
- 2. Too simplistic**
- 3. Opposed to science and medicine**

C. What Biblical Counseling Is

- Seeking to discern desires, thinking, and behavior in light of Scripture
- Adequately dealing with one’s past and present sins or trials
- Using God's Word, by the Holy Spirit, to change desires, thinking, and behavior to be more like Jesus
- Seeking more growth in the sanctification of the Christian, the building up of the Church and the evangelization of the lost for the glory of God.

II. Commitments of Biblical Counseling

A. Sufficiency of Scripture

1. Scriptural Claims

Biblical counseling relies on God's wisdom, rather than man's wisdom, for resolving the issues of life through the sufficiency of God's Word.

- a. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (2 Tim 3:16-17)
- b. Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. ⁴For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. (2 Pet 1:3-4)

2. Purposes of Scripture

Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:15–17, “And that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

- a. Two characteristics of Scripture:
 1. Able to make people wise about salvation. (evangelism)
 2. Useful for teaching, for conviction, for correction, and for disciplined training in righteousness. (sanctification)
- b. Two stages in ministering to people:
 1. People must first hear the gospel, believe, and be saved.
 2. Believers must be built up in their faith by changing from sinful to righteous ways.

3. Sufficient in all Matters of Life

Some people argue that the Bible is helpful for addressing spiritual issues, but is not reliable for handling the problems that people encounter in life. Wayne Mack writes,

The Word of God provides for us comprehensive, though not exhaustive, information regarding every problem of life and is therefore sufficient for us in all matters. Though every issue of life is not specifically addressed in detail, every issue of life is touched on sufficiently to give us guidance. For example, I have heard it argued that since the Bible never mentions certain problems by name, such as anorexia nervosa, we should not consider the Bible as the source of solutions to such problems. In reality, nothing could be further from the truth. While it is certainly true that a problem such as anorexia is never specifically mentioned in Scripture, it is also true that the Bible contains the basic principles needed to address this problem. Proverbs 4:23 teaches that “out of the heart spring the issues of life.” Though the outer symptoms of anorexia are not addressed or even mentioned in Scripture, the heart issues of a person who is struggling with anorexia are dealt with in the Word of God. (Mack 205)

B. Godward Focus

1. God Oriented

Nouthetic counseling is God centered. It seeks to help the counselee to fulfill the two great commandments (Matt 22:37-40). Jay Adams writes,

Counselors of all stripes hold one point in common. No matter how divergent their dogmas, all counselors—Christians included—agree that the aim of counseling is to change people. Change—whether in the counselee's thinking, feeling, behavior, attitude, sensitivity, awareness, or understanding—is the goal of all counseling. Because change is central to counseling and therefore vitally important, the Christian counselor must come to a scriptural understanding of change in all of its dimensions—its nature, goals, and process. (Adams, *How to Help People Change* xi)

2. Glorifying God

a. Proper goal (1 Cor 10:31)

b. Proper motive (2 Cor 5:9)

The proper motive for change is to honor and glorify God. Gary Thomas comments,

Paul answers a lot of questions for us when he says, “We make it our goal to please him.” Ask ten people on the street what their goal in life is, and you'll get an amazing variety of answers. For the Christian, Paul couldn't be clearer—his “consuming ambition, the motive force behind all he does,” is to please God. But Paul doesn't just say pleasing God is his “consuming ambition,” he assumes it will be ours as well. (Thomas 33)

C. Addressing Sin Issues

1. Sinful Choices

Some people may experience problems that are purely organic or are the result of being sinned against. However, the majority of problems that people experience are the result of sinful choices.

Dave Harvey comments on the significance of sin,

Every sin, however small or great its apparent impact on people, violates the purity of the perfectly just and holy God. Sin is always aimed first and foremost at God (Deut 9:16, 1Sam 15:24, Ps 51:4). Jerry Bridges brings it smack into the family room when he writes, “Sin is wrong, not because of what it does to me, or my spouse, or child, or neighbor, but because it is an act of rebellion against the infinitely holy and majestic God.” (Harvey 42)

D. The Plight of Unbelievers

- Enslaved to sin and incapable of doing God's will (John 8:34-36; Rom 8:7-8; Gal 5:18; Heb 11:6).
- Proverbs 13:15 teaches that unbelievers will experience difficulty because of their sin: “Good understanding produces favor, but the way of the treacherous is hard.”
- Unbelievers cannot understand or apply spiritual truth: “A natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised” (1 Cor 2:14).

1. Unbelievers are separated from God

- a. They are “dead in ... trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:1)
- b. Live in worldliness and disobedience (Eph 2:2)
- c. Walk according to the lusts of the flesh and “indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest” (Eph 2:3)
- d. They are “separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world” (Eph 2:12)
- e. Are “alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds” (Col 1:21)

2. Character has been corrupted by sin (Rom 3:10–12)

Sin has contaminated every aspect of the lives of unbelievers including the heart, mind, personality, emotions, conscience, and motives. Romans 3:10-12 teaches:

- a. People are universally evil (“none righteous”)
- b. Spiritually ignorant (“none who understands”)
- c. Rebellious (“none who seeks for God”)
- d. Wayward (“all have turned aside”)
- e. Spiritually useless (“together they have become useless”)
- f. Morally corrupt (“there is none who does good”)

Jesus taught that sin flows from the heart: “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man” (Mark 7:21–23).

3. Conversation has been defiled by sin

- a. Their throat is an open grave, with their tongues they keep deceiving, the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. (Rom 3:13-14).

- b. The mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. The good man out of his good treasure brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth what is evil. (Matt 12:34–35)
- c. The lips of the righteous bring forth what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked, what is perverted. (Prov 10:32)
- d. The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things. (Prov 15:28)

4. Conduct has been corrupted by sin

a. No peace

“Their feet are swift to shed blood...destruction and misery are in their paths... and the path of peace have they not known” (Rom 3:15–17).

b. Selfishness

“And He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.” (2 Cor 5:15)

“For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever.” (Rom 1:25)

c. Live according to the lust of the flesh

“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.” (1 John 2:16)

d. Lives characterized by envy, disobedience, and anger

“For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.” (Titus 3:3)

e. Works of the flesh (Gal 5:19-21)

E. The Gospel of Jesus Christ

1. Power of the Gospel

a. Forgiveness of sin

Commenting on the power of the gospel in counseling, John MacArthur writes,

Forgiveness for sin and power to change into Christ's image are the greatest needs of mankind. The orthodox gospel of Jesus Christ is the answer to the problem. Christ deals with sin: the guilt, the power, the deception, and the misery of sin. He was crucified for sinners, He reigns over hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit, and He will return to complete the redemption of His people from their sins and sufferings. These core truths must infuse the counseling process. (MacArthur 28)

b. Righteousness in Christ

“For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous” (Rom 5:19).

c. Power to change lives (2 Cor 5:17)

Richard Ganz states,

What has God done in regenerating us, causing us to be born again? By His power He has changed us. We are no longer the same. He says, “If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (2 Cor. 5:17). Many individuals will testify that the change that God wrought in them produced a holiness that completely changed their lives. (Ganz 150)

2. Living for Christ

a. Believers are to live for Christ

- For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. (Phil 1:21)
- Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. (Col 3:17)
- For if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. ⁹For to this end a Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. (Rom 14:8-9)
- For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; ¹⁵and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. (2 Cor 5:14-15)

b. Power to overcome every temptation

“No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.” (1 Cor 10:13)

c. Power to live the Christian life

Jerry Bridges writes,

Just as we by faith look to Christ for our righteous standing before God, so by faith we are to look to Him for the enabling power to live the Christian life. This power comes to us as a result of our vital or living union with Him. Jesus referred to this union in John 15:1-5 when He called Himself the vine and us the branches. Through that metaphor He was teaching us that just as the branches derive their life and nourishment from the vine, so we are to receive our spiritual life and power from Him. All believers are spiritually united to Christ in such a way that our spiritual life comes from Him. (Bridges 162)

F. Biblical Change is the Result of Progressive Sanctification

a. Growth in Christlikeness

Through the process of sanctification the Christian becomes more and more like Christ. This process is gradual and involves putting off old sinful ways and putting on righteous thoughts and behavior in Christ (Eph 4:20-24).

Romans 8:28-29 teaches that God’s will for every Christian is that they would become conformed to the image of Christ: “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. ²⁹For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.”

b. Bearing Spiritual Fruit

God desires that His children would bear spiritual fruit for His glory (John 15:1-5).

c. Spiritual Resources

God initiates the sanctification process and He provides the resources to enable believers to grow in Christlikeness.

Stuart Scott comments,

Through salvation believers “enter into a dependent effort with God toward change into Christlikeness (Philippians 3:12-74; 2 Peter 3:18)...Once we are saved, God initiates the sanctification or growth process. God Himself provides His word, His Spirit, and His Church for our growth (2 Peter 1:2-11). Without these provisions we could not change in the least. (Scott 41)

d. God’s Enablement

The process of sanctification involves dependent work. The child of God must work to “exercise ourselves unto godliness” (1 Tim 4:7-9) while depending on God’s enabling power.

III. Resources

Competent to Counsel – Jay Adams

MacArthur Pastor's Library on Counseling – John MacArthur

How to Help People Change – Jay Adams

The Gospel for Real Life – Jerry Bridges

PsychoBabble: The Failure of Modern Psychology and the Biblical Alternative -
Richard Ganz

When Sinners Say “I Do.” – Dave Harvey

Down, But Not Out – Wayne Mack

The Exemplary Husband – Stuart Scott

Sacred Marriage – Gary Thomas

APPENDIX 5

PRACTICE OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING LESSON

I. Basic Elements Of Biblical Counseling¹

A. First Session – General Outline

B. Loving Care

1. Biblical examples — Matt 22:37-40; Acts 20:31; Eph 5:1-2; 1 Thess 2:7-9
2. Definition — “Building a Christlike relationship with the counselee where you put yourself in a position to help (full of grace and full of Truth).” (Prov 27:6, 9; John 1:14; Gal 6:1-10; Eph 5:1-2)

As Jesus is the Great Comforter, counselors should provide comfort to those they counsel.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. (2 Cor 1:3-4)

3. How care is evidenced
 - a. Show compassion (Isa 9:6; Matt 9:35-38)
 - b. Take counselee seriously
 - c. Express confidence in counselee’s ability to obey Scripture (2 Cor 7:16; Phil 1:6)
 - d. Model fruit of the Spirit — You can’t give away what you don’t have.

¹Stuart Scott, “Crucial Elements of Biblical Methodology” (classroom lecture notes, 80552–*Methodology of Biblical Counseling*, Fall 2008, photocopy), 1-10.

c. Be honest. Don't act like you walk on water.

d. Pray with and for the counselee

C. Give Hope

1. The Need for Hope – Romans 12:12; 2 Corinthians 4:1-12

2. True Hope vs. Empty Hope

a. EMPTY

(1) Due to wrong goals

(2) Denying reality

(3) Due to mystical thinking

b. TRUE

(1) Result of salvation (1 Pet 1:3)

(2) Based upon Scripture (Ps 119:49; Ps 130:5)

(3) Realistic (Rom 8:28) Problems are bad, but God is at work.

3. How to Inspire Hope

a. Share the whole gospel (1 Cor 15:1-5)

b. Help them grow in relationship to Christ

c. Teach counselee to think biblically

(1) About God's character (Lam 3)

(2) About possibility for good (Gen 50:20; Rom 8:28-29)

(3) About divine resources (2 Pet 1:3)

d. Be a model (Phil 4:9)

Hope in the Scriptures always is a confident expectation; the word hope never carries even the connotation of uncertainty that adheres to our English term (as when we say, "I hope so"). The counselor must love people...a counselor must be above much else a person of hope. (Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual* 40)

D. Data Gathering

1. What kind of data to gather (PREACH acronym by Wayne Mack)

P—Physical (sleep patterns; medications; diet; activity level; illness)

R—Resources and Relationships (job; school; social; spiritual)

E—Emotions (extremes; feelings oriented)

A—Actions--behavior; sins of commission and omission

C—Conceptual (Thinking)--goals; values; desires; motives

H—Historical--good and bad in past context; present context; failures

2. Ask proper questions

a. Open ended questions

b. Specific

c. Mark important areas for further questioning

d. Observe “countenance”--Non-verbal, halo data

e. Relationship with Christ

3. Importance of listening (Prov 18:13; 20:25)

a. Requires self-control—listening shows you care

b. Listen for

- blameshifting
- “can’t” “unable” “too much”
- defensiveness
- willingness to accept responsibility

c. Listening habits to avoid

- Don't interrupt
- Don't jump to conclusions (Prov 18:17)
- Don't let the mind wander
- Don't do distracting things
- Don't hesitate to ask if you don't understand.

E. Interpretation of Data

1. Compare all data and responses to God's Word and example of Christ – Isa 8:19-20; Rom 4:3; Gal 4:30

2. Look for themes and patterns (Heb 5:14; 12:11)

3. Put data on "witness stand" and ask it questions

- (a) What biblical categories could be used to describe the person I'm counseling? (believer or unbeliever--John 3:36; mature or immature--Heb 5:12-14; Eph 4:13-15; unruly, weak, fainthearted-- I Thess 5:14; wise or fool--Prov 10:1,8; 14:6)
- (b) What is the best way to approach the counselee?
- (c) What is the counselee's greatest need at this time? (friend, father, encourager, comforter, teacher, confronter?)
- (d) What does the data indicate about why the counselee has not resolved the problem? (lack of inclination, inspiration, or information?)
- (e) What is the reason the counselee has come for help at this time?

4. Prayerfully study data

Remember that the heart of the problem is usually the heart. What are the ruling motives and beliefs? Who or what does he worship? By whom or what is he controlled?

5. Form tentative interpretations (USE SCRIPTURE)

- (a) Lying (Abraham? Jacob? Ananias?) The issue is deeper than lying. Why did they tell a lie? Abraham lied about Sarah being his wife b/c of self-preservation.
- (b) Being critical (Diotrephes; depression; Cain in Gen 4:6-7; Elijah in I Kings 19)
- (c) Anxiety (Martha in Luke 10:38-42; Matthew 6--trust in wrong place)
- (d) Fear (1 John 4:18; Prov 22:13)
- (e) Difficulty handling trials (2 Cor 12:7-10; Rom 8:28-29; pride; wrong expectations)
- (f) Bizarre behavior (1 Sam 21:10-15; Dan 4:28-33; Deut 28:28; Prov 28:1; Eccl 9:3 – examples of non-organic type)
- (g) Conflicts (James 4:1-3)

6. Test the validity of your interpretations by asking the counselee what they think.

F. Give Instruction

- 1. The content of instruction should be appropriate to the counselee's problems, condition, spiritual maturity, receptivity, personal background (Heb 5:11-14)
- 2. The method of instruction should be appropriate to the counselee's learning style. i.e. Christ in the Gospels (lecture, observation, experience, research, discussion, questions, reading assignments, evaluation, self disclosure, illustration, role playing, interviews, visuals)
- 3. The timing of instruction should be appropriate-John 16:12 (the disciples couldn't process all the Revelation at that point--more was to come (the Epistles)

G. Homework – Deut 8:11; Ezra 7:10; John 13:17; James 1:19-27

We can help our counselees to avoid frustration and discouragement by helping them to understand that change is a gradual process requiring practice. And we can help them through the change process by assigning homework that facilitates practice, not just homework that teaches principles but homework that requires application of those principles. (MacArthur 197)

1. The Reasons for Homework

- a. It translates what was discussed into action. (Prov 14:23)
- b. It puts responsibility for change where it belongs. (Jas 1:22-25)
- c. It helps minimize dependence.
- d. It helps the counselor to be a faithful steward of his time.
 - (1) Brings out problems and patterns more quickly
 - (2) Helps the counselor to discover those who don't mean business

2. The Mechanics of Homework

- a. Be specific.
- b. Involve both knowing and action.
- c. Review previous homework at the beginning of each session.
- d. Examples
 - (1) Scripture
 - (2) Pamphlets
 - (3) Books
 - (4) Electronic media: CD's, podcasts, MP3, DVD, etc
 - (5) Data gathering assignments, example: Journal of Upsets (Conflicts)
 - (6) Daily study/prayer times
 - (7) Church attendance & involvement (serving)

II. Counselor Resources

A. Books

B. Audio

C. Organizations

APPENDIX 6

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER LESSON

I. Definition of PTSD

Post-traumatic stress disorder can be defined as an anxiety disorder that occurs after a traumatic event in which the individual experiences the threat of serious injury or death and the person's response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror.

For many individuals PTSD represents a common psychiatric response to a variety of extreme psychological stressors. The most common symptoms of PTSD include flashbacks, anger, anxiety, hypervigilance, nightmares, and depression.

A distinction must also be made between Combat Operational Stress Reaction (COSR) and PTSD. COSR is also referred to as battle fatigue and involves any response to battle stress that temporarily renders the soldier unable to temporarily remain on duty. The effects of the trauma are temporary and individuals will normally make a full recovery without professional psychiatric treatment.

II. Diagnostic Criteria for PTSD

The diagnostic criteria for PTSD is presented in the fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV-TR).

Criterion A: Stressor

The person has been exposed to a traumatic event in which both of the following have been present:

1. The person has experienced, witnessed, or been confronted with an event or events that involve actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of oneself or others.
2. The person's response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror.

Criterion B: Intrusive recollection

The traumatic event is persistently re-experienced in at least one of the following ways:

1. Recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the event, including images, thoughts, or perceptions.
2. Recurrent distressing dreams of the event.
3. Acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring.
4. Intense psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event.
5. Physiologic reactivity upon exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event.

Criterion C: Avoidant/numbing

Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and numbing of general responsiveness as indicated by at least three of the following:

1. Efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings, or conversations associated with the trauma.
2. Efforts to avoid activities, places, or people that arouse recollections of trauma.
3. Inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma.
4. Markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities.
5. Feeling of detachment or estrangement from others.
6. Restricted range of affect.
7. Sense of foreshortened future.

Criterion D: Hyper-arousal

Persistent symptoms of increasing arousal indicated by at least two of the following:

1. Difficulty falling or staying asleep.
2. Irritability or outbursts of anger.
3. Difficulty concentrating.

4. Hyper-vigilance.
5. Exaggerated startle response.

Criterion E: Duration

Duration of the disturbance is more than one month.

Criterion F: Functional significance

The disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

III. Treatment of PTSD

The most common treatments that are available for PTSD include pharmacotherapy (medication), Cognitive Behavior Therapy, and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapies.

IV. Example of Elijah¹

A. Elijah was a man just like us! In 1Kings 19, Elijah meets the criteria for PTSD.

1. The traumatic event is his killing the 500 prophets of Baal.
2. He was mortally afraid of Jezebel. He repeats his fears multiple times.
3. He responds to the recollection the same each time.
4. He ran to avoid meeting Jezebel and her crowd.
5. He was operating under the delusion of being the "only one left."
6. Elijah felt isolated, was a loner, and believed his life was going to be short!
7. We know he persisted in this state for more than a month.

¹Charles Hodges, "Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder" Grace Counseling [on-line]; accessed 9 August 2010; available from <http://www.gracecounsel.com/ptsd/ptsd.html>; Internet.

B. What did God do to help Elijah?

1. He lets Elijah run. Sometimes people have to cry.
2. God put Elijah in a safe environment. Elijah never was in danger. Counselee needs a perceived safe place. Also needs to sleep. Physician's help required here perhaps.
3. Gods sends an angel with food and water. Physical needs must be met with mercy.
4. God sends Elijah running. Literal physical work is good!
5. Be patient! God is patient and listens to Elijah. He watched him run in the wrong direction for 40 days.
6. After 40 days, God gets to the point with Elijah. God does not directly answer his statement. He shows Elijah his power. The counselee must see God's power in his word to deal with the issues of fear and worry/ trust, anger/forgiveness, guilt/forgiveness, personal loss/ growth and change. The must come to see themselves as soldiers in Christ's army who are victors instead of victims of circumstances beyond their control.
7. God repeats the question, "What are you doing here?" The answer is nothing of value! God sends Elijah back the way he came, with specific instructions about the work he is to do. He then tells him that he never was alone! PTSD counselee's have to return to the normal routine of the Christian life. REGULAR hours, meals, exercise, work, Bible reading, prayer, church attendance, fellowship, small group accountability, service to others, and memorization of Scripture.
8. Counselee needs a Biblical plan to deal with worry and fear.

APPENDIX 7
SUFFERING LESSON

I. Biblical perspective of suffering

Biblical counselors must help soldiers with PTSD to develop a biblical perspective of suffering. Charles Hodges notes, “Whether it was because someone sinned against them or they sinned themselves, they still need a different understanding of that trouble because if they never come to a godly view of trouble, they will never be able to view what is happening in their life the way God does.”

A. Causes of Suffering

Although there are many different reasons why people suffer, soldiers with PTSD have often experienced suffering as a result of the sinful actions of other people on the battlefield. C. S. Lewis observes, “When souls become wicked they will certainly use this possibility to hurt one another; and this, perhaps, accounts for four-fifths of the sufferings of men.” (Lewis 86)

B. God’s Purpose in Suffering

1. Growth in Christlikeness

God’s glory. Scripture teaches in Romans 8:28-29 that God will use both the good and bad situations in the believer’s life to bring about their ultimate good for his glory:

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹For whom he foreknew, he also predestined to become conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren.

The good that is referenced in this passage is God’s purpose for believers which is conformity to the image of his Son. The process of being conformed to the Son’s image may involve trials and suffering in the life of the believer.

Conformity to Christ. The good that God works in the lives of his children is not necessarily for their comfort or happiness, but conformity to Christ. Paul is not saying that God prevents his children from experiencing things that can harm them. He is rather attesting that the Lord takes all that he allows to happen to his children and turns those things ultimately into blessings.

2. Spiritual Growth

Spiritual lessons. Through suffering believers can learn spiritual lessons that they otherwise would not have been able to learn. For example, people can grow in kindness, sympathy, humility, compassion, patience, and gentleness as a result of suffering.

Greater faith. Most importantly, God can use suffering to bring people closer to himself. Peter writes, “And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you” (1 Pet 5:10). Believers can experience greater faith and Christlikeness as a result of suffering.

Ministry to other people. Another benefit of suffering is that believers will be better equipped to minister to other people who are hurting (2 Cor 1:3-11). After all, suffering is an important prerequisite to ministering to hurting people. People are often more open to receiving help from people who have experienced adversity. For example, Jesus Christ suffered and can therefore sympathize with those who also suffer (Heb 2:16-18; 4:14-16). Soldiers with PTSD can be used by God to minister to other people who are hurting.

C. Example of the Suffering of Christ

The crucifixion. The greatest example of suffering is found in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. John Piper notes, “And let us not forget that his death was no ordinary death. First of all, it was death on a cross, one of the most excruciating forms of execution ever devised. But even more, it was a death in which he bore the wrath of God.” (Piper 185)

Christ’s example. Christ can sympathize with suffering people because he endured suffering on the cross. He also provided the example of how to endure suffering. Peter wrote, “For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in his steps” (1 Pet 2:21).

God's love will never fail. When people experience suffering, they may begin to question God's love for them. But, Jerry Bridges observes,

Any time that we are tempted to doubt God's love for us, we should go back to the Cross. We should reason somewhat in this fashion: If God loved me enough to give his Son to die for me when I was his enemy, surely he loves me enough to care for me now that I am his child. Having loved me to the ultimate extent at the Cross, he cannot possibly fail to love me in my times of adversity. (Bridges, *Trusting God* 140)

Romans 8:39 states that nothing "will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." God's love that was demonstrated on the cross will never fail.

D. Sovereignty of God

Soldiers with PTSD must grow in their understanding of the sovereignty of God. John MacArthur comments,

You will never know all the benefits of the power of suffering until you realize that a sovereign God is providentially ordering everything for your good and his glory. Once you come to accept that God is in control of all things, you will be that much better prepared to deal with whatever hardships and sufferings he may choose to send your way. (MacArthur 116)

God is in control of all things. When people experience suffering, they may feel like God is not in control of the affairs of their life. People may wonder, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" They may even question the love and sovereignty of God.

God is in control of all of the events that take place in the believer's life. When adversity strikes, God is never taken by surprise or unaware of what is happening in the person's life. The believer must remember that God is sovereign and that he "works all things after the counsel of His will" (Eph 1:11). Jerry Bridges writes,

In His well-known statement about sparrows, Jesus said, "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. . . . So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows" (Matthew 10:29–31). According to Jesus, God does exercise His sovereignty in very minute events—even the life and death of an almost worthless sparrow. And Jesus' whole point is: If God so exercises His sovereignty in regard to sparrows, most certainly He will exercise it in regard to His children. While it is certainly true that God's love for us does not protect us from pain and sorrow, it is also true that all occasions of pain and sorrow are under the absolute control of God. (Bridges, *Trusting God* 130)

People may question why God doesn't stop certain tragic events. Warren Wiersbe notes that God can “prevent school buses from getting involved in fatal accidents. He can stop airplanes from crashing. To be fair, you and I must confess that nobody knows how many times God has done these things. All we know about are the times when he did not.” (Wiersbe 185) God allows tragedies to happen and sometimes for reasons that may never be known.

Having confidence in God's sovereignty is crucial to trusting him. Jerry Bridges comments, “If there is a single event in all of the universe that can occur outside of God's sovereign control then we cannot trust him. His love may be infinite, but if his power is limited and his purpose can be thwarted, we cannot trust him.” (Bridges, *Trusting God* 37)

Although everyone will experience adversity in life, believers can trust in the sovereign hand of God. Bridges observes,

That which should distinguish the suffering of believers from unbelievers is the confidence that our suffering is under the control of an all-powerful and all-loving God; our suffering has meaning and purpose in God's eternal plan, and he brings or allows to come into our lives only that which is for his glory and our good. (*Trusting God* 32)

Even when believers cannot understand why they are suffering, they can rest assured that God is in control and is working out everything for their good (Rom 8:28).

E. Goodness of God

God is both sovereign and good. In order to develop a biblical view of suffering, believers need to gain an understanding of God's goodness. Jerry Bridges writes, “The Bible affirms both his sovereignty and his goodness with equal emphasis. References to his goodness and lovingkindness, like his sovereignty, appear on almost every page of Scripture” (*Is God Really in Control?* 96). 1 John 4:8 proclaims that “God is love.” Psalm 145 speaks of God's “abundant goodness,” being “rich in love,” and “good to all.” God is sovereign and good.

God's love demonstrated on the cross. The most convincing evidence of God's love is his giving of his Son on the cross. John writes, “This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him” (1 John 4:9). The greatest proof of God's loves is the cross of Jesus Christ. Any time believers are tempted to doubt God's love for them, they should look to the cross of Jesus Christ and remember how much God loves them.

God's faithfulness. When adversity strikes, people are often tempted to question God's love and goodness. They may question why God would allow them to suffer or to experience a particular trial. But, even when questions arise, believers must rest in the assurance of God's love and faithfulness. God is faithful and has promised in Hebrews 13:5, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

II. Biblical Response to Suffering

The believer with PTSD must be taught how to properly respond to suffering. Charles Hodges states, "Biblical counseling looks at a situation and says that even if someone sins against you, you are supposed to respond in a biblical way."

A. No Situation is Unique

No matter how much a person has suffered, they cannot evade their responsibility as Christians by pleading that their case is unique. "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it" (1 Cor 10:13).

B. Goal of Glorifying God

The goal of counseling is not to feel better, but to glorify God and serve other people (Matt 22:36-40; 1 Cor 10:31). The believer will need to focus on Christ in their suffering and grow in their relationship with him.

Jim Berg writes, "The only lasting and satisfying answer to life's problems will always be in increased intimacy with Jesus Christ. Any solution that does not put Jesus Christ center stage will be ineffective" (Berg 32). Jay Adams notes, "There is no trial into which God calls you that is beyond your ability to withstand. Instead of saying 'can't,' you should say, 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.'" (*Christ and Your Problems* 23)

C. Trust in the Power of Christ

The person with PTSD can trust in the power of Christ to enable them to live in a way that is pleasing to God. They need to study the Scriptures to deepen their relationship with Christ and their understanding of God's Word. Through the daily study and meditative reading of the Word of God, they will draw vast comfort from its pages.

In order to trust God, we must view our adverse circumstances through the eyes of faith, not of sense. And just as the faith of salvation comes through hearing the message of the gospel (Rom 10:17), so the faith to trust God in adversity comes through the Word of God alone.

The Bible also provides direction for living for Christ and it contains the solutions to all of the problems of life (2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:3-4). When Jesus said in Matthew 4:4, “Man does not live by bread alone, but by all the words that come from the mouth of God,” he was giving the key to solving all of the problems of life. Their solution is found in following the Bible which sustained and guided Christ successfully through the deepest trials of his life. God’s Word is sufficient for life and godliness (2 Pet 1:3-4).

D. Trust in God

Believers can also glorify God by choosing to trust him, especially during times of difficulty. People can trust God even when they don’t understand what he is doing or why he has allowed adverse circumstances to occur in their life. God is glorified when believers can say with Job, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him” (Job 3:15). God receives glory when his children choose to trust him by faith.

E. Cry Out to God in Prayer

People who suffer should be encouraged to pour out their heart to God in prayer. Edward Welch comments on the importance of prayer,

An initial surprise to many people, and a gloryweight in itself, is that God actually encourages those who suffer to speak honestly to him. Why is this a surprise to many sufferers? Sufferers tend to feel alone and isolated. They often think that God is very far from them. (Welch 9)

In the midst of pain, people may feel alone and believe that no one else has experienced the same pain. But it isn't true. Jesus Christ has felt such pain and understands human suffering. Believers can cry out to God in prayer because, “we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Heb 4:15). He is able to sympathize with suffering people. Therefore, “let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb 4:16).

F. Worship God

Believers should choose to worship God even during times of adversity. When the initial disaster struck Job, he fell to the ground in worship and said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised” (Job 1:20-21). After the most horrifying of losses, this is Job’s first response. He worshiped God. He humbly acknowledged that God in his sovereignty had given and he had a right to take away.

III. Homework Assignments

- A. Read *Suffering: Eternity Makes a Difference* by Resources in Changing Lives and underline ten sentences that are most important to you.
- B. Assign a chapter from *The Attributes of God* by A. W. Pink to read and study.
- C. Read *Christ and Your Problems* by Jay Adams and underline ten sentences that are most important to you.
- D. Read *You Can Trust God* by Jerry Bridges and answer the questions.
- E. Write down ten ways that God can use your suffering to minister to other people.
- F. Write down ten ways that God is changing you to be more like Christ through suffering.

IV. Resources

When Trouble Comes – Jim Berg

Is God Really in Control? – Jerry Bridges

Trusting God – Jerry Bridges

Trusting God: Even When Life Hurts, Study Guide – Jerry Bridges

Hodges, Charles. “Helping People Labeled with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.” CD of session held at the annual conference of the National Association of Nouthetic Counselors, 2006. Sound Word CD N0631.

The Problem of Pain – C. S. Lewis

The Power of Suffering – John MacArthur

Suffering and the Sovereignty of God - John Piper and Justin Taylor

Why Us? When Bad Things Happen to God’s People – Warren Wiersbe

Edward T. Welch, “Exalting Pain? Ignoring Pain? What do we do with Suffering?”
Journal of Biblical Counseling 12 (1994).

APPENDIX 8
ANXIETY LESSON

I. Description of Worry

A. Worry Defined

1. Worry is an excessive concern about present problems or future events (Matt 6:25)
2. The Greek word stresses the action and effects of worry.

The Greek word for anxious (μεριμνᾶτε) means “to be pulled in different directions.” From the spiritual point of view, anxiety is wrong thinking (the mind) and wrong feeling (the heart) about circumstances, people, and things.

3. Worry can affect the physical.

Anxiety often has physical symptoms such as sleep problems, biting fingernails, stomach cramps, and headaches. These symptoms serve as warning signs that people are succumbing to anxiety.

B. Worry is Wrong (Matt 6:25-34)

1. Worry is senseless because your Heavenly Father cares for you (v. 25-26, 28-30)
 - a. Because God has already given you the greater gift of life, you can trust Him to provide the lesser needs of sustenance. (v. 25; 7:9-11; Rom 8:32)
 - b. If God provides for the physical needs of the lesser creation, surely he will take care of His children. (v. 26, 28-30; Ps 147:9; 104:25, 27; Rom 1:20)
2. Worry is useless because it accomplishes nothing. (v. 27, 34)
 - a. Anxiety is futile (v. 27; Heb 9:27; Ps 31:15; 39:4-6; Luke 12:20; Job 14:5)
 - b. While fretting cannot lengthen your life, it may shorten it!

3. Worry about tomorrow keeps you from being productive today (v. 34)
 - a. Worry is hard work.
 - b. Most of what you worry about never comes to pass.
4. Worry is faithless because it denies God's loving care for you (v. 30-32; 8:26)
 - a. Ultimately anxiety is due to unbelief (v. 30; 8:26; 14:30-31; 16:8; 17:20)
 - b. By worrying you are behaving like an unbeliever (v. 31-32)
 - c. Fretting is unworthy of a child of the King (v. 32; 10:29-31; Ps 84:11)

Wayne Mack comments on the relationship between unbelief and anxiety,

A primary source of anxiety in our lives is unbelief. In other words, our faith is too small. In a way, all of the other primary sources we have discussed can be directly linked to this last one. In John 14:1 Jesus taught, "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me." When we worry, it is really because we lack faith in God and His promises. We do not believe that He will provide for our needs as He promised. We do not believe that His grace is sufficient for us as He said. This lack of faith results in anxiety. (Mack 55)

II. Biblical Solutions

A. Key passages (Matt 6:25-34; Phil 4:4-9)

B. Rejoice in the Lord (Phil 4:4)

1. Trust in the Lord

Rather than worrying about problems, believers are to rejoice in the Lord. Even when circumstances are troubling, Christians can thank God for his blessings such as the gift of salvation, forgiveness of sin, and the spiritual blessings in Christ (Eph 1:3). Believers should rejoice in the Lord at all times because he is the only sure, reliable, unwavering, and unchanging source of joy.

2. Worship the Lord

Whenever we find ourselves worrying, our first action ought to be to get alone with God and worship him. Adoration is what is needed. We must see the greatness and majesty of God! We must realize that he is big enough to solve our problems.

C. The Lord is Near (Phil 4:5)

1. The Lord is close to His children

Paul says in Philippians 4:5, “Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near.” The Lord is near both to hear the cry of the believer and to give them strength. Because of God’s presence, believers should not be fearful or anxious. Although believers may feel alone at times, the Lord is always present and watching over his children.

2. The Lord is watching

When facing troubles, believers can still live in a way that glorifies God (1 Cor 10:31). They should let the Bible decide how they are going to act rather than how they feel about a particular situation. “Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near” (Phil 4:5). We should let the Bible determine our behavior rather than our feelings.

D. Be anxious for nothing (Phil 4:6)

Christians are not to be anxious about any circumstance that they may encounter in life. They should rather entrust themselves to the almighty God who loves and cares for them.

In Matthew 6:25-34 Jesus said three times, “Do not worry.” This was not intended to be a suggestion to follow when-or if-we feel like it; this was given as a command! Charles Hodges comments,

There are a couple of really good things when it is a command. One is that if we break that command, it is sin. It’s not a disease I can repent of sin, I can’t repent of disease. I can confess sin, I can ask God to forgive me, and then I can ask him for the power to live in a biblical way.

E. Turn to the Lord in Prayer (Phil 4:6)

Rather than worrying about the problems of life, Christians should take their concerns to the Lord in prayer. Philippians 4:6 says, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”

Because God cares for his people, they can cast their anxiety on him. Peter wrote, “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you” (1 Pet 5:7). David said in Psalm 55:22, “Cast your burden upon the LORD and he will sustain you.” Jesus Christ said, “Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt 11:28). Paul had learned from personal experience that the way to be anxious about nothing was to be prayerful about everything.

F. Peace of God (Phil 4:7)

“And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” When the exhortations of verses 4-6 are heeded, “the peace of God” will flood one’s troubled soul. God gives the promise of peace to those who are worried, but it only applies to those who follow the instruction that is presented in Scripture.

G. Right Thinking (Phil 4:8)

To overcome the sin of worry, the person must change the way they think. “Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.” (Phil 4:8)

Paul spells out in detail the things we ought to think about as Christians. We are to think on things that are true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, of good repute, excellent, and worthy of praise. People who are worried must replace worrisome thoughts with holy thoughts such as those listed in Phil 4:8.

Worriers should also develop the habit of memorizing and meditating on God’s Word. Right thinking is the result of daily meditation on the Word of God.

Through the application of Philippians 4:8 and by taking “every thought captive to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor 10:5), Christians can renew their minds so that they will not be overcome by the sin of worry.

H. Practice These Things (Phil 4:9)

“The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.”

1. Application of Scripture

It is not enough to hear biblical truth, we must apply those truths to our daily lives. We must strive to be both hearers and doers of the Word. “But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves” (James 1:22). By applying the principles of Phil 4, believers can walk in victory over the sin of worry.

2. The Worry Drill

The worry drill can be used by counselees to help them overcome the sin of worry.

a. They can pray three times a day about their problem.

They should not pray throughout the day or stay awake all night praying about their problem. That is simply sanctified worry.

If they feel like they should pray throughout the day or all night, they should be praying for other people's problems rather than their own. Charles Hodges comments,

And I'll tell you this, I have never been able to stay up all night praying for other people. Not even Peter, James, and John could stay up all night and pray for Jesus. I can stay up all night and worry. I can stay up all night and wring my hands about my problems, but I can't stay up all night and pray for other people.

b. Confession of sin

When the person begins to worry during the day, they should immediately stop it and recognize it for what it is, which is sin. They should then confess it to God, seek His forgiveness, and then ask for strength to think about things that are holy and true.

c. Right thoughts

The person then needs to start thinking about things that they can do something about and praying for other people. They also need to recite and meditate on Phil 4:4-9.

d. Repeat the drill

The person should repeat the worry drill every time that they worry about the problem.

Some counselees may have to repeat the drill 25 times the first day. They may spend their whole day repeating the worry drill. But, the next day they may only do it 15 times. On the third day they may only repeat the drill 10 times. By the fourth day they may only do the drill 5 times. And after a few more days they may not worry at all.

III. Homework Assignments

- A. Read *You Can Trust God* by Jerry Bridges and answer the questions.
- B. Assign a chapter from *Anxiety Attacked* by John MacArthur to read and study.
- C. Assign a chapter from *Overcoming Fear, Worry and Anxiety* by Elyse Fitzpatrick
- D. Read *Worry: Pursuing a Better Path to Peace* by Resources for Changing Lives and underline ten sentences that are most important to you.
- E. Keep an anxiety journal and record times that you are anxious. Record the date, time, circumstances, and what you were thinking about the circumstances.

IV. Resources

Overcoming Fear, Worry, and Anxiety - Elyse Fitzpatrick

Hodges, Charles. "Helping People Labeled with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder." CD of session held at the annual conference of the National Association of Nontheistic Counselors, 2006. Sound Word CD N0631.

Anxiety Attacked - John MacArthur

Down, But Not Out - Wayne Mack

Worry: Pursuing a Better Path to Peace – David Powlison (Resources for Changing Lives)

APPENDIX 9
ANGER LESSON

I. Description of Anger

A. Universal Problem

Anger is a common problem among those who suffer from PTSD. The person could be harboring anger or bitterness because of their circumstances or the anger could be directed toward the persons who perpetrated the traumatic event. Regardless of the reasons for the anger, the Bible offers hope for those who struggle with angry emotions and behavior.

Anger can take the form of either righteous or sinful anger. Ephesians 4:26 commands: “Be angry, and yet do not sin.” Anger can be either godly and constructive, or it can be ungodly and destructive. The anger that people most often experience is sinful anger.

B. Expressions of anger

1. Ventilating anger or “blowing up”

“A fool always loses his temper, but a wise man holds it back.” (Prov 29:11)

“A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but the slow to anger calms a dispute.” (Prov 15:18)

Examples:

- a. Yelling
- b. Slamming doors
- c. Attacking verbally
- d. Cursing

2. Internalizing anger or “clamming up”

“Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,” (Eph 4:26)

“Do not hate your brother in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in his guilt.” (Lev 19:17)

Examples:

- a. Moodiness
- b. Silence
- c. Being irritated

C. Definition of anger

In his book *Uprooting Anger*, Robert Jones defines anger as: The Whole-Personed Active Response Of Negative Moral Judgment Against Perceived Evil.¹

1. **Our anger is an active response.** It is an action, an activity. Anger is something we do, not something we have. It is not a thing, a fluid, or a force. The Bible pictures people who do anger.
2. **Our anger is a whole-personed active response.** It involves our entire being and engages our whole person. It involves the mind, emotions, body, feelings, and behavior.
3. **Our anger is a response against something.** It does not arise in a vacuum or appear spontaneously. Anger reacts against some provocation.
4. **Our anger involves a negative moral judgment.** Anger involves an attitude of judgment, condemnation, and displeasure at persons or things. Anger protests, "What you did was wrong!" It pronounces, "That action is unjust!" It pleads, "This must stop!" Anger objects to wrongs committed.

We call it a "negative" moral judgment not because it is always sinful but because it opposes the perceived evil. It casts negative mental votes against unjust actions. It determines that all offenders must change, be punished, or be removed.

5. **Our anger involves a judgment against perceived evil.** Our moral judgment arises from our personal perception. In anger we perceive some action, object, situation, or person to be evil or unjust. The action may not be evil, but we perceive that it is, and we judge the person to be guilty.

¹Robert D. Jones, *Uprooting Anger: Biblical Help for a Common Problem* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2005), 15.

II. Process of Anger (James 4:1-12)²

A. Why Do You Fight? (James 4:1-3)

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? ²You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. ³You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

James asks the question, “What causes fights and quarrels among you?” James does not say that you are fighting because the other person is a blockhead, or because you woke up on the wrong side of the bed, or you had a bad day at work. James says you fight because of “your desires that battle within you. You want something but don’t get it.” The biblical analysis is straightforward and cuts to the core. You fight for one reason: because you don’t get what you want.

You fight because your desire is frustrated. When people cannot obtain what they covet, they fight and quarrel. Marital and family conflicts, conflicts at work, and national conflicts are all the result of unsatisfied personal lusts and cravings.

B. Who Are You When You Judge? (James 4:11-12)

Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. ¹²There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

The sin that drives interpersonal conflict is further explained by James 4:11-12. We judge, criticize, nag, attack, and condemn others because we literally play God. James asks the question, “Who *are* you to judge your neighbor?” None other than a God wannabe.

Anger always involves judgment of perceived evil. Anger evaluates; that is, it weighs something or someone, finds it lacking, wrong, or displeasing, and then moves into action. Anger arouses us to attack or discredit what we find displeasing.

Anger is a self-contained judicial system, reacting to perceived wrong with energy. When we fight, our minds become filled with accusations: your wrongs and my rights preoccupy me. We play the self-righteous judge in the mini-kingdoms we establish. In an argument, you offend ME by crossing my will. I respond by

²David Powlison, “Anger Part 3: Getting to the Heart of Conflict,” *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 16 (1997): 34.

confessing your offenses to you. At the same time, I explain to you how all my failings are really your fault. If only you were different, I wouldn't be the way I am.

You do the same to me, confessing my sins to me and excusing your own. Nowhere in the heat of conflict does anyone confess their own sins. The log remains firmly planted in the eye as each party plays lawgiver and judge. Jesus taught in (Matthew 7:3-5),

³“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

Angry people focus on the specks in others' eyes and ignore the planks in their own. At the heart of interpersonal conflict, a far more profound conflict rages: the believer stands at odds with the one true God. James 4:1 and 4:12 sound the two key themes that lie at the heart of conflict: grasping demand and self-exaltation.

To find God's solution to conflicts, you must ask and answer the questions, “What do I want?” and “How am I playing God in asserting my will?” You can ask: “What exactly do you want that makes you warlike, when Christ's rule would make you peaceable?” Answer honestly, and you will have identified WHY you participate in sinful conflict.

C. Pursuing Grace (James 4:6-10)

But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” ⁷Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

James 4:6 makes a staggering promise: God gives more grace. God gives grace to the humble. When god-players admit the truth, they find amazing grace in Jesus. Angry people must seek God in repentant faith. James 4:6-10 says that over and over. The Lord offers a “vertical” solution for the sinful desires of the heart. It is interesting how relentlessly God-centered this solution is. Submit to God and resist the devil. By drawing near to God, the devil will flee and God will draw near to you.

Wash your hands from the expressions of anger and purify your hearts from the double-mindedness that professes to know God while serving other gods. Grieve over what you have done: “Grieve, mourn, and wail.” Humble yourself in the presence of the Lord. Notice how *present* God is. Notice how *relational* the solution is. We need to seek Someone who will be gracious and has the power to help us.

III. Strategies for Change

A. Deal with problems on a regular, daily basis

Ephesians 4:26-27 says, “Be angry, yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger.” In this verse God has commanded us to deal with our problems every day.

There are only two ways to deal righteously with a conflict that we have with another person. One, we can overlook the offense. 1 Peter 4:8 says, "love covers a multitude of sins." There are times when it is better to overlook an offense, especially if it is a minor issue and does not hinder the work of the ministry. It's generally better to reserve confrontation for issues that are clearly sin issues.

If we cannot overlook the sin, then we must confront the person in love. Matthew 18:15 says: “If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over.” Ephesians 4:26 commands: “Do not let the sun go down on your anger.”

Scripture admonishes us to get today’s problems taken care of today, so there is room for tomorrow’s problems tomorrow. When issues are dealt with on a daily basis, anger isn’t waiting to happen. If people learn to make this a habit, they will reap the benefits throughout their lives and in their relationships.

B. Examine the reasons for your anger

Whenever we start to become angry, we should immediately stop and think about what is happening. Scripture indicates that many times our angry responses are related to pride and selfishness. We become angry because we want our own way, we want to control people or the situation and we're not able to do it.

The simplest question to ask about what underlies anger is, “What do I really want?” If you are honest, with God’s help, you can recognize if you really crave to get even, or to hurt someone, or not to be inconvenienced, or to prove someone wrong.... You are ruled by what the Bible terms “self.” And, with God’s help, you can also recognize if you really want the Lord of life to be honored in word, deed, attitude, and intention.

C. You can control the expression of your anger

As Christians indwelt by the Holy Spirit, we have the power to control our anger. We must realize that when we fail, it’s by choice. 1 Corinthians 10:13 says: “No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.” God has given us the power to obey Him in this matter of anger.

D. Establish a temptation plan

As you begin to carry out these steps of change, you will quickly meet resistance from the world, the flesh, and the devil. You must therefore devise and carry out a plan to resist temptation and avoid future blowups. A temptation plan might include the following:

1. Avoid unnecessary occasions that tempt you to show anger.

Temptations connected with daily duties are nearly unavoidable. However, you should seek to avoid those places or activities that will provoke your anger. Abstaining from contact with certain friends or associates may be a wise plan of action.

2. Remove yourself when possible from angry situations

When in a situation that you are tempted to become sinfully angry, if possible, leave the scene. Family members need to give permission for, and even encourage, the person to go away to cool off.

3. In the midst of the temptation, ask Christ for strength, and recite key verses

Use 3-by-5 index cards to help memorize key passages of Scripture. Instead of counting to ten when you feel anger brewing, repeat one or two verses of Scripture.

“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Prov 15:1)

“Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing” (Prov 12:18)

“A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control” (Prov 29: 11)

4. Enlist mature believers to pray for you, counsel you, and hold you accountable

Godly friends can help hold you accountable during this time. Select people who care, who are spiritually mature, and who will give you godly instruction—even when you would rather not hear it!

5. Keep a log or journal of personal anger incidents

Record your situation, responses, and underlying beliefs and motives. What patterns emerge? Writing down your sinful responses gives specific material for confession and repentance. You can also evaluate how, specifically, you need to handle such situations differently.

E. You must repent of sinful anger

When you fall in sinful anger, you must confess your sin before God and others. Begin-first and always-with God (Ps 51:4). Then go to each person whom you have offended to confess your sin, humbly seek forgiveness, and reconcile the relationship (Matt 7:3-5).

IV. Homework Assignments

- A. Read the pamphlet, *Anger: Escaping the Maze* – Resources in Changing Lives. Underline 10 key points that speak to you and specific ways to implement them in your life.
- B. Read the story of Joseph in Genesis 37-50. Note specifically where Joseph could have demonstrated sinful anger but chose to respond in ways that honored God.
- C. Read the pamphlet, *Angry at God?* – Resources in Changing Lives. Underline the 10 sentences that are most important to you.
- D. Keep an anger journal

V. Resources

Uprooting Anger – Robert Jones

Anger and Stress Management God's Way – Wayne Mack

The Heart of Anger – Lou Priolo

The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict – Ken Sande

APPENDIX 10

COUNSELING THE FEARFUL LESSON

I. Description of Fear

People with PTSD commonly struggle with fear. Those who suffer from PTSD typically struggle with the fear of not being safe. For example, when a car backfires, they may hit the ground or run because of fear. Soldiers with PTSD think that they have been robbed of their safety and their primary motive is often to remain safe. They may adopt a victim mentality or be primarily concerned with serving self. The solution is for the person to turn from the motive of serving self to glorifying God and loving other people (Matt 22:37-40).

A. Variations of Fear

1. Godly fear

Godly fear involves a healthy respect for responsibility to God (Ps 115:11; Eccl 12:13; Prov 1:7; 2 Cor 7:1) Jerry Bridges writes,

“There are more than 150 references to the fear of God in the Bible. While the majority of these occur in the Old Testament, there are a sufficient number in the New Testament to convince us that fearing God is indeed an attitude of heart we should cultivate today.” (Bridges 27)

2. Natural fear

A healthy respect for danger (Job 41:33; Ps 56:3; 64:1)

3. Ungodly fear (Ps 112:7; Matt 10:28)

Although fear can be a normal response to situations in life, it is sinful when it keeps a person from being obedient to God or when it keeps one from living for God’s glory.

One of man’s greatest fears is man himself. Proverbs 29:25 states, “Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe.” Edward Welch writes, “However you put it, the fear of man can be summarized this way: We replace God with people. Instead of a biblically guided fear of the Lord, we fear others” (Welch, 14). Sinful fear occurs when people fear other people more than they fear God (cf. Isa 51:12-13; Matt 26:69-75; John 12:42-43).

Other common fears that people experience include:

- Fears for your safety and the safety of those you love
- Fears about how you will die
- Fears about being unloved or alone.
- Fears about what you might lose: relationships, money, job, spouse, health, etc.

B. The Nature of Ungodly Fear¹

1. Ungodly fear is directly related to what we want and think (Gen 12:11-13; Prov 4:23; Phil 4:8).
2. When sinfully fearful, we are focused on the circumstances rather than on God (Gen 32:7-12; Num 13:25-14:5; Ps 55:22; Ps 77:4-14; Mark 4:35-41).

Sinful fear is always the result of a lack of faith. Wayne Mack states, “How you respond to frightening circumstances reveals something about your faith in God. When you panic, when you are overwhelmed with fear, you are demonstrating a lack of faith, a lack of trust in God and in Jesus Christ” (Mack 35).

Luke 8:22-25 illustrates this point. The disciples became fearful while they were on a boat during a storm at sea. “They came to Jesus and woke Him up, saying, ‘Master, Master, we are perishing!’ And He got up and rebuked the wind and the surging waves, and they stopped, and it became calm. ²⁵And He said to them, ‘Where is your faith?’” (Lk 8:24-25). The disciples were afraid, as Jesus pinpointed, because they lacked faith.

3. When we are fearful we are focused on self (Deut 7:17-18; Is. 51:12-13; Phil 2:4).

The opposite of a spirit of fear is a spirit of love. That is why John wrote, “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear” (1 John 4:18). Fear and love are opposites. People who are dominated by sinful fear are self-centered. When a person is thinking of themselves, they will naturally be afraid. However, when their eyes are on God and other people, fear is cast out. For example, a mother may be afraid of water, but if she sees her baby drowning, fear disappears and love compels her to dive in to save her child. Love for God and other people will drive out sinful fear.

4. When we are engaged in ungodly fear we are fearing something else more than we fear God (Job 1:13-20; 3:25; Prov 14:26-27; 29:25; Matt 6:31-33; 10:28; Gal 1:10; 2:12; Heb 13:5-6; 1 Pet 3:13-14).

¹Stuart Scott, “Anxiety and Fear” (classroom lecture notes, 80553–*Problems and Procedures of Biblical Counseling*, Fall 2007, photocopy), 5-6.

Wayne Mack comments on developing holy fear,

If you are searching for one key principle to help you in your struggle with fear, here it is. In order not to fear, you must begin to fear...the Scripture is clear: The only way to overcome sinful fear is to develop holy fear. Develop a holy fear of God, and you won't be plagued by a sinful fear of man or anything else. (Mack 139)

In John 12:27, we read that even Jesus was troubled and He cried out to God, “Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, ‘Father, save Me from this hour?’ But for this purpose I came to this hour.” Christ looked to the cross, and it disturbed Him. But Jesus didn't allow His trouble to control Him. He still obeyed God despite His distress. It's not wrong to be troubled or frightened. It is wrong when those emotions control you.

In Matthew 14 when Jesus was walking on the water, Peter jumped out of the boat to run to Him. Peter trusted that Christ would take care of him. But as Peter was walking, he looked at his circumstances, took his eyes off Christ, and began to sink. Why did Peter start to sink? Jesus told him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” (Matt 14:31).

That's what often happens to us. We start out well, we step out in faith, but then we start to look at our circumstances - things aren't going the way we think that they should. So we take our eyes off Christ, and we start to sink. When you are sinking, when you are overwhelmed, recognize your problem – you've taken your eyes off Christ. Repent of your sin, and actively put your faith and trust in Him. (Mack 36)

5. Ungodly fear accomplishes nothing worthwhile (Prov 13:15; Matt 6:27). One of the effects of sinful fear is that it produces irrational thinking. Wayne Mack writes,

When you talk to someone who is really afraid, what do you find? Their thought life is all messed up. Some people won't go on planes because one plane crashed; but they will drive a car even though many more people die each year as a result of car accidents. Some people won't go over a bridge because they are scared it won't support them, even though every day thousands of cars and trucks drive over that same bridge and it has never broken under the pressure. That is irrational thinking. (Mack 20)

II. How to Handle Fear

A. Self-Examination²

1. Is there anything that you are presently fearful about?
2. Recall the last 5 times you were fearful. Explain the situation that was involved.
3. What was your thinking for each situation? Were you thinking about tomorrow? Were you concerned about temporal things or eternal things? Was your focus on unfounded possibilities? What were you fearing more than God? How were you focused: on self or not loving others?
4. How did you respond to your fear? What did you do or not do?
5. What were the results of being sinfully fearful (if you were)?
6. How were you not trusting God?
7. What have you done about those things, situations, or fears since?

B. Before fear hits again³

1. Confess and repent of your sins of ungodly fear to God and others whom your fear may have affected (Ps 50:1-4; Matt 5:23-24).
2. Increase your loving fear (reverence) of God. Study, pray, and commit to love God with all your heart (Deut 10:12, 20; Ps 119:2)

The counselee should be taught how to grow in the fear of the Lord. They need to know that the regular, prayerful, and personal exposure to Scripture is the most effective means of growing in the fear of God. In Deuteronomy 4:10 the Lord connects hearing his Word with learning to fear Him: “Assemble the people before me to hear my words so that they may learn to revere me as long as they live in the land and may teach them to their children.” The individual must grow in their understanding of Scripture if they are to grow in the fear of the Lord.

3. Memorize Scripture verses to help renew your mind (Rom 12:2).
4. Prayerfully resolve to pursue right motives, thoughts and actions to combat the ones you usually have (see your answers above). Make your thoughts thankful, hopeful, trusting, and loving. Try to put your new thoughts in prayer form (Ps 119:59-60).

²Stuart Scott, *The Exemplary Husband* (Bemidji, MN: Focus Publishing, 2002), 278.

³Ibid., 279.

Fearful Thoughts	Thankful, Hopeful, Trusting, and Loving Thoughts
Oh no! I just know this plane is going to crash. I can't do this. I don't want to die!	Thank you, Lord, that I am in your hands. I am just as safe up here as I am on the ground. You are in control of all things. I can trust you to help me with whatever happens.
My job is ending soon and I don't have another one yet. What am I going to do? We're going to be in the poor house!	I thank you, Lord, that you know our needs. I will do all I can to find another job, but I know you will help us through whatever happens. Please help me find another job. You are in control of all things. I will trust you and be content with what You provide.
If I confront her sin, she is going to get really angry, and I don't know what else she will do, but it will be really bad.	If I confront her, she may get angry, but I will endure it in order to do what you want, Lord. I ask you to help her respond well, but I will trust You with the outcome.

C. During the time of fear⁴

1. Earnestly seek the Lord and His help (Ps 34:4; Ps 46:1-3).
2. Put off being sinfully fearful (Isa 12:2; Eph 4:22).
 - a. Ask yourself, "What am I fearing more than God?"
 - b. Ask yourself, "Are my thoughts headed in the wrong direction? Are they:
 - * On the future?
 - * On temporal things?
 - * On untrue things?
 - * Focused on me?
 - * Void or deficient of God and His truth?
3. Put on trust, responsibility, and love.
 - a. Focus most on God and His promises (Ps 18:1-2).

⁴Ibid., 281.

- b. Make yourself dwell on right thoughts and your memory verses (Eph 4:23).
 - * Stay in the present.
 - * Think about eternal things and things that God is concerned with.
 - * Think true thoughts.
 - * Think profitable thoughts.
- c. Ask yourself, "How can I now do what is right?"
 - * What is the responsible thing to do right now?
 - * What is a loving thing I can do right now?
 - * What constructive thing would God want me to do about this problem?
- 4. Be willing to endure the temptation to fear, if you must, in order to love God and others (2 Tim 2:3-4).

D. After - If you fail and give way to ungodly fear⁵

- 1. Ask yourself, "How did I sin?" Be specific about thoughts and actions.
- 2. Ask yourself, "If I had this to do over again, what would I think and do?"
- 3. Confess and ask forgiveness of God and anyone else who was affected by your sinful fear (James 5:16; 1 John 1:9).

III. Homework Assignments

- A. Keep a fear journal and record times that you are fearful. Record the date, time, circumstances, and what you were thinking or saying to yourself about the circumstances.
- B. Memorize: Psalm 34:4 and Psalm 56:3-4
- C. Read the booklet *You Can Trust God* by Jerry Bridges and answer the questions in The back. Bring it with you for discussion to our next meeting.
- D. Assign a chapter from *The Fear Factor* by Wayne and Joshua Mack and answer the questions at the end of the chapter.
- E. Read the booklet *Fear: Breaking Its Grip* by Lou Priolo and underline 5-10 sentences that are most important to you.

⁵Ibid., 282.

IV. Resources

Joy of Fearing God - Jerry Bridges

The Fear Factor - Wayne and Joshua Mack

The Exemplary Husband - Stuart Scott

When People are Big and God is Small - Edward Welch

Running Scared - Edward Welch

APPENDIX 11

POST-SEMINAR QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Table A3. Post-seminar short answer responses

Question	Key themes and frequency
1. What were the strengths of the training seminar?	Biblically based (1) Practical (1) Applicable (1) User friendly (1) Small group (1) Good interaction (1)
2. Which parts of the training did you find least helpful?	None (1) Material was too cognitive (1) Too didactic (1)
3. What changes would you recommend to improve the training?	Utilize video (2) More discussion (1)
4. As a result of the training, do you feel confident to counsel soldiers with PTSD?	More confident (2) Much more confident (1)
5. In what ways did the seminar help improve your ability to utilize Scripture in counseling?	Scriptures are relevant in counseling (2) More willing to use Scripture (1)

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ABSTRACT

TRAINING ARMY CHAPLAINS TO PROVIDE BIBLICAL COUNSELING TO SOLDIERS WITH POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

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The project aimed to train chaplains to utilize the sufficiency of Scripture to counsel soldiers who have experienced the effects of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Chapter 1 presents the purpose, goals, context, rationale, definitions, and limitations of the project.

Chapter 2 discusses the theological issues related to counseling victims of PTSD. The most common counseling issues addressed include suffering, anger, fear, and worry.

Chapter 3 presents the theoretical and sociological support for the project. The chapter primarily discusses the psychology based treatment options that are available for PTSD.

Chapter 4 discusses the two training seminars that were conducted to train chaplains to provide biblical counseling for PTSD. The results of the research instruments are also presented.

Chapter 5 provides an assessment of the overall results of the project.

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