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EQUIPPING LEADERS IN A COUNSELING METHODOLOGY  
BASED ON 1 JOHN AT THE ORCHARD CHURCH IN  
BARRINGTON, ILLINOIS

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A Project  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

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by  
Luke Michael Trifilio  
December 2024

**APPROVAL SHEET**

EQUIPPING LEADERS IN A COUNSELING METHODOLOGY  
BASED ON 1 JOHN AT THE ORCHARD CHURCH IN  
BARRINGTON, ILLINOIS

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This project is for the glory of God and dedicated to my wife, Rachel.

I am so grateful that the Lord has brought us together and so thankful for your sacrifices,  
encouragement, and kindness.

To Chris and Ruben, you bless me, and it is a joy to watch you boys turn into men.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- BAGD Bauer, Walter, William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, and Frederick W. Danker. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979
- EDNT *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*. Edited by Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider. 3 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990–1993
- LXX Septuagint
- JBC *Journal of Biblical Counseling*
- NIDNTT *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. Edited by Colin Brown. 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975–1978



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## PREFACE

First and foremost, this was done in gratitude to the Lord Jesus Christ. My hope is that my love for Him is reflected in my love for His people and His Word. I am truly grateful for my marriage and wife Rachel for supporting me through this project and encouraging me to reach my full potential as a follower of Christ and a pastor. I would also like to thank Ann and Ben Bautista and Joyce and Gee Leong for your faithful witnessing, encouragement, and being such great examples. I would also like to thank Steve Trifilio as I needed your assistance, insight, and affirming my understanding of the philosophy I was reading for this project.

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My journey forward in counseling started with a desire to be a better pastor. I am grateful for certain ministerial organizations and key leaders in these ministries. The Christian Counseling and Education Foundation (CCEF) and their on-line training is excellent and my hope is that their ministry will continue to flourish. Even though I only met David Powlison a half dozen times, his teachings and writings have been invaluable

to me both personally and in ministry. I am particularly grateful for Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (TEDS), and my favorite professor, advisor, and friend Dr. Grant Osborne. I am grateful knowing both these men are with the Lord. I am also grateful for The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and for Dr. Haste. You are an excellent shepherd and I am grateful for your insight, recommendations, and encouragement—thank you!

Luke Michael Trifilio

Carol Stream, Illinois

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The Orchard is a multisite EFCA church (Evangelical Free Church of America) consisting of six campuses connected to a common central leadership and elder board. This project was administered at the Barrington campus which is growing and becoming increasingly dependent upon its lay leadership to meet the needs of the congregation. The church's planting activities are local and involve recruiting and deploying current lay leaders to its church plants which creates a lay leadership turnover. The Orchard is affiliated with Unlocking the Bible, which had a two-year training curriculum for future pastors, church planters, and missionaries called Momentum and a similar shortened version for the Orchard lay leaders called Leverage. Training vocational and lay leadership is one of the church's top priorities.

The Orchard has had, for the most part, an integrationist approach to counseling, but recently the Women's Ministry Director and Pastor of Congregational Life at the Barrington campus embraced biblical counseling, teaching biblical counseling classes, and developing a ministry team.<sup>1</sup> The Congregational Life Ministry (CLM) is a lay ministry team made up of two distinct groups: the Care Team (CT) and the Lay Counseling Team (LCT). The CT are congregants who are biblically literate, trusted by church leadership,

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<sup>1</sup> David Powlison traces the rise and influence of psychology in the church:

The catchword "integration" typically served to represent both the intellectual and professional tasks. Though the definition of "integration" was much controverted, its common denominator could be found in the emergence of a new kind of professional, new both in ecclesiastical and mental health circles: a conservative Protestant psychotherapist who intended to take both halves of that designation with equal seriousness. (David Powlison, *The Biblical Counseling Movement: History and Context* [Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2010], 28)

and appear spiritually mature as they participate in home, hospital, and hospice visits.<sup>2</sup> The second part of this group is the LCT, which can be further distinguished into two distinct groups: biblical lay counselors and secular counselors who now are embracing and learning biblical counseling. The CLM is flourishing, but needs development as it increasingly expands into lay biblical counseling.

### **Context**

The Barrington campus was established in 2011 with 350 attenders; it is located in a wealthy Chicago suburb. Most staff were indoctrinated into an integrationist philosophy of counseling in seminary and were not aware of distinctions between biblical counselors the local Christian counselors, that is, Christians integrating secular psychologies with the Bible/theology.<sup>3</sup> Prior to 2015, there was a minimal amount of counseling occurring at the Barrington campus, as pastors did visitations and oversaw discipleship but made referrals for extended counseling needs.

In 2015, the Pastor of Congregational Life went from being a part-time to a full-time position, and at the same time, the Barrington staff was becoming increasingly disillusioned with local Christian counselors. The Women's Director and the Pastor of Congregational Life started to increase their counseling duties and quickly realized that

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<sup>2</sup> The term "Congregational Life" developed out of a name change (2010), when the Evangelical Church of Arlington Heights (est. 1958) went multisite and changed its name to The Orchard. The philosophy of ministry formed around the tree metaphor of roots (digging deeper in God's Word), life (shared life in Christ), and fruit (the results). Congregational Life oversees LIFE Groups (The Orchard's version of small groups). LIFE is an acronym for Leader, Intercessor, Fellowship in the Word, and Encouragement and care. These groups are a main discipleship strategy for The Orchard. Congregational Life also encompasses different affinity ministries and the congregation's counsel and care.

<sup>3</sup> It may seem strange that the Orchard, which has a commitment to biblical orthodoxy, is associated with counseling integration. The Orchard is in close proximity (15 miles) to the EFCA seminary, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (TEDS: Deerfield, IL). Almost all Orchard pastors are TEDS graduates—several professors and even TEDS presidents are/were members of The Orchard (even a former senior pastor served as TEDS president and has a building named after him). There is a close relationship between TEDS and The Orchard. Powlison notes, "In 1969, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (Deerfield Ill.) hired its first psychologist, Gary Collins, as professor of pastoral psychology. . . . He would become perhaps the major actor in the evangelical psychotherapy movement over the next twenty-five years. . . . In 1977 Collins wrote *The Rebuilding of Psychology*, which became one of several programmatic texts for the integration movement." Powlison, *Biblical Counseling Movement*, 52.

they were ill-equipped. They then took CCEF classes which led to teaching and introducing CCEF curriculum and literature to the congregation. CCEF's motto, "Restore Christ into counseling and counseling to the church," became a paradigm shift to a congregation that perceived discipleship and counseling as two different disciplines.<sup>4</sup>

The Barrington campus also had a Celebrate Recovery (CR), which is a Christian 12-step ministry that was not as gospel centered as it claimed to be. This ministry was presented as a "fix-all" ministry as the 12 steps were communicated in a manner in which they could fix "all" problems. Congregants even struggling with mental illness were encouraged to "work the steps." In 2016, the ministry was removed from the Barrington campus and the step study groups transitioned to LIFE Groups. LIFE Groups focus on discipleship while the CR step study groups were more corrective in nature (i.e., addictions). Several corrective groups were formed to fill the CR void (i.e., men's purity and men's anger groups using CCEF resources), but the campus needs more of these corrective/recovery type groups with increased leadership training in gospel ministry.

Another concern is that the campus is currently growing and it has more than doubled since its inception. The pastoral counsel that has been occurring was mostly done by the Director of Women's Ministry and the Pastor of Congregational Life. Counseling is only one of many duties that these two positions are required to perform and there is simply not enough time to meet the congregation's counseling and visitation needs. The formation of the CLM in the September of 2018 was the beginning of a process of turning some of these deficiencies into strengths. The CLM communicates and coordinates meeting the congregation's needs through a private smart phone app. CLM is engaging in visitation and congregational care which gives some relief to the busy pastoral staff and fulfills biblical mandates for mutual ministry. Some of the members of the CLM with a biblical counseling background are engaging in lay counsel. Currently the secular

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<sup>4</sup> Tim Lane, "More than Counseling: A Vision for the Entire Church," Christian Counseling and Education Foundation, April 14, 2016, <https://www.ccef.org/more-counseling-vision-entire-church>.

counselors that are part of the CLM have only been assigned crisis and care visitation. They have not had lay counseling assignments, as they are currently receiving biblical counseling training and there is a need to assess their biblical literacy and spiritual maturity. The CLM has a monthly training meeting that should be developed into a concise and effective process with a curriculum. For now, each monthly meeting consists of three parts: training on how to minister to people in crisis, basic biblical counseling skills, and discussion of a book study.

A final concern potentially relevant to this project is that a nearby megachurch attempted lay biblical counseling through mandatory training of their small group leaders. This lay counseling ministry did not achieve the desired results and this ministry is no longer operating. Even though this nearby church had to endure a pastoral scandal it appears that the ending of their lay counseling ministry was due to overcommitting and underdelivering. The senior pastor gave the congregation the impression that their Biblical Soul Care was ready to heal and solve all their issues. There were several other factors for that church's limited success, like pastoral turnover, and mandatory participation but a key factor may be that small group leadership and counseling are not necessarily the same skill set. My point here is not to mandate participation, but rather encourage lay leadership to participate in lay counseling through something that these leaders are already committed to: Bible Study (e.g., 1 John). First John is not a counseling manual, but counseling is discipleship and there are discipleship steps in 1 John that apply to counseling. This project would include people who are not LIFE Group leaders nor would it force LIFE Group leaders into a ministry that they are not suited for. At the same time, the CLM is required to go through training and it is the hope of this project that this 1 John methodology would be further developed and added to the CLM trainings. While the priority of this project is training lay leaders with counseling skills, there may be a secondary opportunity to get LIFE Group leaders involved by developing this methodology into a small group study.

The majority of the people composing the CLM have endured trials and suffering, and are ministering to those who are currently struggling with trials and suffering. This is intentional and it is patterned after the apostle Paul's instructions in 2 Corinthians 1:3–7; congregants who have suffered are uniquely suited to comfort those who are currently suffering.<sup>5</sup> This then creates a pattern in which this curriculum is first applied to the CLM and other lay leadership wishing to participate before the participant applies it to the people that they are called to minister too.

### **Rationale**

The EFCA philosophy of ministry is to “major on the majors and minor on the minors.”<sup>6</sup> Churches are unified through the EFCA doctrines: “the majors”; at the same time, EFCA congregations can differ in ministry approaches: “the minors.” The Orchard is aligned with the EFCA “majors” as they are derived from Scripture, so too are the majority of “minors” (i.e., discipleship: LIFE Groups). But some areas of the CLM that have a temporary and/or corrective nature (i.e., integrative counseling and CR) should be realigned to the Orchard's gospel-centered approach.

In addressing the growing needs of the congregation and lay leadership turnover, it is best to apply a biblical approach to training the congregation (Eph 4:12) to serve one another (Rom 15:7). God works through the Holy Spirit, His people, and His Word (1 Pet 1:23). First Thessalonians 5:14 has examples of counsel with imperatives that call the congregation to mutual ministry. Christians who endured hardships are uniquely suited to help those struggling (2 Cor 1:3–7).

Caregivers tend to gravitate to the CLM where they are receiving basic counseling training, but this training needs to be better developed. They are already ministering to those in crisis and engaging in home, hospital, and hospice visits; they are

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<sup>5</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version Bible.

<sup>6</sup> Evangelical Free Church of America, “EFCA Distinctives,” *Beacon Special Issue: The Official Publication of the Evangelical Free Church of America* 72, no. 3 (1999): 6.



potentially ready for biblical counseling training. Biblical counseling training can be available to everyone and especially LIFE Group leaders, but those targeted for biblical counseling training and leadership of corrective small groups should be those who are participating in the CLM.

There are other lay leaders who would benefit from biblical counseling training as well (e.g., affinity group leaders, LIFE Group leader coaches, deacons, elders) along with some of the different groups just mentioned (i.e., LIFE Groups leaders and the CLM). These different leadership roles have different skill sets, ministry assignments, and expectations; so extensive training for each of these individual areas may be somewhat unrealistic. What is needed is a common curriculum that brings all of these ministries together for biblical counseling training. This would be studying the Bible through the lens of biblical counseling so that a lay counselor could walk a counselee through a process using a book of the Bible. A curriculum would not only serve as a one-on-one and verse-by-verse study, but also potentially address personal sin in a LIFE Group. Addressing sin in a LIFE Group is not a new concept, but it is not taken as seriously as it should be. A bold approach to intentionally pursue sin issues in a group setting would add to the importance and value of biblical counseling as well. It is evident that a curriculum based on a book of the Bible in which basic biblical counseling principles could be learned along with a curriculum that could also include a methodology can unite these different needs.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to train and equip select lay leaders in a counseling methodology based on 1 John, so that the CLM and other leaders can provide one-on-one confidential support and encouragement to the church family facing short term emotional and relational challenges and goals at the Orchard, Barrington.

## **Goals**

These goals were selected to develop lay counselors to serve individuals who need additional care beyond the church's discipleship strategy. The creation of the curriculum that is first and foremost biblical with the purpose of congregants growing in Christlikeness was the main priority. This curriculum was presented to potential lay counselors in a weekend intensive seminar. Three goals have determined the effectiveness of this lay counseling intensive as well as sought out areas in which it can be improved.

1. The first goal was to develop this curriculum and have it evaluated by an expert panel consisting of a trusted and biblically faithful vocational counselor, a biblical counselor, and a key Orchard ministry leader that has a strong theological background.
2. The second goal was to teach the methodology along with basic biblical counseling principles in the form of an intensive and to assess the participants through a pre and posttest.
3. The third goal was, after the intensive, to further assess the participants' understanding of the framework of this project and their confidence in applying it to their own lives and potentially in the lives of others through a follow-up interview.

These three goals determined the effectiveness of this lay counseling intensive seminar as well as identifying areas in which this intensive and its methodology can be improved.

## **Research Methodology**

The first goal was to have this curriculum evaluated by an expert panel consisting of a vocational counselor, a biblical counselor, and a key ministry leader.<sup>7</sup> This goal was measured by the Pastor of Congregational Life who evaluated the expert panel's recommendations on biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope and applicability of the curriculum. This goal was considered successfully as the minimum of 90 percent of all the rubric evaluation indicators met or exceeded the sufficiency levels. If the 90 percent benchmark was not initially met then the material would have been revised.

The second goal was to administer the pre and posttest to assess potential lay counselors in their understanding of key issues in biblical counseling and the 1 John

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<sup>7</sup> See appendix 1.

methodology that will be discussed in chapter 3.<sup>8</sup> This goal was assessed by the Pastor of Congregational Life who evaluated the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the curriculum. The pretest data was gathered and recorded in order that this data can be compared to the posttest taken after the intensive seminar. This goal was measured by the Pastor of Congregational Life to evaluate the functionality of the plan, communication process, training elements, provision of resources, and action steps. The purpose was to measure the growth of the participants. This goal was considered successfully as it was met when all of the participants completed, returned and the data compiled electronically for a pre and post intensive analysis.

The third goal was after presenting the curriculum to lay leaders to have follow-up interviews and assess the participants' understanding of the 1 John framework and their confidence in applying it to their own lives and potentially the lives of others.<sup>9</sup> The purpose is to evaluate the growth of the participants in biblical counseling and the 1 John curriculum. This goal was measured by the Pastor of Congregational Life who evaluated the functionality of the plan, communication process, training elements, provision of resources, and action steps. The interview questions asked at the post intensive follow-up interview are listed in Appendix 4. These questions were given at the training so that the participants had the option of answering the questions in writing. The preference was an in person or a phone call conversation in order to communicate pastoral accessibility and shepherding through this process. In other words, the follow-up interview was not only about accessing more data, but also developing the relationship between pastor and lay counselor and to encourage feedback for improvement.

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<sup>8</sup> See appendices 2 and 3.

<sup>9</sup> See appendix 4.

## Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

The following key terms are used in the ministry project, the definitions are provided to shed light on this gospel centered approach to ministry.

*Biblical counseling.* Biblical counseling is “to promote personal change centered on the person of Christ through the personal ministry of the Word.”<sup>10</sup> Robert Kellemen further expands this definition:

Biblical counseling is Christ-centered, church-based, comprehensive, compassionate, and culturally-informed personal ministry that depends upon the Holy Spirit to relate God’s inspired truth about people, problems, and solutions to human suffering (through sustaining and healing) and sin (through reconciling and guiding) to equip people to exalt and enjoy God and to love others (Matt 22:35–40) by cultivating conformity to Christ and communion with Christ and the Body of Christ leading to a community of one-another disciple-makers (Matt 28:16–20; Eph 4:11–16).<sup>11</sup>

*Sufficiency of Scripture.* Sufficiency of Scripture is not only that the Bible is inerrant, inspired, infallible, authoritative, but also is sufficiently suited to minister to all aspects of life as it is comprehensive and perfect. It restores the soul (Ps 19:7), it works with the Holy Spirit to reveal the heart (Heb 4:12–13), and transform the soul (1 Pet 1:23).

We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.<sup>12</sup>

*Regeneration.* Regeneration is an instantaneous event in which God imparts new spiritual life through the Holy Spirit. It is not always dramatic, but a new birth or to be “born again” is the beginning of the sanctification process which is growth in holiness and a life of living to please God:

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<sup>10</sup> Robert Kellemen and Steve Viars, “Introduction: In Christ Alone,” in *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling: Changing Lives with God’s Changeless Truth*, ed. James MacDonald, Robert Kellemen, and Steve Viars (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2013), 14.

<sup>11</sup> Robert Kellemen, “5 Definitions of Biblical Counseling,” RPM Ministries, March 11, 2013, <https://www.rpmministries.org/2013/03/5-definitions-of-biblical-counseling/>.

<sup>12</sup> The Orchard, Barrington, “What We Believe,” accessed October 12, 2024, <https://theorchard.church/what-we-believe>.

First, believers are “chosen, holy and beloved” in Christ, set apart for God in union with Christ, and are actually made new by regeneration (positional or definitive sanctification). Second, believers begin to mature in their new life, set apart day-by-day through growth in grace into the likeness of Christ. This process (progressive sanctification) takes place by the power of the Holy Spirit, through the Word of God, in the communion of the saints, by the continual use of God’s appointed means of growth in grace, each member contributing to the growth of the whole unto maturity in Christ.<sup>13</sup>

It takes God to be godly. This does not mean a person will reach perfection in this life, but the Holy Spirit is necessary for spiritual change and growth and, for this reason, evangelism must be part of the CLM curriculums.

*Mutual ministry.* Mutual Ministry means that Christians are called to serve by ministering to each other. Christians are not only dependent upon God, but also on one another. Paul David Tripp captures this sentiment in *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change*. Tripp explains his book title in the introduction:

The paradigm is simple: when God calls you to himself, he also calls you to be a servant, in instrument in his redeeming hands. All of his children are called into ministry, and each of them needs the daily intervention this ministry provides. If you followed the Lord for a thousand years, you would still need the ministry of the body of Christ as much as you did the day you first believed. This need will remain until our sanctification is complete in Glory.<sup>14</sup>

Ministry leaders are to “equip the saints for the work of ministry” (Eph 4:12) for the benefit of the church and personal growth to maturity in Christ (4:13). This leads David Powlison to challenge pastors,

Hands-on pastoral counseling never means that you become the only counselor in the body of Christ. You are training Christ’s people how to walk in the image of the Wonderful Counselor. This is a refreshing vision for the care and cure of souls! It is a distinctively Christian vision. . . . All human beings are counselors, whether wise, foolish, or mixed. *All* Christians are meant to become wiser counselors.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> “Appendix 1: The Biblical Counseling Coalition Confessional Statement,” in MacDonald, Kellemen, and Viars, *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, 444.

<sup>14</sup> Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2002), 11.

<sup>15</sup> David Powlison, *The Pastor as Counselor: The Call for Soul Care* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 25.

Christians are called to comfort one another (2 Cor 1:4–7), counsel one another (1 Thess 5:14), encourage one another (Heb 3:13), speak the truth in love (Eph 4:16), and carry one another’s burdens (Gal 6:1–3). The command to love one another (John 13:34–35) means mutual ministry is not optional.

The intensive was based on the methodology of chapter 3 and biblical priorities of chapter 2. First John is not a counseling manual, but it has discipleship steps that are appropriate for counseling. In this methodology, the third step is: “Keeping the Word.” This third step in the methodology involves creating a Care Plan which is grounded in selected readings of Scripture and not limited to 1 John. These Scriptures can be from anywhere in the Bible, and would be dependent upon the counseling issue. The process of teaching this methodology is through a verse-by-verse study through 1 John. This training process mirrors the counseling methodology, in which the counselor takes the counselee through the entire text of 1 John highlighting the steps. The Care Plan readings and study, whether in the counseling session or through homework, can come from anywhere in Scripture. The steps and the intensive are a verse-by-verse study through 1 John supplemented with the full counsel of Scripture as needed to address the counseling issue.

### **Conclusion**

As the Orchard is growing, it requires equipping the lay leadership to meet the needs of the congregation. The CLM needs to correct some of the less than biblical approaches it has had to counseling, and to recognize counseling as part of discipleship. God’s Word is sufficient. Through the Holy Spirit, His people are called and competent to minister to one another. There are a variety of different ministries at the Orchard that would benefit from biblical counseling training and a solution to these multifaceted needs of the congregation is to train key leaders in biblical counseling through a Bible Study. Since the congregation is committed to Bible studies, then a study on 1 John that has a developed methodology and structure can unify lay counseling trainings. The CLT will receive trainings for one-on-one confidential support and encouragement that will equip

God's people to minister to those in the congregation facing short term emotional and relational challenges. This will include open invitations to other ministry leaders from the Orchard to participation in these trainings.

## CHAPTER 2

### BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR THE PROJECT

First John was written to a congregation infiltrated by false teachers and teachings (2:18–20; 4:1–6). Many New Testament introductions favor a theory that John’s opponents were First-Century *Proto-Gnostics*.<sup>1</sup> First John was written to Christians, and identifying John’s adversaries is relevant, but the emphasis of this project is that 1 John can serve as a discernable blueprint for maintaining and/or returning to orthodoxy.<sup>2</sup> The exegesis of the preceding verses not only give justification for incorporating biblical counseling into the church’s discipleship activities, but also content for the training. These preceding verses were incorporated into the intensive seminar as they reflect: (1) the *telos*, that is the goal or aim of every believer (2:5b–6), (2) the *hamartiology* of 1 John with an emphasis on the self-deception and anti-godliness that inhabits the human heart (1:8), and (3) the obedience required of disciples as one purifies oneself and practices righteousness (3:3). These verses show that there is a need to provide counsel as humanity’s sin nature creates hypocrisy, self-deception, and the need to pursue purity. These verses show that sin creates a lack of self-awareness which in turn indicates a need for mutual ministry and lay counseling training.

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<sup>1</sup> Adolf Schlatter, *The Theology of the Apostles: The Development of New Testament Theology*, trans. Andreas J. Köstenberger (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 120–24; Donald Guthrie, *New Testament: Introduction*, 4th ed. (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1990), 866–68. D. A. Carson, Douglas Moo, and Leon Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 452–55.

<sup>2</sup> The historical critical method attempts to identify John’s opponents (proto-Gnosticism, Jewish teachers, Cerinthus, Docetism, or possible combinations of these) while the literary rhetorical method acknowledges John’s opponents but places greater emphasis on changing behavior in the community rather than challenging false teachings. Matthew D. Jenson, *Affirming the Resurrection of the Incarnate Christ: A Reading of 1 John* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2012), 5–29.



## First John 2:5b–6 *Telos*: Conformity to Christ

First John 2:5b–6 provides the teleological goal for Christians which is to become Christlike; this is something that is missing in psychology.<sup>3</sup> This goal of Christlikeness is restated throughout 1 John and this emphasis of imitating Jesus suggest progress towards this goal should happen in the here and now (2:5b–6a, 3:2, 3, 7, 5, 16; 4:17).<sup>4</sup> The exegesis of 1 John 2:5b–6 will show that increasing in Christlikeness occurs through union with Jesus Christ, expressed by “existing in,” and “abiding in” Him.<sup>5</sup>

2:5b By this we may know that we are in him:

2:5c ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐσμεν·

2:6 *whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.*

2:6 ὁ λέγων ἐν αὐτῷ μένειν ὀφείλει καθὼς ἐκεῖνος περιεπάτησεν καὶ αὐτὸς περιπατεῖν.

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<sup>3</sup> Jack O. Balswick, Pamela Ebystyne King, and Kevin S. Reimer write, “Psychology does not have the epistemological tools to address issues of teleology.” Jack O. Balswick, Pamela Ebystyne King, and Kevin S. Reimer, *The Reciprocating Self: Human Development in Theological Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2016), 33.

<sup>4</sup> David Lints writes, “The claim that Jesus is the ‘image of the invisible God’ (Col 1:15) is the means to establish that God is renewing, restoring, or redeeming his people into his image.” David Lints, *Identity and Idolatry: The Image of God and Its Inversion*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015), 120. Gregory K. Beale states,

People will always reflect something, whether it be God's character or some feature of the world. If people are committed to God, they will become like him; if they are committed to something other than God, they will become like that thing, always spiritually inanimate and empty like the lifeless and vain aspect of creation to which they have committed themselves. . . . What we revere is what we resemble, either for ruin or restoration. (Gregory K. Beale, *We Become What We Worship: A Theology of Idolatry* [Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2008], 311)

<sup>5</sup> Rudolf Schnackenburg notes, “Alongside of ‘to have fellowship with God,’ which sounds general enough and is only found in 1:3 and 6, one of the commonest phrases is ‘to be in God’ (2:5, 5:20) or ‘to abide’ (2:6, 24; 3:24; 4:13, 15, 16). This combination with the typical word ‘abide’ is usually expanded (except in 2:6, 24) into a twofold or reciprocal formula (‘we in God and God in us’) or vice versa.” Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Johannine Epistles: A Commentary* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 64. Robert Law writes,

It is the fellowship of those who are in fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ—who are in fellowship with the God, and God in them. No thought is more closely interwoven with the whole texture of the Epistle than this of the Divine Immanence, by which the life of God is sustained and nourished in those who are “begotten” of God; and no word is more characteristic of the Johannine vocabulary, alike in Gospel and Epistles, than that by which it is expressed—“abide” (μένειν). (Robert Law, *The Tests of Life: A Study of the First Epistle of St. John* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982], 196)

The imitation of Jesus in 1 John is indicated by an adverbial comparative construct: *kathōs ekeinos* (cf. 3:3, 16; 4:17), which is reflective and prompts Christians to intentionality and self-examination.<sup>6</sup>

The concept of immanence (abiding, indwelling, interiority) is a theme in 1 John. The main expressions of this concept of immanence, *esmen* and *monōs*, occur together in this sentence.<sup>7</sup> This restatement occurs in regard to the claim: “in this we may know,” (*ginōskō*: know, come to know BAGD), so as to examine or discern the person making the statement (*ho legōn*) can know if one’s actions or life matches with one’s words (2:4; cf., 4:9).<sup>8</sup> On *monōs*, the term can indicate remaining or complying, but in Edward Malatesta’s influential monograph:

The expression μένειν ἐν τινί is a favorite of John to denote an inward, enduring personal communion. Μένειν adds to the phrase εἶναι ἐν because, as Hauck observes, by his use of μένειν John “seeks to express the immutability and inviolability of the relation of immanence. In so doing he elevates the Christian religion above what is attained in Hellenistic rapture or even in the prophecy of Israel.”<sup>9</sup>

Rudolf Schnackenburg places emphasis on the sphere in which the Christian is both abiding “in Christ” and Christ is “in him” (reciprocal).<sup>10</sup> C. H. Dodd, however, nuances

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<sup>6</sup> First John 2:5b–6 contains the term καθὼς ἐκεῖνος (“as that one”) in 2:6, which is also found in 3:3, 7; 4:17; a similar form: καθὼς ἐστίν (“as He is”) occurs in 3:2; and a purpose clause: ὅτι ἐκεῖνος occurs in 3:5; 3:16. First John 2:5b–6 (along with 3:2, 3, 5, 7, 16, 4:17) will show that imitation occurs through union (“abide in” or “exist in”).

<sup>7</sup> Edward Malatesta writes,

The word “immanence” is semantically related to μένειν ἐν and ἐμμένειν (Latin: immanere) and resembles the German “immanenz” used by scholars who write in that language to designate at least the Johannine μένειν ἐν expression. The root meaning of “immanence” can indicate an aspect of what we are concerned . . . for the term can mean “indwelling,” “inherent,” “actually present or abiding in,” “remaining within.” And the interiority expressions we are studying so describe, on the positive side, the faithful Christian, God’s gifts, and God Himself. (Edward Malatesta, *Interiority and Covenant: A Study of εἶναι ἐν and μένειν ἐν in the First Letter of Saint John* [Rome: Biblical Institute, 1978], 11)

<sup>8</sup> BAGD, 160–62.

<sup>9</sup> Malatesta, *Interiority and Covenant*, 25–26.

<sup>10</sup> Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 101.

this term with the temporal aspect of remaining.<sup>11</sup> Both “with-in” and “remaining” are accurate but insufficient; abiding in 1 John is rooted in the Gospel of John, as Jesus is in the Father and the Father is in the Son (14:20, 23; 17:21, 23, 26). The *hoti* clause refers back to 2:3 on obedience. Stephen Smalley suggests that there is a “double reference:” obeying His commandments (2:3) and living by His example (2:6) are very similar in meaning.<sup>12</sup> To summarize, *monōs* is not only temporal and spatial, but also relational and reciprocal, and in 2:5b–6 the comparative construct is matching one’s claims to one’s actions.<sup>13</sup>

The apostle Paul speaks of one’s union with God in terms of being “in Christ” and “Christ in His disciples.” This suggests one’s position (i.e., standing, positional sanctification) is “in Christ” and one’s spiritual growth (i.e., progressive sanctification) through the Holy Spirit is “Christ in His disciples.” John’s use is not identical to Paul’s as Georg Strecker notes that the indicative (union with Christ) equals the imperative (to live like Christ).<sup>14</sup> To “exist in Christ” (2:5b) is to abide in Christ (2:6) and this abiding is elaborated upon in 2:6: “to walk as He walked.”<sup>15</sup> Schnackenburg notes that the terms for immanence in 1 John are used for encouragement and exhortation to obedience.<sup>16</sup> A

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<sup>11</sup> C. H. Dodd, *The Johannine Epistles* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1945), 32.

<sup>12</sup> Stephen S. Smalley, *1, 2, 3, John*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 51 (Waco, TX: Word, 1984), 50.

<sup>13</sup> Law explains, “In the Epistle the formulae almost exclusively employed and constantly repeated are these— ‘abides in us,’ ‘We abide in God,’ ‘God abides in us and we in Him.’ In the Gospel, on the other hand, the reciprocal indwelling is that of Christ and His disciples (John 15:4–10), which has its Divine counterpart in His ‘abiding’ in the Father (15:10) and the Father’s abiding in Him (14:10; 17:23).” Law, *The Tests of Life*, 196.

<sup>14</sup> Georg Strecker, *The Johannine Letters: A Commentary on 1, 2, and 3 John* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 29.

<sup>15</sup> Smalley states, “As Jesus lived (πεπιεπάτησεν, aorist), so must the Christian himself live (ὀφείλει αὐτός πεπιπατεῖεν, ‘he must himself live,’ where the infinitive suggests a present, repeated action). In the Johannine writings καθώς (‘as’) relates to the life of Christ as both a model to be imitated, and as the means for that imitation to become a possibility (cf. 3:2; 4:17; John 13:15, 34; 15:12, 17).” Smalley, *1, 2, 3, John*, 53.

<sup>16</sup> Schnackenburg, *The Johannine Epistles*, 98–99.

response that honors Christ leads to spiritual growth: living consistently with one's position (indicative: a static union) "in Christ" leads to one's progressive growth (imperative: dynamic union), so that followers of Christ are maturing into Christlikeness.<sup>17</sup>

Abiding in Christ "ought" to result in Christlike behavior. Raymond Brown stresses *opeilein* is an obligation and not an imperative (i.e., "*dei*— 'must'").<sup>18</sup> "Ought" opens up the possibility of not meeting the goal, but places stress on commitment. Two forces are at work here: "in himself" meaning personal responsibility, that is, the follower of Christ is to assert self-effort in the process of sanctification, while the "existing/abiding" context asserts a spiritual dependence. The comparative construct (*kathōs ekeinos*) requires self-examination. Knowing the goal should influence and/or propel one to pursue Christlikeness.<sup>19</sup> Comparing oneself to Christ should reveal a disconnect or hypocrisy when one's behavior does not match one's belief.

Brown notes that in the Gospel of John, the Jews' obligation is to the Law (John 19:7); to the Christians, it is Christ's example (13:14), and in the epistles the obligation's application occurs through one another relationships (1 John 3:16; 4:11; 3 John 7–8).<sup>20</sup> In examining the first person plural statements in 1 John, it becomes clear that the pursuit of

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<sup>17</sup> Raymond Brown explains, "Christians have the same eternal life that Jesus had and has; this life, as an internal principle, must express itself in the same way as it did and does in him . . . the author conceives this life (also truth, knowledge, light, love) to be a dynamic element expressing itself in behavior rather than a static possession." Raymond Brown, *The Epistles of John*, Anchor Bible, vol. 30 (New York: Doubleday, 1982), 286.

<sup>18</sup> Brown, *Epistles of John*, 262.

<sup>19</sup> David Vincent Meconi writes, "A person as an image has a natural propulsion to become like its prototype (soliloquy is self-invented). It shows an utter dependence upon the archetype—this occurs through a loving union of loving, and knowing God. Wisdom is transformative; foolishness is isolation." David Vincent Meconi, *On Self-Harm Narcissism, Atonement, and the Vulnerable Christ* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2020), 31.

<sup>20</sup> Brown, *Epistles of John*, 262.

Christlikeness does not occur in isolation.<sup>21</sup> Growth occurs in community in which one's talk (*legō*) aligns with one's walk (*peripateō*).

In 2:6, *peripateō* occurs twice, the first is aorist (a completed action) in reference to Jesus and the second in present tense infinitive for the follower of Christ. This emphasizes a paced progression of habitual action as Smalley states, "where the infinitive (walk/walking) suggests a present repeated action."<sup>22</sup> Walking is metaphorical for living (4:9), Colin Kruse translates "must walk as Jesus did literally: 'must himself walk as he walked.'"<sup>23</sup> This is both personal and in community. Both the comparative construct and the self-referent "he himself" walks which accentuate obedience (1:10; 5:2–4) in following His example. The obligation with the infinitive (*peripatein*) has the force of an imperative and implies personal responsibility.<sup>24</sup> The goal and the means of achieving this goal is the same for all followers while the specific barriers to repentance vary from person to person.

The context is a movement in 1 John from sinning to being obedient to the Word (2:3), being perfected in love (2:4), and imitating Jesus (2:5b–6). As in 1:5–10, acknowledging the universality of sin is applicable to all Christians (1:8), and the confession of specific sins is applicable to the individual (1:9). Sanctification is personal; "he himself" is reflexive: the individual is to compare themselves to Christ and then work through the process of sanctification in becoming Christlike (2:1–6).

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<sup>21</sup> John's use of the first-person plural associates the recipients of the letter with himself and the witnesses to the incarnation; they are sharing a common experience: 1:6, 7–10; 2:1–3, 5, 28; 3:1–2, 14, 16, 18–19, 21–24; 4:9–13, 16–17, 19; 5:2–3, 14–15, 18–20. Colin Kruse, *The Letters of John*, Pillar New Testament Series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 60–62.

<sup>22</sup> Smalley, *1, 2, 3, John*, 43.

<sup>23</sup> Kruse, *Letters of John*, 81.

<sup>24</sup> Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Epistles of St John: The Greek Text with Notes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 50.

More detail can be gleaned through the adverbial comparative construct *kathōs ekeinos* (3:3, 7; 4:17) and similar constructs in 3:2, 5, 16.<sup>25</sup> The comparative construct of *kathōs ekeinos* occurs in both the pursuit of purity: “just as He καθὼς ἐκεῖνος is pure” (3:3) and the practice of righteousness: just as He καθὼς ἐκεῖνος is righteous” (3:7). This comparative construct, too, occurs through one’s union with Christ (3:9) which requires intentionality, self-effort, and spiritual dependence, all of which are vital as knowledge and sanctification are progressive (2:3–4). Behavior and abiding are grounded in one’s identity of being a child of God or a child of the devil (3:1, 10).

In 4:17 the comparative contrast results in the removal of fear and instills confidence, even boldness: “just as He is (*hoti kathos ekeinos estin*), so, too, are we in the world.” Being “in this world” is relating to the Christian since followers of Christ *are like* (*kathos ekeinos*) Christ in that they are in the world and do not need to fear judgement. Robert Yarbrough emphasizes the presence of Christ occurring in His people through the Word, and the Spirit. God is love (4:8, 16) and Christians are agents of His love (4:11). 3:16 and 4:17 indicate those who are grounded in “existing” and “abiding” in Christ, become participants in His ministry (3:11; 4:7, 11, 12; 5:6).<sup>26</sup>

There is much that can be gleaned here about the imitation of Christ through the comparative contrast. What is significant for the next chapter on methodology is that this comparative contrast is calling followers of Christ to examine their Christian confession and compare this to their behavior. This verse is a call to self-examination: one is to become aware of one’s actions when they are not corresponding to their beliefs. Identifying and examining this disconnect or hypocrisy will help shed light on chapter 3

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<sup>25</sup> There is some ambiguity with the pronouns in 1 John: do they refer to the Son or the Father? Smalley notes that *kathōs ekeinos*, “as that One” (2:6; 3:3, 7; 4:17), “always refers to Jesus.” Smalley, *1, 2, 3, John*, 52.

<sup>26</sup> Robert Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 258.

when embracing a methodology that attempts to distinguish between a presenting problem and a core/root problem.

In 1 John 2:5b–6 the teleological goal for Christians is to become like Christ. The comparative construct and similar expressions show an intentional, self-examining nuance to personal spiritual growth that is progressive (2:6). But this personal reflection is also relational (3:2, 3), sacrificial in serving others (3:16), representative (4:17), and corporate (2:6; 3:2, 3, 16; 4:17). The “ought” is an indication that spiritual growth is not automatic (2:6) and the corporate third person-plural suggests this guidance for growth comes from within the church. The Spirit is at work both in the community and individuals, and this shows a dependency on God and one another. This counsel to Christlikeness is to occur in a context of repentance and faith (2:1–2; 5:1–5), obedience to His Word (2:3), and the perfecting of His love (2:5a).<sup>27</sup>

### **First John 1:8 Hamartiology**

First John 2:5b–6 brings forth the goal that Christians are called to imitate Christ, but in 1 John 1:8 Christians are called to do something Jesus never had to do: address personal sin. Jesus is sinless, “and He appeared in order to take away sins” (3:5) and “destroy the works of the devil” (3:9). It is sinful to deny sin (1:8), and in denying, one denies personal responsibility which negates the ability to change. The thesis of this section is that a biblical counseling curriculum must have a methodology that incorporates a thorough understanding of the corrupting effects of sin upon the human heart. This will be demonstrated through the exegesis of 1:8: “If we say we have no sin, we deceive

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<sup>27</sup> Jay E. Adams writes,

In Colossians 2 and Ephesians 4, Paul stressed this is his discussion of the new man and the renewal of God’s image. This image was ruined at the fall. The goal of counseling is the renewal of that image. Concretely this means likeness to Christ, who perfectly imaged God as man. The attainment of that goal is achieved as a client changes from his former sinful life patterns and grows into the stature of Christ (Ephesians 4:13). (Jay E. Adams, *Competent to Counsel: Introduction to Nouthetic Counseling* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970], 73–77)

ourselves, and the truth is not in us”; ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι ἀμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔχομεν, ἑαυτοὺς πλανῶμεν καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν.

*Ean eipōmen* in 1:8 is the second of a series of three conditional statements “if we say.” In the context of 1:8, this suggests a negative pattern that John is addressing: a teaching contrary to the gospel that has infiltrated the congregation. It is common to understand 1:5–10 as a complete paragraph, but Smalley, among others, places emphasis on sin (1:8–2:2). So, Smalley’s division stresses four statements on sin: two conditions that are followed by two criteria.<sup>28</sup> 1:8 proves the claim of 1:5–6: that in God there is no darkness; therefore, those denying sin are in darkness, a self-deception that equates to separation and estrangement from God. Verse 1:8 is remedied in 1:9, in which sin is to be confessed and the disciple is forgiven and cleansed.

The phrase: *hoti hamartian ouk echomen* “we have no sin” only occurs in the Gospel of John (9:41; 15:22, 24; 19:11), with the implication of denying being guilty of sin.<sup>29</sup> Sin in the singular and anarthrous is referring to the concept of sin as part of human nature. Those who deny sin are claiming sin to be morally irrelevant; that is, they are claiming one’s sin nature does not affect one’s relationship with God.<sup>30</sup> The light/darkness and walking/falling theme continues into chapter 2. So, in God there is no darkness (1:5), but in John’s opponents there is darkness (*planōmen, anomia, adikia, epithymia, and alazoneia*) as they are not in union with Christ. They have hearts of

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<sup>28</sup> Smalley does not break this section on walking in the light (1:5–10), but should have a greater emphasis on overcoming sin

“Claim:

1:8. If we claim to be sinless, we are deceiving ourselves.  
1:10. If we claim that we have not sinned, we are making him out to be a liar.  
(Smalley, *1, 2, 3, John*, 28)

Remedy:

1:9. But if we acknowledge our sins, he will forgive our sins.  
2:1, 2. If anyone should sin, we have an intercessor, our sin offering.”

<sup>29</sup> Smalley, *1, 2, 3, John*, 29.

<sup>30</sup> Sin is singular, to emphasize the sin nature which incorporates the character of the attribute. Westcott explains, “The thought here is for ‘sin’ and not of ‘sins:’ of the singular, the principle, and not of the separate manifestations. For the singular compare c. iii. 8 f.; John 1. 29: for the plural v. 9; ii. 2, 12; iv. 10; Apoc. 1.5.” Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 22.



darkness and it is sinful to deny sin: to hate one's brother, to be in, and to walk in darkness (2:10).<sup>31</sup> This negative pleonasm is John emphatically stating a need to identify oneself as a sinner (1:8).<sup>32</sup> This acknowledgement of a sin nature should result in acknowledging individual sins (1:9).<sup>33</sup> A recognition of sin is necessary and "in Christ" one can be restored (1:8, 9) and make progress in overcoming sin (3:3, 7).<sup>34</sup>

The third-person plural *eipōmen* refers to John's opponents (i.e., anti-Christ), so it is appropriate to refer to these speakers as "some" as in "some say: there is no sin." But, since false teachers/teachings and self-deception is prevalent within the community, and it is a community effort to discern false teaching and self-deception (2:18–23; 4:1–6), then it is better to say "we." "We may say there is no sin," *harmartia* is in the singular and shows sin's character and nature—sin reinforces sin being self-inflicted deception: "we can say we are not sinners" then we deceive ourselves. There is a hopelessness when sin is denied as responsibility too will be denied; since hope is dependent upon moving from self-deception to acknowledgement and change (3:3).

*We deceive ourselves.* Sin is associated with self-deception. The reflexiveness of this statement, that a person does this to oneself, shows that self-deception perpetuates the sin. As a result, in so doing, then truth is not efficacious.<sup>35</sup> Many contemporary

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<sup>31</sup> Malatesta, *Interiority and Covenant*, 27–34.

<sup>32</sup> Ethelbert W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible: Explained and Illustrated* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 418.

<sup>33</sup> Judith M. Lieu states, "The plural is used of sins forgiven (1:9; 2:12; 3:5) or propitiated (2:2; 4:10; at 1:7lat 'every sin' has a plural sense), but also to be confessed (1:9), which implies their present reality." Judith M. Lieu, *New Testament Theology: The Theology of the Johannine Epistles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1991), 59–60.

<sup>34</sup> Schnackenburg notes that Irenaeus mentions the pneumatics in Gnosticism, perceived that they "cannot be defiled by the material world and its impurities." Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 80.

<sup>35</sup> Edwin A. Blum and Glenn W. Barker state, "As an on-going reality, there follows a denial of responsibility for individual actions. . . . Second, we recognize that the truth is simply not in us or with us. When the principle of sin is denied, truth as an inner principle of life cannot exist. The futility and irony of our predicament then becomes evident: In God's name, we make God's presence and power an impossibility." Edwin A. Blum and Glenn W. Barker, *1, 2 Peter; 1, 2, 3 John; Jude*, Expositor's Bible Commentary with The New International Version (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 106. In addition, John Stott writes, "John's

commentators point to the Old Testament image of an animal wandering off (Deut 22:1; Job 38:41), but this illustration misses the intentionality. It is not an innocent wandering; the sheep's departure is purposeful.<sup>36</sup> The self-reflection involved in this indicative statement suggests that the sin that separates us from God also keeps us from understanding ourselves.<sup>37</sup> The indicative and reflexiveness also denotes personal responsibility. *Planōmen* (lead astray, cause to wander, deception [BAGD]) is present and active, so this statement has ongoing consequences.<sup>38</sup> The passive *planōmen* with the reflexive *heautous* (ourselves) makes this self-reflective (self-inflicted).<sup>39</sup>

The difference between the children of God and the children of the devil (3:10) is the practice of truth (1:6), the practice of sin (3:4, 8), and the practice of righteousness (3:7, 9, 10). Self-deception suggests intentionality as it is willful disobedience regarding the sin (anarthrous and singular) nature (1:8) and in 1:9 it refers to sins of the individual

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affirmation is equally applicable today to those who deny the fact or guilt of sin by seeking to interpret it solely in terms of physiological, psychological or social causes." John Stott, *The Letters of John*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 19 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988), 82.

<sup>36</sup> The LXX emphasizes *planeo* as idolatry. Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 61.

<sup>37</sup> Johan Lust, Eric Eynikel, and Katrin Hauspie state,

The dualism of "spirit of truth" and "spirit of error" seen in the T. 12 Patr. (T. Jud. 20:1; 2) is also seen in 1 John (4:6; 8); thus the occurrences of *πλανάτω* in 1:8, 2:26, and 3:7 are also to be interpreted dualistically. The *διάβολος* (3:8) is at work the Christological false teachers (2:26; 3:7); they are identical with the *πλάνο*, indeed with the *πλάνος* (9) and he *ἀντίχριστος* himself (2 John 7). Whoever follows the false path of the heretics deceives himself and separates himself from the *ἀληθεία* (1 John 1:8). (Johan Lust, Eric Eynikel and Katrin Hauspie, eds., *A Greek–English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, Part 1, *A–I* [Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1992], 376)

<sup>38</sup> BAGD, 665. Walter Bauer notes, "The danger for the Christian is of deceiving himself (1 Cor 3:18; 1 Jn 1:8) which can lead to falling away from right doctrine. . . . On the opposite side is the truth (Jas 5:19f.) which must be held firmly by faith. In him who is himself the truth." Walter Bauer, "Lead Astray," in *NIDNTT*, 2:460.

<sup>39</sup> Jeremy Pierre writes, "The reflexive 'we deceive ourselves' is displayed in people think of themselves as without sin. This is not necessarily people's belief that they are sinless; rather, it is any self-belief that does not say the same thing as God does about how sinful they are." Jeremy Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life: Connecting Christ to Human Experience* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2016), 36.

(with article and plural). Several terms further define sin are *anomia*, *adikia*, *epithymia*, and *alazoneia*:

1. Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness (*anomia*); sin is lawlessness (*anomia*) (3:4).
2. All wrongdoing (*adikia*) is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death (5:17).<sup>40</sup>
3. For all that is in the world—the desires (*epithymia*) of the flesh and the desires (*epithymia*) of the eyes and pride (*alazoneia*) of life—is not from the Father but is from the world (2:16).

*Anomia* is sin (3:4), to be lawless is to be “anti-God,” it is apostacy, it does not obey God and self-rule is in alignment with the devil’s rule (1 John 3:9).<sup>41</sup> It is God’s seed that allows a follower of Christ to overcome this rebellion (3:4).<sup>42</sup> Antichrist in 1 John is plural; those apostates that left the community were self-deceived and also attempting to deceive the faithful (2:21–22). John calls the congregation to acknowledge their sin nature (1:8), and individual sin (1:9) as both are rooted in the human heart as *anomia*. Anti-godliness is only overcome through the abiding presence of God.<sup>43</sup>

*Adika*. Unrighteousness is contrasted to Christ’s righteousness (2:29; 3:7). *Adika* in the Old Testament is a general term for sin, but in the New Testament it is the result or

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<sup>40</sup> Walther Günther states that when sin and unrighteous are being compared and/or contrasted, “*Harmartia* is the main idea. *Adikia* probably means here unjust deeds and injustice amongst men, which are not to be regarded as mortal sin but regarded as mortal sins but are to be forgiven.” Walther Günther, “Sin,” in *NIDNTT*, 3:575.

<sup>41</sup> Daniel J. Harrington notes that the term law (*nomos*) does not occur in 1 John, “but there are frequent references to commandments (fourteen times in 1 John and four times in 2 John). Very likely ‘lawlessness’ is understood as disregard for the commandments as set out in 1 John.” John Painter, *I, 2, and 3 John*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, Sacra Pagina Series 18 (Collegeville, MI: Liturgical, 2002), 222.

<sup>42</sup> John Piper states, “The ‘seed’ here may be the Spirit of God or the Word of God or the nature of God—or all three. Whatever it is specifically, God himself is at work in the new birth so powerfully that we cannot keep on practicing sin. God’s new presence cannot make peace with a pattern of sinful behavior.” John Piper, *Finally Alive: What Happens When We Are Born Again* (Minneapolis: Christian Focus, 2009), 147.

<sup>43</sup> See a summary on the “seed” that emphasizes the incompatibility of sin and God’s presence in Judith M. Lieu, *I, II, III, John*, New Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 136–40.

damage of the “wrong” or “wrongdoing” (5:17).<sup>44</sup> Unrighteousness is linked to “falsehood,” for example see John 7:18, where unrighteousness is correlated to the pursuit of self-glory.<sup>45</sup> The use of *adikia* in the epistles usually refers to sin’s effects (5:17).

Yet it can be argued that a ἁμαρτία (*hamartia*) in 1:7 is a more generic term for failure to comply with God’s will, while ἀδικία in 1:9 connotes specific acts of wickedness or wrongdoing. Support for this is found in 5:17, the only other place where ἀδικία occur in John’s Epistles: πᾶσα ἀδικία ἁμαρτία ἐστίν (all wrongdoing is a [particular] sinful act”); John must be affirming that all (specific) evil deeds are to be understood as ἁμαρτία (sin). The understanding of ἀδικία as tending to point more toward specific evil deeds find ample support in the LXX usage (228 occurrences).<sup>46</sup>

*Anomia* is lawlessness, it is the sin that possess and rules the human heart. *Adikia* is sin (5:17) that manifests itself in specific deeds and acts as the result of sin which also perpetuates or creates more sin. John is clear that *anomia* is overcome by God’s seed; *anomia* emphasizes the continual rebellion against God’s rule. Unrighteousness (*adikia*) emphasizes the continual results and perpetuation of this apostasy (*anomia*).

In 2:16, John tells what not to love (i.e., the world and the things in the world). He used *epithymia* regarding misplaced affections: lusts, cravings, and desires.<sup>47</sup> *Alazoneia* is often translated to “boast, be boastful.”<sup>48</sup> The affections of the heart are towards creation

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<sup>44</sup> Meinrad Limbeck explains, “Since to do wrong usually means to damage the one wronged, ἀδικέω can take on, specifically in legal terms and commercial language, the sense of doing damage. Αδικία designates the wrong, the unrighteousness, whereas ἀδικημα refers to the specific wrong deed, the misdeed (Acts 18:14; 24:20; Rev 18:5).” Meinrad Limbeck, “adikos,” in *EDNT*, 1:31.

<sup>45</sup> Günther writes, “The NT’s use of these words shows that we are dealing with commonly accepted and used categories of injustice whose particular meaning in each case we only discover through a close examination. Hence, we must seek to learn the meaning of each individual passage from its context, or from what qualifies it or is contrasted with it.” Günther, “Sin,” 3:575.

<sup>46</sup> Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 65.

<sup>47</sup> *Epithymia* is often translated as “lust.” Lust, Eynikel, and Hauspie notes that “ἐπιθυμιῶν: to set one’s heart upon, to long for, to desire.” Lust, Eynikel, and Hauspie, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, 170.

<sup>48</sup> Stott states,

The *alazōn* was a braggart (Rom 1:30; 2 Tim 3:2; Jas 4:16), “a conceited, pretentious humbug” (Dodd), who seeks “to impress everyone he meets with his own non-existent importance” (Barclay). He

and not the Creator; so, too, the epistle ends with a warning against idolatry (5:21). F. F. Bruce sees a correspondence between 2:16 and 5:21, since the world's affections are from the world and to the world. This is a form of idolatry; it is a heart issue.<sup>49</sup>

Sin infiltrates the heart in the form of an anti-godliness (*anomia*) which is a rejection of God that happens through self-rule. This is a form of idolatry and its affections and desires are toward worldliness. It can be beneficial to look at *adikia* as the results and perpetuation of sinfulness and how *anomia* affects the will, strength, and volition. "Practicing truth" is aligned with walking in the light, and is contrasted to liars and darkness (*anomia, planōmen, adikia, epithymia, and alazoneia*). Sin is willful and intentional: it results in righteousness, the self-deception perpetuates sin itself, idolatry, and guilt.<sup>50</sup> Both *anomia* and *adika* are afflictions of the heart. *Anomia* tends to speak of the root of sin, that is the lawlessness that corresponds to self-rule, and *adika* (in the epistles), tends to speak of the results of sin, that is, the consequences and perpetuation of sin. Jeremy Pierre's *Dynamic Heart* is a helpful guide to understanding the workings of the inner person. Figures 1 and 2 show a modified version of the functionality of the heart and 1 John hamartiology.<sup>51</sup>

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boasts to what he has and what he does. His arrogance relates to his external circumstances, whether wealth or rank or dress; it is a "pretentious ostentation" (Plummer), "the desire to shine or outshine others" in luxurious living (Ebrard). (Stott, *The Letters of John*, 105)

<sup>49</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles of St. John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 66–67.

<sup>50</sup> Malatesta writes, "Outside of 1 Jn 2,8b ἀληθές is never in the NT to describe a commandment nor is it modified by an interiority expression. However, several Johannine texts suggest a certain parallelism. In the Fourth Gospel, while ἀληθές does occur in the ordinary sense of conformity to the facts (e.g. 4,18; 10:41), it is used most frequently in relationship to the theme of witness (5:31–32; 8:13–14, 17; 21:24; see 7,18; 19,35; 3 Jn 12)." Malatesta, *Interiority and Covenant*, 140.

<sup>51</sup> The figures are modified, but drawn from Pierre, *Dynamic Heart*, 17.

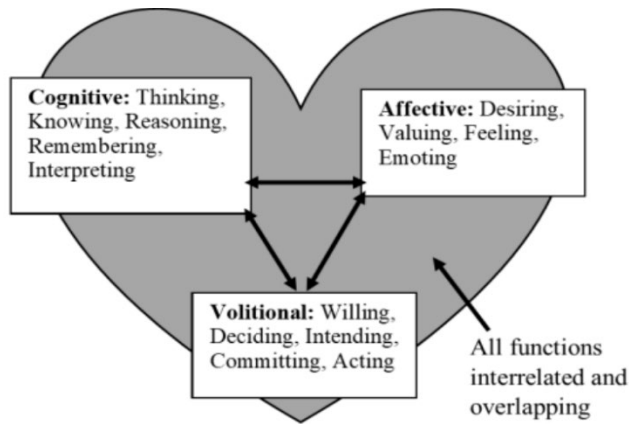


Figure 1. Dynamic heart

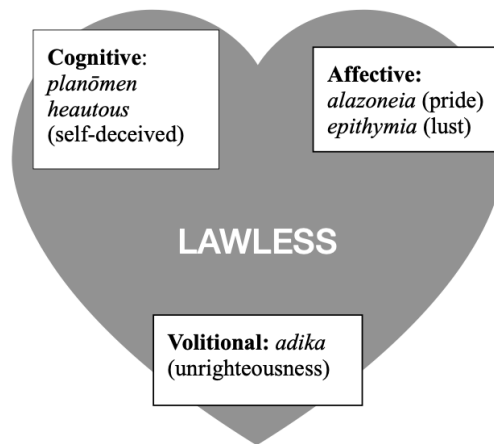


Figure 2. Hamartiology in 1 John

### First John 3:3 Purify Yourself

Cleansing (1:7, 9) is related to purity (3:3). Cleansing is typically in regard to an outward action while purity is inward, that is, the outward relationships with God and one another is reflected in an inward purity of the Holy Spirit’s vitality within the soul.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Smalley notes that *katharos* (“clean”) has to do with people and objects, and *agnos* (purity) may be subjective as it signifies a

“qualitative holiness or purity belonging to the deity,” and thence to related things or persons; whereas the more common word *καθαρός* is used of cleanliness in persons and things alone. The significance of *καθώς* is probably two, fold. At least it suggests the pattern for Christian believers to follow. We are to imitate the purity of Jesus and be pure ‘just as he is pure’ (*cf.* 2:6; 3:7, 16; also 4:17). But *καθώς* may also point to the motivation for such imitation, and even to the means of putting that imitation into practice. (Smalley, *1, 2, 3, John*, 150)

“And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure” (3:3); καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἔχων τὴν ἐλπίδα ταύτην ἐπ’ αὐτῷ ἀγνίζει ἑαυτὸν καθὼς ἐκεῖνος ἀγνός ἐστιν. I. Howard Marshall notes that although many commentators view forgiveness and purification as synonymous, purification goes beyond guilt to the very power of sin.<sup>53</sup> “‘To purify’ was originally a cultic term, meaning to withdraw from the profane, to make something fit for worship.”<sup>54</sup> Purification is used ceremonially in John and Acts, but in the epistles it is a moral purity (Jas 4:6; 1 Pet 1:22).<sup>55</sup> The exegesis of 1 John 3:3 will show that “abiding” (2:28) and imitating Jesus (3:2) involves purging sin (3:3–9) and practicing righteousness (2:29; 3:7, 3:10). As will be shown the “purifying oneself” points to a future hope, but the motivation and means of purifying oneself and practicing righteousness are dependent upon the sanctifying, indwelling presence of Jesus Christ.

There are two different groups in 1 John 1:5–10: those “walking in light” (1:7) who are forgiven (i.e., the Church: “in Him”) and those “walking in darkness” (1:8). Both groups sin. Those in the light are in union with Jesus and are marked by spiritual activities: regeneration, repentance, abiding, growing in Christlikeness, etc. Those who are not “cleansed of unrighteousness” are in darkness, self-deceived, not in the truth (1:8), and blaspheming (1:10); they manifest hate, and are blind, stumbling, and lost (2:9–11).

The use of *pas* shows that everyone in the congregation should be pursuing purity since “all” have a sin nature (1:8), while the specific sins differ from person to person (1:9). John’s appeal is corporate, but in 3:3 the use of *pas* (everyone) anticipates every individual believer’s transformation. John sees this future hope as an incentive to

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<sup>53</sup> I. Howard Marshall writes,

To purify is to remove the defiling effects of sin, either by the avoidance of sinful acts (2 Cor. 7:1; Jam. 4:8) or by the pardon of sins already committed (Eph. 5:26; Heb. 1:3; 10:2). Here the thought is primarily of pardon through Christ’s atoning blood, but the fact that John speaks of both forgiveness and cleansing may suggest that he is also thinking of the destruction of sinful desires which defile us in God’s sight. (I. Howard Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, New International Commentary of the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978], 114)

<sup>54</sup> Schnackenburg, *The Johannine Epistles*, 161.

<sup>55</sup> Kruse, *Letters of John*, 117.

pureness of living in the present, as Smalley states, “In other words, the genuine child of God must ‘keep pure’ by seeking to remain free from sin.”<sup>56</sup> John has already reminded the congregation about the false teachers who infiltrated the church (2:18–19), and that they do not need outside teachers (2:26–27). Within the congregation, “all” are pursuing purity even though they are at different places in the process of sanctification with different issues and challenges. The use of “all” means that the congregation is dynamic, as it is the church members who are to minister to one another (i.e., mutual ministry). The apostle John impresses upon his readers their need to be united to the Lord and His people through His Word (2:5, 7, 14). In sanctification it’s the church, not the world, expresses hope through communicating God’s Word (1:1–2; 2:5; 4:5–6).

To hope in the Lord is to trust in Him. Even though hope occurs only once in John’s epistles, Schnackenburg sees hope as the culmination of Christian expectation: “to see Him and to be like Him” (3:2).<sup>57</sup> Hope is an expectation, but it is dynamic because it calls for the Christian to respond by pursuing purity. Maturation occurs through responding to the preaching and reading (2:7–8) of the apostolic teaching (2:14; 4:5–6). The “we” (first-person plural), as in “we know” (*ginōskomen*) and “we exist” (*esmen*) in 2:5b, indicates that sanctification occurs in community (John 17:17).

Jesus, in addressing sin, notes the danger that performing rituals can take priority over the heart condition that these rituals were signifying (Matt 23:25–26). The problem was assuming that righteousness could be obtained by an outward ritualistic cleansing, rather than the need for an inner heart/soul purity. The purpose of taking away sins in 1 John 3:5 is in the context of sin being identified with lawlessness.<sup>58</sup> John tells

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<sup>56</sup> Smalley, *1, 2, 3, John*, 149.

<sup>57</sup> Schnackenburg, *The Johannine Epistles*, 161.

<sup>58</sup> Marianne Meye Thompson explains,

More specifically, however, *lawlessness* may refer to the lawlessness expected in the last days, the ultimate rejection of God’s truth to be manifested in false teaching and immorality (Mt 7:15, 23; 13:41; 24:11–12; 2 Thess 2:3). The meaning of *anomia* fits with John’s emphasis that the secessionists are



his audience that the letter is written so that they do not sin (2:1) and that Jesus appeared to take away sin (3:5), Marshall states, “that for John purity meant freedom from sin”<sup>59</sup>

In 1:9 it is the faithful and righteous Lord who cleanses, but in 3:3 one is called to purify oneself. There is replacement occurring in 1 John: to remove or purge impurities and to practice righteousness.<sup>60</sup> The practice of righteousness was discussed in the 1 section of this chapter in the *Conformity to Christ* (1 John 5b–6).<sup>61</sup> The Lord does the cleansing (John 13:10–11; 15:3), but purity (*hagnizei*) requires self-effort (1 John 3:3; 2 Cor 11:2; Phil 4:8; 1 Tim 5:2, 4:12, 5:22; Titus 2:5; Jas 4:8; 1 Pet 1:22; 3:2).<sup>62</sup> “Purifying” oneself, removing and purging contamination, is in the context of the “lawlessness” of sin (1 John 3:4–10). Kruse, drawing upon De la Potterie’s influential article “Sin is Iniquity” states, “The term (lawlessness) belongs to a series of expressions that describe the spiritual reality of the sinner, his situation, his interior state, and not so much the evil acts he commits.”<sup>63</sup> This is important to note here because in chapter 3 a potential distinction will be made between the presenting problem and the core problem. The core or heart issue will often,

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in fact the “antichrists” expected in the last hour (2:18): their sin is not just iniquity, but the iniquity of Antichrist. The fundamental understanding of sin, then, is that it is opposition to the will of God. That opposition need not be manifested in open rebellion of hostility, such as we think of when we consider the animosity to religion that some prominent atheists exhibit. Nor do we have to think of catastrophic Armageddons. Indeed, in Johannine thought the antichrists’ work is deception (3:7; 4:1), and the primary sin is unbelief. While we might think of unbelief as a passive sin, a sin of omission, the Johannine community was prepared to view it as the supreme manifestation of human sinfulness and rejection of God. Thus the statement sin is lawlessness does more than offer a definition of sin. By showing sin for what it is, it encourages renunciation of sin (Smalley 1984: 155). For how can sin—opposition to God—be part of the lives of those who vow their allegiance to God?” (Marianne Meye Thompson, *1–3 John*, IVP New Testament Commentary [Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1992], 93)

<sup>59</sup> Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 174.

<sup>60</sup> Lieu writes, “For 1 John, purifying oneself is therefore not just a preparedness that may be expressed in avoidance of the inappropriate but an active discipline of those who would see God.” Lieu, *I, II, III, John*, 126.

<sup>61</sup> Pierre explains, “Imitating him in character is not only acts of obedience, but hearts that think like him, value what he values, and share some priority of commitments.” Pierre, *Dynamic Heart*, 111.

<sup>62</sup> Stott, *Letters of John*, 124–25.

<sup>63</sup> Kruse, *Letters of John*, 118.

but not always, be related to this lawlessness of sin. This purifying of self is connected to the dethroning of the self and submitting to the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Every Christian, through the Holy Spirit, has Christ dwelling within them, and every Christian is called to submit to the lordship of Jesus Christ. It is important to again stress this is not a mystical experience, this is not a mystery, but rather a constant and intentional movement towards obedience. God's Word is true and faithful and, therefore, obedience to Scripture creates predictability. John uses the term "oneself," to point to the preeminence of immanence. That is, the purity of the self is in direct relationship to the priority of Jesus Christ in one's life. Or to put it another way, the supremacy of Jesus Christ is in opposition to the primacy of the self.

Both cleansing and purity are dependent upon the abiding presence of Jesus Christ. In 1:7, 9, the cleansing is by the efficacy of the blood of Christ. A sinner does not deny sin (1:6, 8, 10), but rather confesses sin and is in agreement with the Lord. A sinner needs to confess to not just being a sinner, but also to confess specific individual sins (1:9). "Cleansing" is aorist and is a completed action (the cross), but confession of sin (1:9) and advocacy of Jesus (2:1-2) are present which indicates an ongoing process of sanctification (not simply one's "standing" or "positional" sanctification).<sup>64</sup> First John 3:3 indicates that a follower of Jesus pursues purity and practices righteousness, and, through a commitment to Jesus Christ, does so through the Holy Spirit, the Word, and mutual ministry. To see and know Him (3:2), means to submit to Him (3:3). Purifying oneself is an abdication of self-rule (3:6). These verses indicate that hypocrisy, self-deception, and needed purity demonstrate that Christians lack self-awareness and are therefore in need of counsel. Sanctification often involves the counsel of mature Christians.

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<sup>64</sup> Jay Adams states, "Confession and cleansing clear the way for a renewed fellowship with God (1 John 1:3, 6, 7) that revives a harmonious and comfortable relationship with the environment." Jay Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling: More Than Redemption* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 40.

## Conclusion

The key verses that were exegeted in this chapter will be invaluable for the counseling methodology presented in chapter 3 and future trainings. The imitation of Christ theme found in 1 John shows the goal of the Christian life is to become like Jesus. Due to the lawlessness of the human heart, this goal will involve a life-long process of sanctification. A key theme in the next chapter will be tracing resistance. In 1 John 5b–6, John draws our attention to a gap between what one confesses and what one does. This exploration of why one's beliefs and behaviors do not match will be crucial and may require counsel in discovering the root problem that is behind the presenting problem.

This hypocrisy of one's actions not matching one's beliefs can be difficult for an individual to comprehend by themselves as a key component to sin is self-deception (1:8). Sin's self-deception keeps us from understanding ourselves. Sin manifests in different ways and personal sin will vary from person to person and their situations. What is universal is that the root of sin is lawlessness which manifests in the individual's affections, cognition, and volition. Counsel is useful here as one cannot often comprehend why one does what one does; that is self-deception equates to a lack of self-awareness. One often needs the counsel of another to become self-aware.

Purifying oneself requires obedience. As with the other verses exegeted in this chapter, purifying oneself from sin and practicing righteousness is submitting to the lordship of Jesus Christ. This purifying oneself is in alignment with imitating Christ and battling the lawlessness and self-deception of sin. As shown in this chapter it requires a dying to oneself, an abdication of self-rule and a trust in God's Word—that is faith that God's ways are the right ways.

The tension of not understanding one's own behavior can be resolved through comparing oneself to Christ and identifying how one's beliefs and actions should be aligned as well as understanding the self-deception that perpetuates sin and the need to die to self. These verses not only show the need for and the method of pursuing sanctification but also how sanctification requires the help of others. Through the study

and application of 1 John one can identify one's hypocrisy, self-deception, and/or need for purity; one will be better at becoming self-aware and understanding one's resistance to obedience. The hope is that through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ a follower of Christ can address and overcome their sin issues. All three of these verses amplify the continual need to submit to the lordship of Jesus Christ. They are particularly relevant for the next chapter, as identifying one's hypocrisy and self-deception will greatly assist one's comprehension and movement from the presenting problem to the root issue.

## CHAPTER 3

### TRAINING LAY COUNSELORS UTILIZING A FRAMEWORK DERIVED FROM FIRST JOHN

This chapter presents five maxims from 1 John that guide the new lay counselor through a counseling process and emphasize the presence of Jesus Christ. In 1 John, “to be in God” corresponds *to have* as in “to have God” or “have the Son,” “to know God,” “fellowship with God,” and even being “from God” are statements of immanence (indwelling, interiority, abiding-in).<sup>1</sup> Rudolf Schnackenburg calls these statements “formulas of immanence” as they relate to “abiding” or “to abide” and “existing” and “existing in.”<sup>2</sup> Of these so-called formulas, Schnackenburg states,

In view of this it may not be methodologically wrong to include within our purview those sayings which speak of “abiding” in other entities closely connected with God, such as “truth” (1:8; 2:4); “His Word” (1:10; 2:14: cf. 2:24; 5:10); “His

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<sup>1</sup> Edward Malatesta writes,

The explicitly interior aspects of the New Covenant promises in Jer 31 and Ez 36, namely, the law written upon the heart, the new heart, and the indwelling presence of God’s own Spirit, signify a profound and lasting change in the recipients of such gifts. They are marked forever as called to belong to God as His people and to have Him as their God. These gifts mediate a new communion with the Lord, a new intimacy of faith and love. (Edward Malatesta, *Interiority and Covenant: A study of εἶναι ἐν and μένειν ἐν in the First Letter of Saint John* [Rome: Biblical Institute, 1978], 23)

<sup>2</sup> Rudolph Schnackenburg relates these formulas of immanence as this group of “abiding” terms helpfully explain the inner relationship of Christ’s presence in the believer:

For our overall view we may already deduce from this survey the following characteristics: a) The Christians’ fellowship with God is an intimate mutual relationship (cf. the reciprocal formulas). It is not solely a relationship of protection on God’s side or of participation on the human side. b) It may be represented as a mutual interpenetration and has more than a merely moral quality. The terms used for the “abiding” of the divine Being and life in the human are much too real for that. c) The personality of God and of the human are never compromised: “God” is often represented as “the Father” or “the Son” or both at once (1:3). d) The way to fellowship with the Father is exclusively through the Son (2:23; cf. 5:12, 20). This is a basic Christological principle. e) Fellowship with God is never a momentary thing. It is an experience that is not limited in time, as in mysticism or ecstasy, but is in its very nature a permanent possession (“to abide;” “to have God”), a gift of salvation, and is related to “eternal life.”) There are important conditions (“if . . .”) and criteria (“by this we know”) for fellowship with God. (Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Johannine Epistles: A Commentary* [New York: Crossroad, 1992], 64)

anointing” (2:27); “His seed” (3:9); “eternal life” (3:15); “love” (4:12; cf. 2:5; 3:17). But each of these formulas of immanence requires separate investigation.<sup>3</sup>

One attribute Schnackenburg did not mention that I believe should be included in this list is: “light” which is to “abide in the light” (2:10) and to “walk in the light” (1:7). In creating a methodology with intentionality, I removed from Schnackenburg’s list “anointing” and “seed” (2:27; 3:9) as these entities are given by God and Christians do not control them. But Christians can and are called to (1) “walk in the light” (1:7); (2) “practice truth” (1:6); (3) “keep the Word” (2:5); (4) love first (4:19); and (5) “live through Him” (4:9). Each of these phrases are based on an imperative or contain an imperatival force.<sup>4</sup> These five maxims focus the counseling process on immanence which facilitates transcendence.<sup>5</sup> The thesis of this chapter is that this modified version of Schnackenburg’s so-called “formulas of immanence,” can form a series of progressing steps, a counseling method, which are

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<sup>3</sup> Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 64. Schnackenburg includes “eternal life,” but understands “eternal” life as not only a promise of future life, but also a life in Christ in the here and now: “Here the author brings up a concern that has motivated him all along (cf. 1:3; 2:12–14; 3:1, 14; 4:13). The divine life given to the Christian believers must become life with God and with the brothers and sisters.” Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 247. Raymond Brown states, “Duration (everlasting, or even without beginning) is not the primary issue; it is a life from another eon (*aiōn*, whence *aiōnios*) or sphere. Indeed, it is the life of God Himself.” Raymond Brown, *The Epistles of John*, Anchor Bible, vol. 30 (New York: Doubleday, 1982), 168. Likewise, as Robert Yarborough writes, the promise equates to the present: “This life has an eschatological fulfillment but is also a decisive element of believers’ lives here and now.” Robert Yarborough, *1–3 John*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 290.

<sup>4</sup> Love first is not in quotes because it is not found in 1 John; it is unlike the other four maxims which are direct quotes. Though in teaching this process to beginning/lay counselors, a goal is to keep these maxims consistent with short memorable statement (i.e., love first) which is like its literal counter parts. Love first is taken from 4:19, which commentators state has an imperatival force. In explaining this verse, Stephen Smalley emphasizes and italicizes “*must*”: “Despite the indicative mood in which this v began, an implicit exhortation (continued in the subsequent vv) has begun to emerge by the end. Not only can we love because of God’s prior and primary love, but also, we *must* love him and others in return” Stephen S. Smalley, *1, 2, 3, John*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 51 (Waco, TX: Word, 1984), 262. I would add to this understanding the imperatival force through the imitation of Christ theme in 1 John (2:5–6, 8; 4:17), which justifies summarizing 4:19 as love first. Especially regarding the use of *prōtos* in 4:19, and the previous reference to the new commandment (2:7–8 cf. John 3:34 [“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.”]) (cf., Rom 5:8). Some commentators emphasize 4:19 being a restatement of prior verses 4:10–11 on God’s love manifesting in a love for one another. Other commentators will mention the imperatival force in the preceding verses (i.e., 4:20–21), as Judith M. Lieu writes, “Nonetheless, this does not mean that whether ‘we do love’ is immaterial; the statement masks an imperative, and the following verses will establish this.” Judith M. Lieu, *I, II, III, John*, New Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 196.

<sup>5</sup> Jay Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling: More Than Redemption* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 55.

especially ideal for training counselors as these attributes give direction and application.<sup>6</sup> In other words, the pastoral counsel John gives to overcome false teachings/teachers in 1 John is also a useful guide in counseling.

In this chapter I give examples in which I used 1 John as the framework and the content of the counsel. But even though these sequential maxims are derived from 1 John, the content of the counsel is not dependent upon 1 John, rather the counselor should select relevant Scriptures that speak to the counselee's specific issues. That is, the counseling framework comes from 1 John, but the specific Scripture to address the counseling issues may be selected from other biblical books by the counselor. The following five sections in this chapter will address these five maxims in sequential order and clarify their relevance for counseling. With each step, the counselee will learn a competency which will help progress to the next.

### **Walk in the Light**

The thesis of this first section is to “walk in the light” necessitates orienting or reorienting the counselee to Jesus.<sup>7</sup> Walking in the light is relational (1 John 1:5–6), and reflective (1:6). The counselor's priority is to address and potentially redeem the presenting problem through repentance and faith (1:9).<sup>8</sup> To “walk in the light” (1:7), being “in the light” (2:8–9), and “abiding in the light” (2:9–10) represents being in union with God

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<sup>6</sup> These attributes that a Christian is to abide in (light, truth, Word, love, and life) are predicated: *walk in the light; practice truth; keep the Word; love first; and live though Him*. These are also names or titles for God: Jesus is the light (1 John 1:5; John 12:44–46) “the Word of life” (1 John 1:2), “the logos” (John 1:14), “the truth” (John 14:6; 1 John 5:20); “Spirit of Truth” (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 1 John 4:6; 5:6); love (1 John 4:8, 16); life (1 John 1:2; John 11:25; 14:6); and eternal life (1 John 5:20). These predicated attributes should also be pursued in the pursuit of godliness.

<sup>7</sup> Jay E. Adams, *Competent to Counsel: Introduction to Nouthetic Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 67–69.

<sup>8</sup> Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 211–16.

through Jesus Christ and pursuing its implications.<sup>9</sup> Walking in the light is transformative and sanctifying as it addresses the presenting problem through the reprioritizing of one's relationship with the Lord. This, in turn, creates new responses to the counselee's issues.<sup>10</sup>

The counselor in training needs to be aware that there tends to be a root issue, the underlying issue, also known as the core or heart problem is in relation to the presenting problem. To get to the root problem the counselor must pay careful attention to the resistance which hinders one's walk with Jesus, since this resistance gives insight into the root problem. This is not to say the root issue behind the presenting issue isn't relational too, but discovering this underlying root issue involves gathering data through unfolding experiences and analyzing descriptions.<sup>11</sup> The counselor needs to note the

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<sup>9</sup> Robert Law wrote an influential commentary (originally published in 1913) in which he objects to commentators who simply state that light is about God's magnificence and excellencies. They neglect the implications of fellowship and symbolism that show light is both immanent and transcendent:

Light is that which reveals; darkness, that which conceals. Light is the medium in which we come to see as God sees, to have a true perception of all moral objects—qualities, actions, and persons. To “walk in the light” is therefore, to have, in the first place, the will to see all things in the Light of God, and to acknowledge and act up to what is thus seen to be the truth. To “walk in darkness” is the effort, instinctive or deliberate, not to see, or the failure to acknowledge and act up to what is seen; to withdraw ourselves, our duties, our actions, our character, our relation to the facts and laws of the spiritual realm, from light which God's self-revelment sheds upon them. And to do this is, ipso facto, to exclude the possibility of fellowship with God. (Robert Law, *The Tests of Life: A Study of the First Epistle of St. John* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982], 64–65)

<sup>10</sup> On the inner witness Paul K. Moser explains,

God wants people to know God directly, in a cooperative acquaintance relationship of direct interpersonal knowledge, without the distraction of philosophical arguments. Accordingly, God wants the self-commitment of human agents to be directed to *God*, not ultimately to an inference or a conclusion of an argument. As a result, a recurring theme among biblical writers is that God alone is our foundation, rock, and anchor, and this includes our cognitive foundation regarding God's reality (see, for instance Ps 18:2, 31, 28:1, 31:3; Isa. 44:8; cf. 1 Cor 2:9–13). This theme implies that God wants to be one's sole evidential foundation for believing in God and for believing that God exists, and hence no argument is to assume this role. (Paul K. Moser, “The Inner Witness of the Spirit,” in *The Oxford Handbook of The Epistemology of Theology*, ed. William J. Abraham and Fredrick D. Aquino [Oxford: Oxford University, 2017], 121)

<sup>11</sup> Wayne Mack states,

This process involves two basic elements: accurately analyzing or conceptualizing the data and explaining it to the counselee. In other words, one aspect of interpretation involves what goes on in our minds as counselors. We must analyze the data gathered during the inventory phase so that we can understand it from a biblical viewpoint. And we must decide what should be done about the



resistance to the 1 maxim: to “walk in the light” in order to be able to move to the second maxim of “practicing the truth.” This is sequentially demonstrated in the next section on “practicing truth” whereas *alētheia*: *lēthe* means to cover up or hide, and hence *a-lētheia*, truth, etymologically speaking as an uncovering or revealing.<sup>12</sup>

For example, Anthony was experiencing panic attacks. One situation was with other church couples at a monthly board game night. We rehearsed how to initiate conversations which would create a relational response. We developed responses that relied on Jesus Christ; in which Anthony took the focus off of himself and focused on representing Christ in these situations. Walking in the light provided some relief and functionality as Anthony was able to reflect in situations that previously intimidated him. As we discussed the negative impulses involved and rehearsed different scenarios, what was essential to this process was tracing resistance; the “why,” the motivation, behind the panic attacks: “Why the distress?” “Why fear?” “Why anger?” Noting these presenting issues resistance to “walking in the light” or resistance to repentance should lead to the root issue in the second maxim “practice the truth.” Understanding the causes of Anthony’s distress, fear, and anger (the presenting issues) led to deeper (root) issues: “Why the need for control and self-protection?”

Fellowship with God is a necessary component for fellowship with one another (1:6–7).<sup>13</sup> Healing does not occur through the counselor/counselee relationship, but rather God is the Redeemer.<sup>14</sup> The counselee comes into a relationship with God through faith for the propitiation of sins (2:1–2). Jesus Christ is the focal point of this relationship even

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problems according to Scripture. (Wayne Mack, *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically* [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005], 147)

<sup>12</sup> Hans Hüber, “ἀληθῶς,” in *EDNT*, 1:58.

<sup>13</sup> On immanence and presence, see Jean-Luc Marion, *Prolegomena to Charity*, trans. Stephen Lewis, *Perspectives in Continental Philosophy* (New York: Fordham, 2002), 124–52.

<sup>14</sup> Randy Patten, *Biblical Counseling and the Church: God’s Care through God’s People* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 243.

though the process of renewal and sanctification occurs through the Holy Spirit. While Jesus describes this relationship in terms of a friendship (John 15:14) and mutual or reciprocal abiding (1 John 2:27, 28; 3:6; 4:12), it is governed by a loving dependence, trust, submission, and obedience. Strengthening one's relationship with the Lord will be manifested in one's relationship with the Lord's people (1:6). Jesus Christ not only mediates our relationship with God, but He also facilitates our relationships with one another (1:5–6).<sup>15</sup>

Walking in the light in 1 John is a response to confessing one's sin and restoring one's relationship with Jesus (2:7–9). Reflection is a process in which one can meditate on (2:24), question (3:17), evaluate (2:5b–6), and contemplate (John 11:50). It is also relational and intimate as God promises understanding and this understanding is potentially in regard to idolatry (1 John 5:20).<sup>16</sup> So in biblical counseling it is necessary to focus on prayer, confession, and tracing resistance.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Michel Henry, *The Words of Christ*, trans. Christina M. Gschwandtner, Interventions (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 47–48.

<sup>16</sup> Critical commentators often speculate on the warning against idolatry in 5:21 as it seems to be disconnected from the context. It appears to be unrelated to 5:20. *Nestle-Aland 27* ed. indents 5:21 as a new paragraph as they see it as disconnected from 5:20. However, *dianoian* is used only once in 1 John 5:20 in the context of John's warning about idols (5:21). In the LXX this term occurs three times in the short passages on the "Idolatrous Elders Condemned" (ESV heading) in Ezekiel 14:1–4. In the Ezekiel passage, the prophet has an ability to have insight into the idols of the hearts of the exiled Hebrews. Ezekiel and John use this term slightly differently: the Hebrews are to approach the prophet in Ezekiel in regard to their personal idolatry in Ezek 14:1–4; the Christians are to understand (*oidamen*) that they are given insight (*dianoian*) into knowing (*ginōskōmen*) and being in Jesus. If one reads 5:20–21 together (in context), then knowing Jesus (salvation) also gives Christian's insight into their own personal idolatry (5:21). This fits into the greater context of the letter, Jesus is sinless "and he appeared in order to take away sins" (3:4) and "destroy the works of the devil" (3:9).

<sup>17</sup> On resistance Jean-Luc Marion writes,

Temptation thereby assumes its proper status: a state of resistance, as much the resistance to the conversion of my inclination to sin as the resistance of my progressive conversion to this very inclination. In any case it is precisely not a matter of sin but of temptation, which, if it precedes, permits, and possibly produces the sin, is absolutely not identical to it—which, for that matter, is confirmed by the fact that the theme of temptation here comes from a citation of Job 7:1. . . . Temptation becomes for Job not only the paradoxical occasion for a proof of faith but also an ordeal of self—in short, for a resistance. (Jean-Luc Marion, *In the Self's Place: The Approach of Saint Augustine*, trans. Jeffrey L. Kosky [Stanford, CA: Stanford University, 2012], 147)

In *Knowing by Heart*, Anthony Steinbock includes different forms of reflection and, while his analysis is (descriptive) phenomenology, there are implications for biblical counseling.<sup>18</sup> Reflection is conscious and intentional while reflexion is unintentional and unconscious; it is an in the moment reaction. Reflection is about pursuing one's motivations, desires, and drives in regard to the presenting problem and in light of biblical illumination.<sup>19</sup>

The hope of this project is that followers of Christ will respond to their counseling issues in a manner that is Christ honoring and that unregenerate responses will change to saintly responses.<sup>20</sup> Sanctification requires reflection on God's Word and this requires reception (1 John 2:27; 3:22; 5:9), and in turn practice (1:6; 2:29; 3:4–10). Proper reception is to confess one's sins and seek personal insight from the Lord. A main emphasis in 1 John is that both Jesus's purpose for the incarnation and John's writing (2:1) is directed at overcoming sin (3:5–6, 8–9; 5:19). Reflection increases one's capacities for new reactions and responses (John 16:8).<sup>21</sup> The light of God's revelation of Jesus Christ

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<sup>18</sup> Anthony J. Steinbock, *Knowing by Heart: Loving as Participation and Critique*, Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, 2021), 169–73.

<sup>19</sup> Jeremy Pierre explains,

Jesus redeems people's thinking by granting them new core beliefs that lead to an entirely new interpretation of their situations. Rather than understanding the world from a limited set of beliefs formed from the opinions of family and culture, observations made over the years, testimonies accepted as trustworthy, or the priorities of the media, the Holy Spirit helps Christians perceive the world from a different center of beliefs. . . . They believe that a good God makes the gracious effort to explain how people best function sexually, vocationally, relationally, and ethically. Christians believe that people are not the center of the universe, and their concerns are not the highest purpose of life. Christ re-centers people's deepest structures of belief around what God reveals as most important and most true. (Jeremy Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life: Connecting Christ to Human Experience* [Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2016], 77–78)

<sup>20</sup> While all Christians are saints, John Cottingham suggests that the term applies to mature believers—those who have gone through trials and hardships and through obedience have a new and greater knowledge of the Lord. To Cottingham, saints have had experiences that have produced wisdom and they are examples to be emulated. John Cottingham, "Saints and Saintliness," in Abraham and Aquino, *Oxford Handbook of the Epistemology of Theology*, 79–96.

<sup>21</sup> See "Unknown Habits," in Greg E. Gifford, *Heart & Habits: How We Change for God* (The Woodlands, TX: Kress Biblical Resources, 2021), 14–15.

and the self-realization of abiding in this relationship creates new motivation and responsibility. This is not so much about being active or passive, but about being receptive to the Lord through His Word.<sup>22</sup>

Walking in the light is the first step in this 1 John framework. It is reorientating the counselee to Christ in regard to the presenting problem. There is often a deeper problem, a heart, core, or root issue that may be behind the presenting problem.

Since the first step often involves repentance, then special attention needs to occur in tracing resistance to obedience or repentance. Tracing the resistance to obedience and repentance will give insight to the heart issue which leads to the next step: practicing the truth. New action/reaction manifested is a work of Christ.<sup>23</sup> The expectation here is relational, and intentional. Consciously directing one's attention along with dependence upon the Word and Spirit, and focusing on Jesus should start to intuitively guide one in Christlikeness.<sup>24</sup> Before addressing the heart problem, the counselor will make sure the counselee has learned what is necessary in the Christian walk by demonstrating repentance and faith.<sup>25</sup> The counselee should understand that repentance and growing in

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<sup>22</sup> Christina M. Gschwandtner, *Marion and Theology*, Philosophy and Theology (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), 84.

<sup>23</sup> Michel Henry states,

It is the very moment by which what did not yet exist except in internal virtuality finds itself brought outside, and placed within sight, and henceforth perceived by that sight, become visible and thus objective and real. Action consists literally of this passage from interior to exterior, from what is not seen to what is seen, from what is still only a simple subjective intention, in itself deprived of reality, to what, from having emerged into exteriority and become visible as such, now finds itself real. . . . It appears that phenomenality consists precisely in this coming outside into the world's light: action is like making, it is a making-come-outside." (Michel Henry, *I Am the Truth: Toward a Philosophy of Christianity*, trans. Susan Emanuel [Stanford, CA: Stanford University, 2003], 172)

<sup>24</sup> Marion introduces the concept of interlocuter, which is reflective in the idea of listening to the interior *scheme* and developing a reflective prayer life: "Speaking to God (as in the case of confessing praise par excellence) demands that the word spoken be referred to what it intends, the eminence that does not speak, therefore referring the locutor this interlocuter, or more exactly passing from the rank of locutor (in relation to God) to the rank of interlocuter (he whom God approaches as *interlqué*)." Marion, *In the Self's Place*, 18.

<sup>25</sup> Kelly Kapic shows a pattern, for example, in the narratives of the Gospels as they start with John the Baptist's repentance and then God's revelation of Jesus Christ. Kapic uses the term "often" as there

faith are necessary for one to “walk in the light” (1 John 1:5–10). Tracing resistance is a diagnostic step that shows what is necessary for the next step, practicing truth.

### Practice Truth

The triune God is not only the source of truth, but God the Father (John 17:3), the Son (John 14:6; 1 John 5:20), and Holy Spirit are truth (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 1 John 3:24; 4:2, 6; 4:13; 5:6, 8). Disciples are in a personal relationship with the Truth. Christians historically have believed that knowing truth comes through knowing God, as God alone can accurately and factually define reality.<sup>26</sup>

Unfortunately, humanity’s self-deception is complicit in perpetuating more sin (1 John 1:8). When one lies, they lie to themselves first. Even secular psychologies assert man’s thoughts are at best, opinions.<sup>27</sup> As previously noted, *aletheia* has an alpha privative which negates the meaning and is combined with *lēthia* (the *hidden* mythical river).<sup>28</sup> It means to un-conceal, or to reveal; its antonyms are to be forgotten, to be unaware, and to

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is no guarantee that God will reveal one’s motivation or cause behind the sin. Kelly M. Kapic, *A Little Book for New Theologians: Why and How to Study Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2012), 75.

<sup>26</sup> Origen on 1 John 1:1, 5, introduced *De Principiis* by acknowledging truth comes to man from God, who has revealed Himself through Jesus Christ. Origen, *De Principiis* 1.1, trans. Frederick Combie in *The Anti-Nicaean Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 242. John Calvin explains, “Again, it is certain that man never achieves a clear knowledge of himself unless he has first looked upon God’s face, and then descends from contemplating him to scrutinize himself.” John Calvin, *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion 1*, ed. John McNeil, trans. Ford Lewis Battle (Louisville: John Knox, 1960), 37. Gschwandtner summarizes Marion’s understanding of truth,

Truth is not about “clear and distinct” evidence as Descartes and most of modernity claimed, but instead about the unfolding of what has been covered over (*lethe* means to cover up or hide, hence *aletheia*, truth, etymologically speaking can be interpreted as an uncovering of a kind of revealing). Instead of subjecting it to the principle of contradiction and the principle of sufficient reason, truth must be based on conditions of possibility. (Gschwandtner, *Marion and Theology*, 125)

<sup>27</sup> Daniel Gilbert, *Stumbling on Happiness* (New York: Vintage, 2006), 176.

<sup>28</sup> Hüber, “ἀληθῶς,” 1:58.

be oblivious.<sup>29</sup> In 1 John self-deception is intentional ignorance regarding sin (1:6, 8).<sup>30</sup> The opposite of truth “is not found simply in error or falsehood but in lying: wanting to keep, in addition to the true, the false, because one loves it as much as, indeed more than, the true” (cf. John 3:19–21).<sup>31</sup> Since, the presenting problem is addressed in reorientating the counselee to Christ, the underlying root issue may be identified through un-concealing the resistance to the lordship of Jesus. The thesis of this section is to “practice truth,” is to align one’s behavior, practices, and responses with one’s beliefs and biblical convictions.<sup>32</sup>

An example, a dad sought counsel regarding his young adult son struggling with depression, suicidal ideation, and wanting to pursue gender transition. The dad was consistently and even egregiously disrespected and somewhat estranged from both young adult sons. It appeared that the dad was struggling with “people pleasing” and both sons verbalized this. He had a disconnect in his thinking as he did not agree with the people pleasing diagnosis, but at the same time, could not explain his people pleasing behavior. The people pleasing was a blind spot to the dad; it was self-deceptive. The dad intentionally denied what was so obvious to myself and one of our deacons who was discipling the dad.

Tracing the resistance requires a reality check, identifying the separation between what one believes and how one behaves (1 John 3:18). Other terms may also work well with uncovering resistance, such as “blind spots,” a lack of self-awareness, idolatry, or “hypocrisy gap” (a gap between one’s behavior and one’s beliefs). First John places an

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<sup>29</sup> Lee McIntyre’s *Post-Truth* is helpful as it identifies the subversion of truth (from falsehoods to willful ignorance to lying), much like a slippery slope from ignorance to intentional deception. Lee McIntyre, *Post-Truth*, MIT Press Essential Knowledge (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2018), 7–15.

<sup>30</sup> Linda Zagzebski in seeking out motivation behind desire for autonomy and authority: “The ultimate authority over the self is the self.” Linda T. Zagzebski, “Authority in Religious Communities,” in Abraham and Aquino, *Oxford Handbook of The Epistemology of Theology*, 97.

<sup>31</sup> Marion, *In the Self’s Place*, 111–12.

<sup>32</sup> Practicing amounts to doing or acting upon, as Adams states, “To know truth is not a neutral, ‘intellectual’ matter (as many assume) but a moral fact demanding decisions and commitments about life. John 8:32 follows John 8:31: Knowing the freedom that truth brings is the result of knowing and obeying the Word of the One Who, Himself, is the Truth.” Adams, *Theology of Christian Counseling*, 172.

emphasis on love so the counselor must not refer to the counselee as a hypocrite. It can be profitable to be self-referential in personal illustrations by showing one's own hypocrisy. The truth often is situated in this "hypocrisy gap" or to be more precise "practicing truth" should close the gap in reducing one's hypocrisy. Shepherding is an appropriate and loving term for drawing a counselee out of resistance to disclose the root issue. The counselor does not demand repentance, yet truth is necessary for repentance. David Powlison and Edward Welch are particularly helpful here in uncovering the cause, drive, or rationale by using "X-Ray Questions."<sup>33</sup> The dad in the above example was conflicted by being made aware of the people pleasing, yet denying this reality. Progressing out of this self-deception requires gentle shepherding as the counselee tends to avoid the resistance. The counselor must continually keep the counselee on a path forward practicing truth instead of self-deception, avoidance, detachment, etc.<sup>34</sup> This is about connecting the counselee to the Lord; God is truth, to resist truth is to resist God (John 14:17).<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> David Powlison, "X-Ray Questions: Drawing Out the Whys and Wherefores of Human Behavior," *Journal of Biblical Counsel* 18, no. 1 (Fall 1999): 2–9. Edward Welch speaks of not simply diving into Powlison's "X-Ray Questions," "but instead create a dialogue in which motivations and desires can be traced through the emotions." Edward Welch, "Questions about Questions," *Journal of Biblical Counsel* 33, no. 3 (2019): 3.

<sup>34</sup> Marion notes, "In short, to not hate the light, it must be loved more than oneself, at least more than the self, whose traits it accuses. If in contrast, I love myself, however deformed, more than the light that accuses me, than I will have to hate it, since it will continue to accuse me, and I will also have to love myself as deformed. And in this way, I will end up hating myself as much as I hate the truth." Marion, *In the Self's Place*, 113.

<sup>35</sup> In his chapter on prayer ("Wounded Speech"), Jean-Louis Chrétien unpacks the truth about prayer: in praying the Christian is making truth statements about God. Praying shows a belief that God is omnipresent, omnipotence, immanent, and transcendent. Prayer makes a statement about one's dependence upon God and need for mercy:

To ask God, to accomplish in speech an act of a question and request, means that, as we speak to him, we at one and the same time say something about him and something about ourselves inseparably. We make ourselves manifest to ourselves; we are through speech made manifest to ourselves as we manifest ourselves to him. To ask is actively to acknowledge that we are not the origin of every good and every gift. . . . All prayer confesses God as giver, by dispossessing us of our self-centeredness, in a speech that at every instance the addressee alone, in our eyes, makes possible. By returning to me, prayer does not speak to me of myself alone. (Jean-Louis Chrétien, *The Ark of Speech*, trans. Andrew Brown [New York: Routledge, 2004], 21–22)

Reframing is about changing distortions, perceptions, and reversing negative thought patterns by realigning and reorientating the counselee to the God of truth (1 John 3:18–19).<sup>36</sup> God defines reality, but with finite man, truth is to be agreed-upon (i.e., two witnesses, cf. Deut 19:15; John 8:17; Rev 11:1–14), and confessed (1 John 1:9; 2:3; 4:2, 3, 15).<sup>37</sup> A faithful subordination of one’s perceptions to truth defined by the Lord (2:4) through His Word is needed. God is right and one must align one’s perceptions to the truth (John 8:43–47).<sup>38</sup> Jean-Luc Marion states that truth can incite different reactions (i.e., love, indifference, hatred, etc.); the responses are based on self-interest.<sup>39</sup> My experience in pastoral counselling is that followers of Christ typically detach, a cognitive processing that emerges by weighing, examining, and evaluating truth’s implications, and then move towards self-awareness and a Christ honoring path forward.<sup>40</sup>

Discernment and correction are necessary to practice truth, along with the humility and acceptance of not perceiving oneself as the source of truth. In the above example, this “uncovering” identified a gospel issue: the dad believed he deserved to be punished, even by his sons as the dad blamed himself for the divorce that occurred years

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<sup>36</sup> The American Psychiatry Association writes,

Reframing: A process of reconceptualizing a problem by seeing it from a different perspective. Altering the conceptual or emotional context of a problem often serves to alter perceptions of the problem’s difficulty and to open up possibilities for solving it. In psychotherapy, for example, the manner in which a client initially frames a problem may be self-defeating. Part of the therapist’s response might be to reframe the problem and the thoughts or feelings that the client associates with it, so as to provide alternative ways to evaluate it. (American Psychiatry Association, “Reframing,” April 19, 2018, <https://dictionary.apa.org/reframing>)

<sup>37</sup> Pierre, *Dynamic Heart*, 35–37.

<sup>38</sup> Pierre explains, “But if people have an accurate self-conception, it must include this uncomfortable fact: they are fallen into sin, which means their motive was and action are bent toward self-worship at the expense of others.” Pierre, *Dynamic Heart*, 134.

<sup>39</sup> Marion, *In the Self’s Place*, 113.

<sup>40</sup> Marion states, “Bearing it does not mean making it mine, however, nor letting myself be reducible to it; rather, it means not denying my deformity and, by admitting it, finding myself at once free from it. In recognizing it, I am detached from it, and in seeing myself in its light, I appear to myself illuminated by it.” Marion, *In the Self’s Place*, 113.



prior due to his own sinful behavior. He believed his son's gender dysphoria was a punishment from God (Exod 34:7).

Dispossession is a common term used in phenomenology that has different meanings for different authors.<sup>41</sup> Marion's thesis in *In the Self's Place* is that Augustine's goal was to replace one's self with the Holy Spirit.<sup>42</sup> Jesus speaks of dying to oneself, and to be more precise, the part of the self that one is dying to is the ego.<sup>43</sup> Dispossession is a letting go of a false belief, past memory, irrational impulse or fear, self-defense mechanism, etc. Truth must be practiced; to know truth requires doing or acting upon the truth. There is an identifying of oneself with the Truth, that is, He who is true.<sup>44</sup> John uses two terms that are particularly helpful: "to purify" oneself is to purge oneself of impurities (1 John 3:3) and "to practice" (to do and/or act upon) which is used regarding righteousness (2:29; 3:7) and truth (1:6).<sup>45</sup> The dad in the previous illustration, was attempting to control and manipulate the situation through people pleasing. Change occurred rapidly, almost instantly, in regard to self-realization although the change in behavior took time and accountability. In this example, progress occurred as the focus changed from overcoming people pleasing to overcoming guilt as overcoming guilt

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<sup>41</sup> On dispossession, Paul Ricoeur implies that self-understanding is necessary, for it implies "dispossession of the egoistic and narcissistic ego." Steven McGuire, "Interpretive Sociology and Paul Ricoeur," *Human Studies* 4, no. 2 (April–June 1981): 189.

<sup>42</sup> Marion and others see the soul as given—a gift from God while the ego is self-created. The ego is often associated with the development of language (I, me, and mine). This is movement from being controlled by one's ego to the Holy Spirit. Marion, *In the Self's Place*, 282–88.

<sup>43</sup> Marion, Henry, and other Christian phenomenologists perceive the development of the ego with language (this is a post-structuralist approach: that the ego is developed through the acquisition of language). That is, the "I" in the nominative, "me" as the accusative and "mine" in the genitive shows a development of the ego (cf. Henry on the "self" being given and the "ego" being a self-creation. Michel Henry, "The Phenomenology of Birth," trans. Michael Tweed, in *A Michel Henry Reader*, ed. Scott Davidson and Frédéric Seyler, Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, 2019), 29–45.

<sup>44</sup> Marion, *In the Self's Place*, 112–13.

<sup>45</sup> Purifying and practicing are very much the same, as Heath Lambert states, "Adams grounded his teaching on dehabitation and rehabilitation in biblical instruction of 'putting off' and 'putting on.'" Heath Lambert, *The Biblical Counseling Movement After Adams* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 68.

diminished the people pleasing. The people pleasing was the presenting problem disclosing a deeper issue of guilt and shame. This dad's relationship with God in properly relating to God's forgiveness, allowed the dad's relationship with his son to change. In other words, as the dad is properly relating to God, this dad is now appropriately relating to his children.

Truth necessitates responsibility and Jerry Bridges is helpful here as he has put forth the concept of dependent responsibility.<sup>46</sup> It is clarifying to list and distinguish between one's duties and one's dependency upon the Lord. This is particularly helpful both for those who attempt to control situations and for those who tend towards passivity. Dependent responsibility amounts to self-control; instead of attempting to control others it exercises faith as a trust and dependence upon the Lord.

The dad's goal for counsel was to change his child and this has not happened. The dad came to the realization that God has forgiven his past, and if God is not punishing him, then he should not punish himself. But in "practicing the truth" the dad is responding responsibly and in dependence upon the Lord, and has restored his relationship with one of his sons and is navigating through the difficulties of loving his younger son while not attempting to manipulate him.

Practicing the truth involves matching one's beliefs with one's actions. Due to the lawlessness and self-deception of sin, this lack of self-awareness will often require counsel. Often there is a heart issue behind the presenting problem, when this is occurring, a counselor can assist the counselee through lovingly and gently tracing the resistance behind disobedience or unrepentance. A key to understanding one's actions is

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<sup>46</sup> Jerry Bridges taught at The Orchard-Barrington, and explained that the motto "let go and let God" is flawed and put forth the concept of dependent responsibility. In several of Bridges's books he used a term dependent responsibility. Jerry Bridges, *The Discipline of Grace: God's Role and Our Role in the Pursuit of Holiness* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2006), 129–46. Paul David Tripp has this concept under the heading "Clarifying Responsibility," and has a drawing which is simply a circle within a circle: "This inner circle represents the things that God has called me to do that I cannot pass on to anyone else. The only proper response is to seek to understand and to faithfully obey." Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2002), 250.

understanding one’s motivations behind those actions. As we shall see in the next step of Keeping the Word, the counselor needs to know doctrine; a biblical counselor needs to know their theology.

### **Keeping the Word**

The previous section spoke of dispossession; this section is on “keeping,” a term nuanced with possessing.<sup>47</sup> This is internalizing the Word which implies acting on and applying the Word to daily life as well as both the presenting and heart issues. The counselor will use the Word in each counseling session and the counselee will increase in biblical literacy, which will aid in studying, applying, and obeying Scripture. The thesis of this section is that “keeping the Word” implies an integrative hermeneutic that requires a receptive heart and constancy in the Word. Testimonies will be discussed in the concluding section; but the anticipation in this section is that the counselee will confidently prove the Word true by applying it to their struggles.

Keeping the Word requires constancy.<sup>48</sup> In 1 John, abiding in the Word (2:14) means Christians have the Word “in us” (1:10), and “keeping the Word” is acting upon it. Abiding in the Word is equivalent to abiding in the triune God, that is, on knowing,

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<sup>47</sup> The Orchard is EFCA committed to the denomination’s statement of faith. See Evangelical Free Church of America, “EFCA Statement of Faith,” accessed December 1, 2024, <https://www.efca.org/sof>. A resource to supplement this training is from our senior pastor hosting The Gospel Coalition’s Midwest Chapter on the Word, which unpacks the three “I” s (inerrancy, inspiration, and infallibility) as well as the acronym SCAN (Sufficiency, Clarity, Authority, and Necessity). This teaching is modified from Kevin DeYoung, *Taking God at His Word: Why the Bible Is Knowable, Necessary, and Enough, and What That Means for You and Me* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014).

<sup>48</sup> For Ricoeur, constancy, as in “keeping one’s word” is necessary for personal identity, so too, keeping God’s Word is required for Christian identity:

Self-constancy is for each person that manner of conducting himself or herself so that others can count on that person. Because someone is counting on me, I am accountable for my actions before another. The term “responsible” unites both meanings: “counting on” and “being accountable for.” It unites them adding to them the idea of a response to the question “Where are you?” asked by another who needs me. This response is the following: “Here I am!” a response that is a statement of self-constancy. (Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another* [Chicago: University of Chicago, 1992], 165)

This logic applies to keeping God’s Word, as keeping God’s Word is ethical—it entails responsibility in the way one reacts toward others. It develops identity through obedience to the Word, internalizing God’s Word into one’s thoughts, and therefore a constancy that is sanctifying.

growing, and maturing in the Lord (2:14), which occurs through obedience to the Word and by the indwelling Spirit (3:24).<sup>49</sup> Regarding allegiances (John 17:14–16), one is “from God” (1 John 2:27; 4:6), not from the world (2:14, 16; 4:5) when one “listens” to and acts upon the apostolic message (4:6). Sin is disobedience. John’s adversaries, those denying their sinfulness and who left the congregation (2:19), do not have the Word or truth (1:8, 10). This obedience is related to “keeping” Jesus’s “commandments” (2:7, 8; 3:23; 4:21) and “abiding” in the Father and the Son (3:24).

This constancy in keeping the Word (internalizing, acting upon, and being responsible to it) should grow the counselee in Christlikeness. The *teteleiōtai* (perfecting, completing, fulfilling) occurs in obedience to His commandments (the Word) (3:11, 22) and through abiding in God by the Holy Spirit (3:24; 4:16). The result of this *teteleiōtai* is love (2:5; 4:18) which is discussed in the next section. In other words, obedience in doing the will of God, keeping the Word, and abiding in the Lord results in a dynamic love (2:3–4).

In Michel Henry’s *The Words of Christ*, his existential hermeneutic started with (1) Christ’s words about humanity (the human condition). Then (2) Christ’s words about Himself, that is, on Jesus’s claims of who He is, that is, His divinity, which has implications on His love, ability, Word, promises, etc. And then (3) Christ’s words to justify or legitimize these words in regard to Himself and us.<sup>50</sup> In training counselors, I

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<sup>49</sup> On immanence in the New Testament, Brown states,

In the prophetic reflections on the New Covenant, this divine presence was to be interiorized in individual Israelites. The passages cited above promising an intimate knowledge of God as part of the New Covenant (Jer 24; 31; Ezek 36) connect such knowledge with an immanence of the divine spirit and the Law in those who accept the covenant. . . . This immanence goes beyond the OT expectations of the New Covenant, for it has a mutuality; not only God in His children, but His children in God. The reason for this development is that the model for the immanence is the intimate relationship between Father and Son revealed by Jesus. The immanence of the Christian New Covenant is new because of Jesus’ ideal. “That they all may be one, *just as you Father in me and I in you*, that they may also be in us” (John 17:21). This is not a mysticism for the few but a new spiritual status for all who truly believe in Jesus. (Brown, *Epistles of John*, 284)

<sup>50</sup> This is summarized well in the “Introduction to the English Edition” by Karl Hefty in Henry, *The Words of Christ*, xi–xxix.

will be advocating a modified version of *The Words of Christ* hermeneutic and alliterate, with the letter “r” with the terms: reality, remedy, and redemption. The counselor tends to be short on time (I will be advocating 50-minute sessions) and in this short period of time he or she will be able to use Scripture to (1) explain the human condition (reality), (2) how a relationship with Christ addresses the particular issue (remedy), and then (3) how to apply this to one’s life (redemption). The counselor should be able to explain the issue in a universal sense (using doctrine) and then, in dialoguing with the counselee, relate those doctrines to the specifics of the counselee’s personal experiences. The hope here is as the counselor will select appropriate texts in which they can identify doctrine and then dialogue with the specifics of the counselee’s issues, and this process will, in turn, create a skill and habit within the counselee to rely on Scripture.<sup>51</sup>

For example, a group of moms approached an elder and me about an older man and long-time member of our church who was injecting himself into high school ministry on Sundays and then would stare at their daughters in an inappropriate manner. When confronted, Allen was humble, apologetic, and compliant as I asked to meet weekly. I anticipated sexual sin such as pornography, promiscuity, or prostitution. As we progressed from “walking in the light” to “practicing the truth” Allen revealed his secret, that outside of church he was “Ali” (a man pretending to be a woman). He said he was not a homosexual, nor acting-out in masturbation or promiscuous behavior. He said crossdressing made him feel better about himself, though it caused his divorce over forty years ago, he believed his desire was related to being molested as a child. He knew

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<sup>51</sup> Grant Osborne writes,

The “illumination” of the interpreter is one aspect of the larger ministry of the Holy Spirit in bringing people to regeneration and daily growth in their Christian life. It is that portion of the “internal testimony” which relates to understanding and applying God’s revealed Word. Technically, the *testimonium spiritus sancti internum* relates to our conviction regarding Scripture’s authority, and illumination refers to understanding that Word. . . . This means that the Spirit works through the mind and study of the interpreter. However, there is no guarantee that the person will “automatically” comprehend the intended meaning of the passage. The hermeneutical tools all provide grist for the Spirit’s will in the act of interpretation. (Grant R. Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction Biblical Interpretation* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991], 340)

crossdressing was wrong at some level, but Allen thought that his sin was not serious because he was not sexually acting out and he justified his behavior as he was a child victim.

Allen became convicted as we delved into “the lawlessness” (the reality) of the human condition (1 John 3:4). He got specific as we discussed different topics from self-idolatry, perverse thought life, and sin’s effects on others (i.e., staring at high school girls).<sup>52</sup> Allen became convicted of his sinfulness as he realized that this separated him from Jesus and others and saw the “remedy” in 1 John 1:9 through confession and repentance. Allen went “public” in his repentance in a manner that was beyond my expectation and without my prompting. He purged his house of woman’s clothing, deleted “Ali’s” social media, and joined a corrective small group which included an accountability partner. We spent much time working redemptively through 1 John in which we focused on the contrasts (i.e., light/darkness, love/hate, life/death, truth/lie, etc.) in daily thoughts and seeing these contrasts as decisions and choices, and personally fleshing out the implications of these options.<sup>53</sup>

Immanence is prior to identity. In discussing this with colleagues they tend to prioritize identity. Our focus was on 1 John’s contrasts and that this redemptively equates

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<sup>52</sup> Jay Adams notes,

It is the Holy Spirit who accomplishes each of these things for both the counselor and the counselee: (1) He illuminates the believer’s mind so that he can interpret the Scriptures, giving ability to understand and wisdom to know how to live according to the will of God. This He does as *the Spirit of Truth* (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13) and *of wisdom* (Isa 11:2; 1 Cor 2:13). (2) He gives power both to will and to do that will of God whenever believers step out by faith in obedience to scriptural injunctions (Ezek 26:27). This He does as *the Spirit of holiness* (Rom 1:4). The Spirit, then gives power to know and power to do. (Jay Adams, *Use of Scriptures in Counseling* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984], 59)

<sup>53</sup> The Holy Spirit works with the Word to sanctify the follower of Christ. Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, convicts (John 16:8), corrects (14:15), reveals motivations (3:19–21), dethrones oneself (12:24–25), recognizes self-deceit (1 John 1:6, 8; 4:6) and the wreckage that it creates (1 John 1:10, 3:12–15). Scripture not only shows one’s bondage, but the way to freedom (John 8:31–38). The Spirit reminds (John 14:26); teaches (John 14:26; 1 John 2:22); guides (John 16:13). He gives knowledge, understanding (1 John 5:20), and discernment (4:6). God promises His very presence within the believer (John 14:23, 24). Followers participate in Jesus’s ministry through speaking the Word to one another (17:20).

to choices (i.e., practicing the truth) which involves immanence.<sup>54</sup> It was a focus on the presence of Christ and keeping/guarding His Word in his decision-making process that led to Allen’s identity in Christ being worked out in practice.

There is a redemptive aspect in addressing one’s counselee as these struggles will bring about a greater knowledge, obedience, and faith in the Lord. The foremost way this occurs is through His Word. Christians primarily speak to God through prayer and worship, and the Lord speaks to us through His Word. Every counseling session must include prayer and the Word. These are spiritual disciplines to be modeled by the counselor and incorporated into the counselee’s life. It is this constancy in the Word that defines a follower of Jesus Christ. This then leads us to the next step, that is, God’s Word and the Holy Spirit should manifest in love. Obedience to the Lord results in love, even when so called “tough love” is required in a difficult response. This tough love needs to occur in the fruit of the Spirit. An import note here is that the hope is long after the counsel has concluded, the counselee will still be committed to constancy in the Word. The counseling relationship will end, but a relationship with Jesus Christ through His Word is a lifelong commitment.

### **Love First**

“Love first” is like the other four maxims in this project as Christians are called to “abide” in God’s love, just as one is to “abide” in the light, truth, Word, and His life. This abiding is to be an extension of God’s love, to love others through being an extension of God’s love. Love, like the other attributes light, truth, Word, and life, is an attribute of the triune God (4:8, 16). “Love first” may seem counterintuitive in a variety of situations and yet this imperative requires one to trust the Lord in imitating Him (1

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<sup>54</sup> On immanence being prior to identity, see Michel Henry, “Those within Me: A Phenomenology,” trans. Scott Davidson, in Davidson and Seyler, *A Michel Henry Reader*, 63–64.

John 4:19; cf. Rom 5:8).<sup>55</sup> “Love first” is different from the other maxims as they are direct quotes while love first is a motto derived from 1 John 4:19.

*Agapē* is the most used term for love in 1 John as an “affection” (BAGD) and “indicating a general attraction.”<sup>56</sup> *Agapē* is not dependent upon the object of that love (the beloved), rather it is established by the person manifesting that love (the lover). Millard Erickson states, “In general, God’s love may be thought of as his eternal giving or sharing of himself,” Erickson defines love in four dimensions of God’s love: (1) benevolence, (2) grace, (3) mercy, and (4) persistence.<sup>57</sup> The thesis of this love first section is that obedience to the Word engenders and increases one’s capacity to love which creates new responses motivated by the love of God and imitation of Jesus Christ (1 John 2:5; 4:12, 17–18).<sup>58</sup>

Scripture is clear that one can increase one’s capacity to love (1 Thess 3:12–13; Eph 4:13–16; Phil 1:8–9).<sup>59</sup> These eight theses from 1 John and loving first are not

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<sup>55</sup> Pierre writes, “Though faith is a gift of God, it is also an active human response of trust in what God has revealed about himself. Thus, the aim of ministry is faith in Christ granted by the Spirit through the Word.” Pierre, *Dynamic Heart*, 3.

<sup>56</sup> BAGD, 4. Walther Günther and H. G. Link, “ἀγαπάω,” in *NIDNTT*, 2:538. Ingo Broer writes,

The discussions of the divine love reach their high point in the sentence “God is love” (4:8, 16). This is recognized on the basis of God’s action. God sent his Son into the world of death in order to bestow on humankind the gift of life (v. 9) God’s love is directed first at the cosmos, the world of humankind which requires salvation (vv. 9f.; cf. John 3:16). Brotherly love (ἀδελφός 5) is not confined to Church members, as 1 John 3:16f. and 3 John 5 indicate. The stress on brotherly love apparently pursues a double aim: the repulsion of false teachers by means of dependable criterion (1 John 2:9–11; 4:20) and the strengthening of brotherly fellowship among Christians. (Ingo Broer, “ἀγαπάω,” in *EDNT*, 1:12)

<sup>57</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 262.

<sup>58</sup> Marion sees a clear relationship to growing in sanctification and increasing in one’s capacity to love, “For, failing to love more, one ceases to love.” Marion, *In the Self’s Place*, 142.

<sup>59</sup> John Broger has a love test that requires participants to rate themselves considering scriptural truths on being loving (he also suggests assessing oneself by writing out the love section of 1 Cor 13:1–13 and replacing one’s name for the word love (W8). John C. Broger, *Self-Confrontation: A Manual for In-Depth Biblical Discipleship* (Indio, CA: Biblical Counseling Foundation, 1991), W7–9.



exhaustive, but they are a good start in training counselors on how to encourage counselees to new and loving responses.

First, Christians love first because “God is love” and humanity is in “the image and likeness” of God—humanity is designed to love.<sup>60</sup> Marion, in *The Prolegomena to Charity*, reminds his readers of Blaise Pascal’s analysis of love, that knowing comes from loving. To know someone is to love that person. Sin’s lawlessness thwarts God’s design. We are created in the image and likeness of God; a key here is to align one’s heart with the Creator’s heart (i.e., to love what God loves and love how God loves).

Second, Christians love first because God takes the initiative; *agapē* is based on who God is (1 John 4:8, 16), since God is the origin of love: Powlison states, “He [God] insists that we learn love by being loved.”<sup>61</sup> According to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, God is even the source of my love towards Him.

This means that our love for God rests solely upon our being loved by God, in other words that our love can be nothing other than the willing acceptance of the love of God in Jesus Christ. . . . The relationship between the divine love and human love is wrongly understood if we say that the divine love precedes the human love, but solely for the purpose of setting human love in motion as a love which, in relation to the divine love is an independent, free and autonomous activity of man. On the contrary . . . the love with which man moves God and his neighbor is the love of God and no other; for there is no other love; there is no love which is free or independent from the love of God.<sup>62</sup>

Christians love God and are called to love one other (1:7; 2:23; 4:7, 11, 12), in John’s short letter, his emphasis on loving other Christians is massive (2:9, 10, 11; 3:10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17; 5:16).

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<sup>60</sup> On Pascal epistemology of the “third order” (that knowledge comes, not just through senses or logic, but knowing through loving), see Marion, *Prolegomena to Charity*, 153–70.

<sup>61</sup> David Powlison writes,

God insists on the supreme worth and glory of who he is and what he has done. God insists that self-centered people learn love—not coping skills, not self-actualization, not meeting felt needs, not techniques of managing emotions or thought life, not fulfilling personal goals. God’s morally charged categories heighten human responsibility. His willing mercy and sheer grace give the only real basis for true compassion and patience. (David Powlison, *Pastor as Counselor: The Call for Soul Care* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021], 2)

<sup>62</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1955), 56.

Third, Christians love first because God's love is the source of their salvation and sanctification. In Johannine literature, to experience God's love is to experience salvation.<sup>63</sup> Two concrete examples of love being sanctifying in 1 John are fear and shame. Fear and shame are ultimately a result of the Fall. In 1 John it is God's love that overcomes these afflictions. In 1 John, shame is overcome in identity, and this identity of being a child of God is related to God's love (3:1). Likewise with fear, it is God's perfect love that removes the fear of judgment. This is being perfected "that the Spirit motivates love for fellow believers and the objective practice of love is the basis of their assurance. Sin leads to fear, but love to confidence."<sup>64</sup>

Fourth, loving first is an act of obedience: sin is disobedience and it is unloving. Love is an imperative and our response is a choice.<sup>65</sup> First John does not promote impeccability (sinlessness is not possible, although one can sin less). And the *telos* (perfection, completeness, fulfillment) comes through obedience to the Word which is not burdensome (5:3). Obedience is part of sanctification and loving first is part of one's spiritual growth.

Fifth, loving first is calling Christians to be an extension of God's love. Christians participate in God's love, in Christ and through the Holy Spirit (2:8; 4:10, 11). In a CCEF lecture, Ed Welch used the metaphor of a "conduit" (i.e., the soul as a pliable channel for God's love), that is, Christ's love to His disciples in turn targets others with

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<sup>63</sup> In Johannine literature, salvation and love as synonymous See W. Günther, and H. G. Link, "Love," in *NIDNTT*, 2:546–47.

<sup>64</sup> Smalley, *1, 2, 3, John*, 260.

<sup>65</sup> Pierre explains, "Helping people seek God, therefore, means helping them cultivate greater self-understanding. Biblical self-reflection does not result in self-indulgence, but in self-discernment. When people learn more about themselves, they can then weigh their responses before the Word of God. The Word of God helps us discern between healthy, God-honoring responses and harmful, God-denying responses." Pierre, *Dynamic Heart*, 32.

the love that they have received.<sup>66</sup> This is a concrete reality of immanence and transcendence (4:10–12), in that the Christian experiences God’s love and then loves others. God gives of Himself to make His people like Him; it is axiomatic, to love others is a response to God’s love.

Sixth, loving first requires wisdom and discernment as love is not optional. How to love can be manifested differently dependent upon the situation. Paul David Tripp gives insight as to when loving may seem counterintuitive; occasionally the most loving thing to do is confrontation.<sup>67</sup> Powlison uses the term love “wisely,” that is, wisdom is needed in how to love others as sin is internalized in both the lover and the beloved.

Seventh, Augustine, commenting on Gen 2:18, called the internalizing of love a perversion. There is an exteriority to love that requires a dying to self.<sup>68</sup> Marion identifies self-love being connected to self-interest.<sup>69</sup>

Eighth, Christ indwells His followers through the Holy Spirit. When Christians are loving other Christians as they are loving Jesus (i.e., Matt 25:35–37; cf., Acts 9:4–8).

The goal of loving first is moving from a negative reaction to a loving one and this is dynamic. In participating in God’s love, one can produce concrete examples of growth which, in turn, is encouraging and produces a testimony. New reactions can occur and build momentum; that is counseling is about resolving an issue and loving first can produce a swift change with concrete results. This new response injects “hope,” that in

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<sup>66</sup> Edward Welch, “Who Are We? Needs, Longings, and the Image of God in Man,” *JBC* 13, no. 1 (Fall 1994): 26–38. Also see David Powlison, “Love Speaks Many Languages Fluently,” *JBC* 21, no. 1 (Fall 2002): 2–11.

<sup>67</sup> In his discussion on comfort and confrontation, Tripp discusses that loving is not always intuitive. Tripp, *Instrument’s in the Redeemer’s Hands*, 221–37.

<sup>68</sup> David Vincent Meconi, *On Self-Harm, Narcissism, Atonement, and the Vulnerable Christ* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2020), 103–28.

<sup>69</sup> Marion writes, “My love always amounts to the love of myself. In other words, because in this love I love myself, I thus love concretely only love those who love me. Whence the judgment of Christ: ‘If you love those who love you, what reward do you deserve?’ Do you the tax-collectors do as much? And you hail only your brethren, what have you done that is so special. So not the gentiles do as much? (Matthew 5:46–47).” Marion, *Prolegomena to Charity*, 77.

turn adds momentum to the process. The counselee can return to the counseling sessions with concrete examples of situations in which he/she has *loved first*.

Loving first in the midst of conflict may seem counterintuitive, but it is an act of faith that can bring a redemptive result as it is renewing the image of Christ in the follower of Christ. Even when so-called “tough love” is required in a situation, this tough love response needs to occur in the fruit of the Spirit. God has chosen to love us, while we were sinners, in rebellion against Him.

An elder and his wife sought counsel. Their son was getting married to a woman who is an atheist and has relatives who have embraced same-sex marriage. They were struggling in whether or not they should go to their own son’s wedding. As I was developing this methodology, after going through these first steps fairly quickly we spent our time on loving first. Instead of boycotting their son’s wedding in which gay in-laws would be part of the ceremony, they went to the wedding with the anticipation of being an extension of Christ’s love.

This couple originally believed that they were honoring Christ by protesting the wedding. The in-laws and gay couple that they were going to avoid actually now do Zoom Bible studies together and they talk regularly on the phone. This elder enjoys updating me on the progress that he is making as he loves and witnesses to his gay in-laws. The gay couple has Jewish lineage and was surprised and delighted that this Christian elder knew and could explain the Hebrew Scriptures so well. The elder loves to show how the Hebrew Scriptures all point to Christ. Another benefit from loving first, is that the relationship between the elder and his son was already strained due to the son marrying an atheist. By initiating a loving response, rather than boycotting the wedding, their relationship with their son has been strengthened. The son’s new marriage is also a blended family and the parents now have a greater influence upon their grandchildren and new step-grandchildren. This testimony fits well with the 1 John methodology as the next step involves ministering to others.

Loving first is a response to the love that God has shown to His children. Loving first is a way in which God’s love shapes the love of His followers by increasing their capacity to love. By learning to love the way God loves, the follower of Christ grows to be an extension of the love of God. Through the Holy Spirit, God’s love is reforming the soul of His followers, and His people are in fact growing or increasing their capacity to love.

### **Living through Him**

The thesis of this section is that a life in Christ is a life of sanctification (1 John 4:9; 5:11, 20) and sanctification involves ministering to others (i.e., 1 John 3:14, 16–18).<sup>70</sup> In short, sanctification entails participation in ministry (5:16). By *living through Him*, through the Holy Spirit one becomes an extension of Jesus’s ministry using God’s Word (1:2), as well as growing in Christlikeness.<sup>71</sup> While not all Christians who receive counsel are competent to counsel, all are called to serve in mutual ministry. Some first steps are listed below as well as some of the needs that are relevant in developing lay ministry.<sup>72</sup> *Living through Him* requires a dying to the self (3:14–16) and a redemptive view of sanctification and a recognition that it is personally sanctifying to assist others in their sanctification.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Smalley states,

ἵνα ζήσωμεν δι’ αὐτοῦ, “so that through him we could live.” The conjunction ἵνα (that) may indicate either the *purpose* of God’s “sending” (“in order that we might live” through Jesus), or its anticipated *result* (“so that, in the end, we could live” through him). So Haas, *Handbook*, 108. However, both meanings are possible here, and in fact they complement one another; for the purpose and result of God’s saving mission are obviously related. Our translation (‘so that’) is intended to reflect both senses. (Smalley, 1, 2, 3, *John*, 242)

<sup>71</sup> Steve Viars and Rob Green, “The Sufficiency of Scripture,” in *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling: Changing Lives with God’s Changeless Truth*, ed. James MacDonald, Robert Kellemen, and Steve Viars (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2013), 89–106.

<sup>72</sup> Jay Adams, “Qualifications for Counseling,” in *Competent to Counsel*, 59–67. Robert W. Kellemen, “Appendix 2.1 Congregational S.W.O.R.D. Heart Exam,” in *Equipping Counselors for Your Church* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2011), 328–334. Jay Adams, “Test Yourself, Counselor,” in *Committed to Craftmanship in Biblical Counseling* (Woodruff, SC: Timeless Texts, 1994), 97–107. In preparation for counseling, see “Appendix 1: Opening Blind Eyes: Another Look at Data Gathering,” in Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands*, 277–87.

<sup>73</sup> See “Team Counseling,” in Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 204–8.

Serving “one another” is part of being the church as Christians are not only dependent upon God, but also upon one another.<sup>74</sup> There are imperatives, and actions that have an imperatival force in 1 John, in which the apostle is expecting members of the congregation to serve one another. This occurs through praying (3:22; 5:14), offering accountability (5:16), sharing testimony (5:9–11), and caring for individual physical needs to personal ministry (3:18).<sup>75</sup> This project is designed for the Orchard which presents unique opportunities such as within LIFE Groups, corrective / accountability groups, discipleship relationships, and advocates in counseling.<sup>76</sup> Particularly helpful are accountability partners which are incorporated and encouraged in LIFE Groups, in which there is a “mutual ministry” time built into the LIFE Group meeting time.<sup>77</sup> Harvest Bible Chapel (HBC) has had a great influence in the Western suburbs of Chicago. Harvest made Biblical Soul Care training mandatory for church leadership and small group leaders. Anyone seeking counsel at HBC had to always have an advocate who would assist the

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<sup>74</sup> Stuart S. Scott and Andrew Jin, *31 Ways to Be a One-Another Christian: Loving Others with the Love of Jesus* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd, 2019). Edward T. Welch, *Caring for One Another: 8 Ways to Cultivate Meaningful Relationships* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018).

<sup>75</sup> Smalley states,

ἔχει τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἐν αὐτῷ “has that witness within himself.” Believing in Jesus as the Son of God is synonymous with accepting God’s (superior) testimony to his Son (v. 9). The result is that the Christian disciple “has that witness within himself.” The phrase ἔχειν ἐν means “to have within oneself,” or “to have in one’s heart.” (*BAG*, 333). Such an expression immediately suggests that John is referring to the inner testimony of the Spirit (vv. 6, 8) in the heart of the believer. (So Law, *Tests*, 125; Brooke, 139; Stott, 182; Williams 57). The inward witness of God’s Spirit shows the Christian that he was right to believe in Jesus; and this “internal testimony” (of the Spirit) balances and complements the external and historical witness of the “water and blood” baptism and death of Jesus, which marks the limits of his earthly ministry (vv. 6, 8). Christian believing is subjective in character, but its origins are ultimately objective. (Smalley, *1, 2, 3, John*, 285–86)

<sup>76</sup> On the importance of biblical accountability, see Heath Lambert, *Finally Free: Fighting for Purity with the Power of Grace* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 45–57.

<sup>77</sup> John Street presents a complementarian theology of counseling, which requires counseling to be gender specific (men with men and women with women), but also emphasizes a complementarian view of marriage and the family. Therefore, the man is to account for and may be corrected regarding his loving leadership. John Street, *Men Counseling Men: A Biblical Guide to the Major Issues Men Face* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2013), 19.

counselee to apply what he was learning.<sup>78</sup> The Orchard occasionally uses advocates but it is not mandatory. This project will hopefully encourage recruiting and incorporating more such advocates.<sup>79</sup> The Orchard, through Celebrate Recovery ministry (CR) also encourages sponsors, and GriefShare discussion leaders are GriefShare graduates. The church also has correction groups which deal with specific issues such as men's purity, men's anger, and women's support from abuse.<sup>80</sup>

Life in Christ is a life of sanctification.<sup>81</sup> Two key commands are purifying oneself (3:3) and practicing righteousness (3:10).<sup>82</sup> Being reconciled to God involves not

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<sup>78</sup> Garrett Higbee, "Biblical Counseling and Uncommon Community," in *Biblical Counseling and the Church*, ed. Bob Kellemen and Kevin Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 130.

<sup>79</sup> See Edward Welch, *Crossroads: A Step by Step Guide Away from Addiction* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth), 37–46.

<sup>80</sup> Jerry Bridges, *True Community: The Biblical Practice of Koinonia* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2012).

<sup>81</sup> Heath Lambert writes,

The Doctrine of Sanctification. Sanctification is a joint work between God and man, where God supplies grace for Christians to grow in obedience to Christ. While Christians are made holy in a definitive sense at conversion, it still remains for them to grow in holiness. This work of grace requires believers to utilize, by faith, the normal means of grace such as Bible reading, prayer, thought renewal, and fellowship in the context of the local church. Christians will experience real progress in growing more like Christ, yet this work will be incomplete in this life. The work of counseling is fundamentally the work of helping Christians grow in this grace of sanctification. (Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016], 333–34)

<sup>82</sup> Kruse elaborates,

The verb "to purify" (*hagnizō*) is found only seven times in the NT. It can have either ceremonial or moral connotations. So, in John and Acts it is used consistently in relation to ceremonial purification (John 11:55; Acts 21:24, 26; 24:18). However, in James 4:8 ("purify your hearts, you who are double minded") and in 1 Peter 1:22 ("having purified yourselves by obeying the truth") *hagnizō* definitely denotes moral purification, and this is what it means in the present context where people purify themselves in order to be pure as Christ is pure. That it is the moral purity of Christ which the author has in mind is confirmed by what is said in 1 John 3:5: Christ has appeared to take away our sins, and in him there is no sin. (Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 116–17)

Carey C. Newman states,

1 John makes nearly the same point as James: Righteous deeds are evidence of salvation. (This lends credence to the theory that [Paul's] teaching on justification by faith alone had been greatly misunderstood; see 2 Pet 3:16.) The author explicitly ties the practice of righteousness with conversion (1 Jn 2:29; 3:7, 10). Good works become the mark of conversion. While not specifically connecting righteousness or justification with faith, 1 John does ground the practice of righteousness with Christology. "He who does right is righteous, as he [Jesus] is righteous." Laying claim to righteousness

only the forgiveness of sin, but also the ability to overcome it. There is a synergistic effort required in change: to purify oneself is to remove impurities (to purge) intentionally eliminating that which hinders one's pursuit of obedience and holiness and the growth toward Christlikeness. The Christian life is not impeccable, but intentional progress can be made by breaking reoccurring patterns of sins.<sup>83</sup>

On presence, Bonhoeffer believed that confession is to be before a fellow believer. In this case, "Our brother breaks the circle of self-deception. A man who confesses his sins in the presence of a brother knows that he is no longer alone with himself; he experiences the presence of God in the reality of the other person."<sup>84</sup> The Holy Spirit not only convicts the follower of Christ of sin (John 16:8), but also manifests Christ's presence in the hearer (John 14:17).<sup>85</sup>

Not only does one need to be born of God (1 John 4:7), but for God's love to be manifested (4:8), *to live through Him* (4:9) one needs to die to one's self. Jesus gives life by dying (John 12:26) and His servant keeps his life by losing it (John 12:24–25).<sup>86</sup>

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involves a christoformaic pattern of living. (Carey C. Newman, "Righteousness," in *The Dictionary of the Later New Testament & Its Developments*, ed. Ralph Martin and Peter Davids [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997], 1056–57)

<sup>83</sup> On developing a greater dependency on Jesus Christ, see Andrew Murray, "Ye Are The Branches: An Address to Christian Workers," in *Absolute Surrender* (Chicago: Moody, 1895), 111–27.

<sup>84</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (New York: Harper Collins, 1954), 34.

<sup>85</sup> Edward T. Welch, *Side by Side: Walking with Others in Wisdom and Love* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 67–71.

<sup>86</sup> D. A. Carson writes,

The person who loves his life will lose it: it could not be otherwise, for to love one's life is a fundamental denial of God's sovereignty, of God's rights, and a brazen elevation of self to the apogee of one's perception, and therefore an idolatrous focus on self, which is the heart of all sin. Such a person loses his life, i.e., causes his own perdition. By contrast, the one who hates his life will keep it for eternal life. This person denies himself, or, to use another of Jesus' metaphors, takes up his cross daily (cf. Mk. 8:35 par.), i.e., he chooses not to pander to self-interest but at the deepest level of his being declines to make himself the focus of his interest and perception, thereby dying. (D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 438–38.



This is an act of love.<sup>87</sup>

Because this *agapé* is inherently unselfish and servant-like, it is self-sacrificial and, in that regard, kenotic. 1 John 3:16 connects *agapé* with self-sacrifice directly: ‘We know love by this, that he [Jesus] laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another.’ The Spirit’s witness, then points to and manifests divine *agapé* and thereby involves the kind of agapeic self-sacrifice found in the cross of Christ. In doing so, the Spirit provides evidence of God’s reality and character.<sup>88</sup>

For Moser, the inner witness of the Spirit produces something concrete: a life that dies to self and lives for others, that is, a life of sacrificial love (3:14–16). This redemptive nuance gives the counselee an expectation that the Lord is good, loving, and present, despite the hardships that a counselee may face.<sup>89</sup>

To *live through Him* incorporates hope into the process as one sees one’s own struggles as redemptive. This redemptiveness should further motivate and strengthen the counselee to engage in the counseling process.<sup>90</sup> Being in Christ does not simply restore one to an original condition, but as Jay Adams states, “The stance of the Christian counselor is fundamentally asymmetrical; what he promises (and seeks to get the counselee to anticipate) is *always more than he ever had before—a better situation than ever existed in the past.*”<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Marion sees *kenosis* as an act of love: “Complete self-surrender on behalf of the other . . . love opens out, gives itself freely and abundantly, abandons itself to the other.” Gschwandtner, *Marion and Theology*, 94.

<sup>88</sup> Moser, “Inner Witness of the Spirit,” 119.

<sup>89</sup> Dan G. McCartney, *Why Does It Have to Hurt? The Meaning of Christian Suffering* (Philipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1998). Also see David Powlison, *God’s Grace in Your Suffering* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018).

<sup>90</sup> See Welch, “Telling Your Story,” in *Crossroads*, 25–36.

<sup>91</sup> Adams writes, “Grace (and its effects) is greater than sin and its effects. Therefore, what Jesus Christ obtained for His people in salvation is not merely what Satan took away from Adam. Through His death and resurrection, Christ bought that—and much more. Thus, to be true to the New Testament teaching, the counselor’s stance must be based on the great truth that Christ offers counselees more than they ever had before.” Adams, *Theology of Christian Counseling*, 180–81.

A redemptive perspective is the realization that God takes hardships and uses them for a greater purpose (1 John 3:16).<sup>92</sup> This is significant, as walking in the light comes through the propitiation of sin and God’s grace brings good out of evil.<sup>93</sup> Tripp defines redemption as: “God’s ultimate goal is his own glory, Christ came to restore people to the purpose they were made for: to live every aspect of their lives in worshipful, obedient submission to Him.”<sup>94</sup> Healthy fruit/results can come out of their trials, hardships, and sufferings.

A life in Christ is a life of sanctification. A commitment to Christ, self-awareness, biblical literacy, and loving responses are all biblical ways in which the counselor/counselee can, through the Lord, redeem one’s counseling issues. The final step in this process is serving others and dying to self. This certainly involves being a “one-another” Christian in serving, but also a humility—dying to self in being served by others. The counselee should be part of the life of the church, being disciplined and potentially discipling others or serving in a manner that supports, advocates, and encourages others.

Also, being reliant on others involves being reliant on Jesus Christ. What is being practiced in the counseling process (i.e., repentance, battling sin, and pursuing purity and practicing righteousness, etc.), should be able to put into practice on that person’s own. There is a certain weaning that should occur as the goal is not a dependency upon the counselor but a dependency upon Jesus Christ. A very helpful tool that was mentioned in this chapter was responsible dependency in which one evaluates and navigates through

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<sup>92</sup> Colin Brown explains,

Whenever men by their own fault or through some superior powers have come under the control of someone else and have lost their freedom to implement their will and decisions, and when their own resources are inadequate to deal with those other decisions, and when their own resources are inadequate to deal with that other power, they can regain their freedom only by the intervention of a third party. (Colin Brown, “Redemption,” in *NIDNTT*, 3:177)

<sup>93</sup> Mike Wilkerson, *Redemption: Freed by Jesus from the Idols We Worship and the Wounds We Carry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossroads, 2001), 36–37.

<sup>94</sup> Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands*, 6–7.

their needs and relationships through a biblical lens. Being responsible for one's self includes knowing one's weaknesses and being able to ask for help and appropriately depending on others, participating in Christ's ministry to others, as well as being dependent upon Jesus.

### **Conclusion**

This counseling process was developed out of a modified version of Schnakenberg's so-called formulas of immanence. I was drawn to Schnakenberg, as well as Malatesta and several different authors as their commentaries and monographs emphasized immanence, the indwelling and internal presence of Christ in His followers. As a pastor, as the illustrations in this chapter illustrate, this process has worked well for me doing counsel at the Orchard. The next question is now can this be replicated in lay ministry.

## CHAPTER 4

### DETAILS AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

On August 3, 2024, an intensive seminar on biblical counseling was offered to select lay leadership of the Orchard using the 1 John framework. The goals of this project were met as an expert panel evaluated the project prior to the seminar, pre/posttests to measure the growth of the participants were administered and analyzed, and follow-up interviews were successfully completed. The selection of participants from the Orchard is discussed below. In preparing for this intensive it became evident that the curriculum for teaching this methodology would need a manual; this will be referred to as the “Handbook.”<sup>1</sup> The structure of the seminar was six parts, which consisted of an introduction, that not only presented the 1 John framework, but also gave basic biblical counseling insight and material. The remaining five sections of the six-section intensive were based on the five steps found in the methodology. The intensive presentation had additional objectives that will be discussed in the appropriate six parts of the intensive sections as was presented.

#### **Participants**

This intensive training had fifteen participants selected, those chosen are lay leaders that have the potential to replicate the 1 John framework in their own ministries. The participants represented an eclectic sampling of lay leadership from the Orchard. There were deacons, LIFE Group coaches, LIFE Group leaders, a key teacher for adult ministries (who is a retired Bible college professor), Seniors Ministry leaders, and Care Team leaders. There were two retired vocational pastors, two retired vocational

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix 7.

missionaries, and two former elders. On a ministerial level there were two participants that I have personally counseled using the 1 John methodology, and have also personally counseled the adult children of two participants using other counseling approaches. I have overseen and advised all of these participants in their lay ministries. One of the evaluation tools is a follow-up interview with the participants. This interview is not only to glean information about evaluating and improving this project, but also to continue and enrich the personal relationships in such a way as to mentor and be a resource to these participants in their future biblical counseling ministry. Six of these participants had taken the Orchard's *How People Change* class and the two leaders from the Care Team had taken *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands* class.<sup>2</sup> While prior to the intensive I shared the methodology with various lay leaders and members of the pastoral staff, the participants of the intensive were receiving the information for the first time with one exception, a participant who has been proofreading this project.

### **Development of the Handbook**

It was evident that the information being presented would be overwhelming without a Handbook. The Handbook follows the six-part intensive with six sections. Its contents include: (1) introductory content which is shortened and simplified selections from the methodology chapter, (2) the text from 1 John, (3) various exercises, and (4) essays I had previously written for ACBC exams and similar compositions used in pastoral counsel. The intensive and the Handbook followed the outline listed in the Research Profile which is based on six sections/sessions. The Handbook was punched and bound in three ring binders. The left binder pocket contained the "low risk" consent signature page, the pre/posttests, and the questions for the follow-up interview.

The right pocket had "Recommended Resources" which were hole punched but intentionally not bound. The Recommended Resources was used in each of the six

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<sup>2</sup> Timothy Lane and Paul David Tripp, *How People Change* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2006); Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2002).

sessions.<sup>3</sup> The Recommended Resources had websites for biblical counseling, recommended authors' websites, recommended publishers showing the variety of different kinds of resources, and a bibliography. The handouts that accompanied the Recommended Resources were examples of suggested materials that were downloaded.<sup>4</sup> In retrospect, I wanted the participants to understand how easy it is to get this material so I randomly chose these handouts. I did not realize this till after the Intensive, but I should have chosen these handouts or incorporated them from or with the Recommended Resources. For example, Jerry Bridges has a short book on *My Identity in Christ* and I believe all these participants would have recognized and trusted this name.<sup>5</sup>

One more final component of the Handbook was the Intensive Outline with key concepts and summaries for each section along with fill-in blanks, places to write out definitions, and take notes.<sup>6</sup> This Intensive Outline was handed out to participants after they completed and turned-in the consent signature page with the pretest. The Intensive Outline was hole punched, but not bound in the Handbook, like the Recommended Resources handout, so that participants could quickly toggle back and forth between the Handbook, the Outline, and the Recommended Resources.

### **Intensive Schedule**

I printed the name *Light Conquering Darkness* (LCD) taken from 1 John 2:8 for the curriculum. This title, like the Handbook, is a work in progress. Certain values

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<sup>3</sup> See appendix 6.

<sup>4</sup> Two handouts were briefly discussed. The handouts were somewhat randomly chosen with the intention of encouraging participants to seek out resources on the internet. The first downloaded handout, "My Identity in Christ," needed to be slightly reformatted to fit one page. Trinity Community Church, "My Identity in Christ," accessed October 21, 2024, <https://trinitycc.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/My-Identity-in-Christ.pdf>. See also appendix 8. The second handout was "God's Promises." Garments of Splendor, "God's Promises," accessed October 21, 2024, <https://garmentsofsplendor.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/100-promises-printable.pdf>. See also appendix 8.

<sup>5</sup> Jerry Bridges, *Who Am I? Identity in Christ* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2012).

<sup>6</sup> See appendix 5.

from this project were emphasized in the presentation: that counseling is discipleship, the goal of a Christian is to become like Christ, the lawlessness of sin, etc. These were principles that came from the exegesis in chapter 2. This LCD Intensive involved reading through the entirety of 1 John, but due to being short on time I read the text out loud instead of assigning it to the participants. The philosophy of ministry is to apply this methodology to oneself and then others. Change occurs through the Holy Spirit, the Word, and God's people.

### **Introductory Session**

The LCD Intensive started on time, but the pretest took longer than anticipated. I emphasized the importance of feedback, and this may have slowed down the process as the participants took more time to give thoughtful responses. I anticipated the pretest taking less than 15 minutes, but it took at least 25 to 30 minutes. The session started with prayer. The introduction contained a brief vision statement, the project goals were stated, and then emphasis was placed on these objectives:

1. The Intensive is to be a resource for participants in overcoming their issues.
2. The Intensive is to be a resource for participants to use in lay counseling.
3. The Intensive is to be a connecting point with other lay leaders who are learning biblical counseling as well as a pastoral connection. I know the participants personally and I want to strengthen that relationship so that I am a resource/mentor for the participants (Eph 4:11–12).
4. The Intensive curriculum was evaluated by the expert panel prior to the intensive, and the pre/posttest with a follow-up interview are designed for participants to give insight into making this presentation and methodology better.

After these Intensive objectives were discussed, the next section was key terms (i.e., immanence, redemption, and amplification). The discussion on amplification, that is, how the Apostle John's writing style, how he revisits topics was particularly helpful as I introduced the methodology in which the five key themes will also be revisited and amplified throughout 1 John.

The Handbook has two segments that were briefly discussed in the introduction session: “Introductory Matters,” these are issues to cover when first meeting with a counselee and “Biblical Strategies to Develop Caring Relationships.” The participants were encouraged to read and review these on their own. The priority of my teaching on this last part of the introduction was influenced by Chrétien’s “The Hospitality of Silence” that corresponds well with data gathering and empathetic listening.<sup>7</sup>

### **Section 1: Walk in the Light**

The second section is the first step. The main take away is that, *walking in the light* is reorientating oneself and the disciple to Jesus. The second part of this section was on how to address the presenting problem. The counselor will be calling the counselee to obedience, so from the outset it is important to realize there is potentially a presenting problem and also a deeper heart issue. It is important to pay extra attention to the resistance to obedience (resistance to *walking in the light*). This deeper heart issue will be addressed in the next section. But this initial struggle with the presenting problem may give insight into the deeper heart issue.

I realized as I was preparing for the Intensive that most of the pastoral issues that I typically deal with require repentance. The text of 1 John fits well in these situations as the flow of 1 John: *walking in the light* is reorientating one to Jesus (1 John 1:5–7) and is tied to repentance (1:8–2:2). What I realized was that I could potentially give participants the impression that all lay counseling involves repentance. I believe that the participants involved in the Intensive are mature enough to discern a situation well enough to know that not every issue involves repentance. But it occurred to me all future participants might not have this insight. So, I incorporated an extra fill-in space into the outline, so the counselor will have a choice of repentance (1:8–2:2) or faith (5:1–5) as a starting point. If the issue is something that does not require repentance like loss, grief, death, or a bad medical

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<sup>7</sup> Jean-Louis Chrétien, *The Ark of Speech*, trans. Andrew Brown (New York: Routledge, 2004), 39–76.



diagnosis, then starting with faith is appropriate. Even being sensitive to something like depression, trauma, or mental illness the starting point can be faith (5:1–5), rather than repentance (1:8–2:2). David Powlison’s “Three Trees” is a great example, in which sin and repentance is addressed in Powlison’s process, but it is not necessarily the starting point.

For the most part this initial step involves tracing the resistance to obedience. The counselor should pursue the presenting problem: why is a particular issue personally difficult? What are the barriers to repentance? With this said, two hand-outs were also included in this section: the first is a pretty extensive teaching on repentance, the second was a verse-by-verse study that emphasized repentance through 1 John 1:8–2:2. Finally, the participants sat at tables and there was supposed to be a table discussion on “barriers to repentance,” but due to the late start this discussion, and another discussion question was by-passed. Even though the table discussion did not occur, the “Repentance” segment of this section had a “barriers to repentance” section that the participants could read/review after the Intensive.

## **Section 2: Practice the Truth**

This was the hardest and most consuming section and included extra illustrations. At the Orchard we tend to avoid using original languages (Greek and Hebrew) as the pastoral staff does not want to give the congregation the impression that they need to go to seminary to understand the Bible. In the Intensive, I did need to explain the term “truth” in Greek (*alētheia*) and unpack its implications.

The Handbook also had a handout on the “Noetic Effects of Sin.” I could tell by the participants reactions that this “noetic” concept was new to them and they found it valuable, especially helpful in regard to 1 John 1:8 on “self”-deception. The Practicing Truth section has a shortened version of Powlison’s X-Ray Questions.<sup>8</sup> The discussion

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<sup>8</sup> Lane and Tripp, *How People Change*.

was on tracing the resistance and the motivation (i.e., the X-Ray Questions) behind that resistance. Following 1 John, the emphasis was on affections “what to love” (2:7–11) and what “not to love” (2:15–17) and then discerning false teaching (2:18–2:25) and anointing (2:26–27).<sup>9</sup> These themes in 1 John 2 combined with motivational questions assist the counselor in moving from the presenting issue to the core or heart issue. To further assist in tracing the resistance there is also a segment in the Handbook that was discussed on “Tracing Emotions.”

### **Section 3: Keep the Word**

This was an encouraging part of the presentation and the participants were engaging and interacting with this topic. I perceived those who attended the Intensive as spiritually mature which requires knowing the Word. Another part of this section that I felt was beneficial to the participants was the emphasis on doctrine and themes in the Scripture. The importance of doctrine was explained. One example is justification (that one is accepted by God through faith): this doctrine should have an impact on a person’s anxiety. Or another example is God’s sovereignty in light of a person’s desire to control people or situations. We also compared biblical themes like idolatry or slavery to addiction. These examples help a counselee to relate their struggles to Scripture and how to use Scripture to respond to these struggles.

At this point we went from reflective questions strategically placed in 1 John to topical components (these topical examples could potentially be used in counseling: “100 Bible Promises” and “My Identity in Christ”). I could tell by the participant’s warm reactions that they had seen these types of downloads before and benefitted from them.

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<sup>9</sup> Stephen S. Smalley writes on anointing: “We have interpreted this term as meaning both the Spirit and the Word of God. The faithful are by definition those who have received the gospel of truth, and appropriated it through the activity of the Spirit; and this cannot be said of those whose understanding of the apostolic preaching (about Jesus) is inadequate or erroneous.” Stephen S. Smalley, *1, 2, 3, John*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 51 (Waco, TX: Word, 1984), 123.

They were concrete examples of themes that could assist the participants in their own lives and in caring for others.

The text of 1 John 3:4–14 was included in the Handbook. The participants were encouraged here to do two things. First, go through the text of 1 John 3:4–14 emphasizing the use of Scripture for battling sin. Before moving forward to the next step, to then go through relevant Scripture outside of 1 John and to develop a scriptural Care Plan so that the counselees will be saturated in the Word. In other words, after going through 1 John 3:4–14, the counselor is now encouraged to use whole Word of God that is relevant to the scriptural Care Plan.

A Care Plan was new to the participants. We discussed the concept and went over an extensive one that came from the ACBC website that was listed on Recommended Resources. It was extensive and professionally done. The participants seemed impressed at how easily I found it and that there is a variety of Care Plan topics and resources. I sensed in the presentation a positive reaction from the participants. Developing a Care Plan can be intimidating and by simply having the Recommended Resources along with a couple of handout examples took the mystery out of developing a Care Plan. They can use and/or modify a plan that was already created and hopefully develop (personalize) their own Care Plan for specific issues and situations.

#### **Section 4: Love First**

The love first session was introduced with an emphasis that one should be increasing in love. It started with a love test that had a scale of 1–10 for a participant to rate themselves. The hope is after going through the biblical principles one will increase in responding in loving ways. This part of the presentation simply followed this section of the Handbook. This consisted of a description and goal of creating new responses to: love first.

The “love test” was influenced by John Broger’s love test in *Self-Confrontation*.<sup>10</sup> This session incorporated 1 Corinthians 13:4–7 in which one crosses out the word love or term for love and asked the participants to replace or fill-in the term love with their own name (i.e., Luke is patient, Luke is kind ...). Many participants heard of doing this 1 Corinthians 13:4–7 exercise mentioned in sermons and in teachings. But I actually followed through on the exercise and was wondering how many participants were simply thinking through the exercise without actually doing it and spending time reflecting and hopefully adjusting one’s behavior to reflect God’s Word. The point here is that one ranks themselves in how loving they perceive themselves. Then they will be asked to rank themselves after assessing themselves in light of 1 Corinthians 13:4–7. This should be a humbling experience.

The next part, was an explanation of 1 John 2:7–8 in which John discusses the old commandment (Lev 19:8; Deut 6:6; Matt 22:37–40) and the new commandment (John 13:34–36). The emphasis here was that in Jesus’s teachings there was a movement from loving one’s neighbor as oneself, to loving others as Jesus loves us. This then was followed with a 1-10 scale love test again.<sup>11</sup> By looking at 1 Corinthians 13 and 1 John, a person would probably down grade their love ranking. That is, a person may give themselves a 4 and after the 1 Corinthians 13:4–7 exercise and discussion in 1 John 2:7–8, rank themselves a 2 or 1. This next part has 9 bullet points on how to increase in love. One might have ranked oneself as a 1 and potentially advance to a 10 through these 9 bullet points on growing in love. Going from a 1 to a 10 on this love scale is unrealistic. But it does clearly impress upon the participant that they can grow in concrete ways.

Each of the bullet points on how to increase in loving responses also had the 1-10 love ranking scale after the bullet point to help develop confidence that one can grow

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<sup>10</sup> John C. Broger, *Student Workbook for the Self-Confrontation Bible Study* (Indio, CA: Biblical Counseling Foundation, 2015), W7–10.

<sup>11</sup> Listed in the Love First section of the Handbook; see appendix 7.

in loving first. The final part of this love section has questions that are reflective from 1 John 4:8–4:21. These verse-by-verse questions challenge the participants to find concrete ways of implementing love first. In Christ, one can become more loving through new responses.

### **Section 5: Live through Him**

Living through Him is about being an extension of Jesus’s ministry. This project is designed so that someone who benefited from doing this study would then replicate it with others. The concepts in this session were not difficult for the participants. There is the realization here that not all participants can or should be leading, but the hope is that the participant will in some way get active in blessing the lives of others. It might be through testimony, accountability, prayer, etc., this section was about getting others involved in the work of ministry. The first segment in this *Live through Him* section was on the church, specifically in regard to counseling and for the counselee to be participating in the life of the church.

This last section, has reflective study questions from 1 John 5:1–5 which is followed by an essay “Reasons for Concluding Counseling,” and also segments on sanctification (i.e., the “Role of the Holy Spirit” and “Union with Christ.”) These articles were briefly mentioned in the Intensive and the participants were asked to go over them on their own time. The participants were instructed to taper-off the counseling: one of the advantages of this 1 John study is that there is a starting and ending point. But with that said, Intensive participants were asked to continue to meet with the disciple they are counseling as needed to phase-out their meetings to bi-monthly, monthly and quarterly. The participants are counseling people in their congregation and the hope is that these relationships will continue. This also offers some accountability for the counselee to participate in the life of the church (i.e., joining a LIFE Group, praying for others, sharing testimony, etc.).

The last exercise for the counselor to follow-up on is the Tests of Life. Robert Law over a hundred years ago picked up on a “testing” theme in 1 John and developed three tests of life in his commentary.<sup>12</sup> Over the last century commentators have added to this list. I believe the best listing is in John Piper’s *Finally Alive*.<sup>13</sup> Piper has 11 tests and each is linked to 1 John, and these 11 points can be an excellent review and assurance for the 1 John framework. Piper’s tests are in regard to regeneration, but in this section these 11 points are not only about rebirth, but also areas that Christians can reflect and grow in. For example, Christians can grow in “practicing righteousness” (2:29), “loving others” (2:9; 3:14; 4:7–8; 4:20), “imitating Jesus” (1 John 2:5–6), etc. These tests of life can be used in a variety of ways, such as a spiritual check-up and could also be used for follow-up meetings as areas to work on or improve.<sup>14</sup>

I have a personal relationship with all the attendees and they were especially patient as the Intensive ended nearly 40 minutes late. Lunch was provided and several folks were taking the posttest while eating. They took the Handbooks home with them, and as I followed-up with the post interviews many shared that they were reading through the Handbooks.

Two decisions felt last-minute; these were right decisions but a bit rushed and need to be honed a little better before presenting this project again. The 3R hermeneutic was not needed and I was not comfortable presenting it. It needs to either be developed better in my own practice and then communicated to the participants, or else dropped from the presentation. Another area which was corrected before the Intensive but probably could use more deliberation was how to better explain the starting point for *walking in the light*, whether to start with faith and/or repentance. A third area, I did not realize until

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<sup>12</sup> Robert Law, *The Tests of Life: A Study of the First Epistle of St. John* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982).

<sup>13</sup> John Piper, *Finally Alive: What Happens When We Are Born Again* (Minneapolis: Christian Focus), 123–28.

<sup>14</sup> See Handbook in “Live through Him” section in appendix 7.

actually in the moment of giving the presentation was that I felt that I had positive responses from the Care Plan examples, while at the same time I think more instruction could have been given on this topic. I believe that these five steps give structure and at the same time freedom to dig deeper or emphasize one step over another. I think I need to develop a more thorough resource on writing a Care Plan.

### **Conclusion**

This project was a success; the Intensive for training lay leaders in the 1 John methodology appears to have benefited the participants as they found value in our time together and perceive themselves to be competent to counsel or growing in their abilities to counsel. The goals were met. This intensive gave great insight into how to do trainings better along with how to enhance the curriculum. While the Bible is not a book on how to do counseling, a Bible study modified from 1 John can serve in training biblical counselor's as well as providing the content for counseling. As a Bible study successfully targets a certain counseling issue this takes the counselees through a verse-by-verse process with a specific goal.

## CHAPTER 5

### EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate the effectiveness of the LCD Intensive. Chapter 1 showed a need for biblical counseling at the Orchard and set the goals for this project. Chapter 2 identified values and priorities in 1 John that were faithfully communicated in the Intensive (i.e., regeneration, abiding, the imitation of Jesus, the lawlessness of sin, etc.). The curriculum presented in the Intensive was centered on the methodology found in chapter 3. Chapter 4 detailed the Intensive and through the preparation and execution of the Intensive began the process of identifying areas of potential improvements. Chapter 5 measures the Intensive's effectiveness through the project's goals. This Intensive was evaluated through the expert panel's curriculum evaluation, the pre/posttests, and follow-up interviews in order that this project may be improved and replicated. The thesis of this chapter is that the Intensive was successful, the curriculum presented is operable, and, with some necessary improvements, this 1 John methodology is a viable curriculum for training counselors.

#### **Evaluation of the Project's Purpose**

Counseling is discipleship and like other types of discipleship the pastoral staff cannot shepherd a large congregation alone as the laity rightly needs to participate. Some of the flaws of secular psychologies were brought up in the presentation. The illustrations found in the methodology (chapter 3) were also employed in the Intensive. Through these illustrations I demonstrated a clear pattern in that the congregation seeks secular counsel first and biblical counsel when secular counsel does not work. These illustrations showed a clear pattern of disappointing secular psychologies and an effectiveness in which the Lord is at work in His people through His Word.



This Intensive and this project was designed to bring about certain values derived from 1 John and discussed in chapter 2. Chapter 3 was about the five-step methodology, but also on expected results and applications of this methodology: repentance, reflection (especially in regard to affections and thoughts), the priority of the Word, the Spirit manifested in love, and mutual ministry. These values from chapters 2 and 3 were aligned with the counseling process to show that these kinds of activities normally used for discipleship can and should be used in counseling.

One comment that I found surprising was from a mature and respected lay leader who said he did not realize that repentance was part of the counseling process. I mention this comment because I was focusing my efforts to expand this project to drill down on different counseling goals, but I did not realize the need to dig deeper on a theology of change (i.e., repentance).<sup>1</sup>

I was clear that discipleship can have goals, but I emphasized goal setting more in this counseling curriculum, that is, the counseling process has a specific goal. Again, structure, whether it is in the methodology and training takes the mystery out of counseling. Some of the examples in the Intensive were of overcoming guilt/shame, anger, people pleasing, panic attacks, and gender dysphoria. Having goals and structure gave the participants confidence.

## **Evaluation of the Project's Goals**

### **Goal 1: Expert Panel**

The first goal was met as an expert panel (a trusted Christian counselor, an ACBC certified counselor, and a retired pastor and Bible college professor) evaluated the curriculum prior to the Intensive.<sup>2</sup> The expert panel was given both the Research Profile and chapter 3 in case the panel wanted more detail on the methodology. As explained in

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<sup>1</sup> John C. Broger, *Self-Confrontation: A Manual for In Depth Biblical Discipleship* (Indio, CA: Biblical Counseling Foundation, 1991), 86.

<sup>2</sup> See appendix 9.

chapter 4, the Research Profile was, for the most part, a shortened version of the methodology (chapter 3) and was combined with the Intensive Outline.<sup>3</sup> I followed-up with phone calls to the evaluators as the scores were high. The methodology was so well received by the evaluators that I verbally went over the process as I was concerned that I might not be getting accurate evaluations. The phone calls further reinforced the evaluations. I did get questions challenging some of my Scripture references; this was due to the shortening of chapter 3 in the Research Profile and will be resolved through endnotes in the Handbook. I received no negative feedback from the expert panel evaluations in regard to the methodology.<sup>4</sup> There were helpful comments and clarifying questions that assisted in making the presentation more succinct. The expert panel evaluations are encouraging, affirming, and as positive there were no substantive changes that needed to occur.

## **Goal 2: Participants Pre/Post-Tests**

Originally, the pre and posttests were going to be Likert scales, but this switched to short answers as the questions in the Likert scale were too binary. That is, participants could have answered in a yes or no manner without elaborating on the questions. The participants taking the time to answer these short answer questions hindered my start time. But they also provided useful information that this Intensive was tracking and affirmed an effective methodology. The goal was met.<sup>5</sup>

The completion of the second goal showed an increase in knowledge in biblical counseling, theological topics (i.e., noetic effects of sin), recommended resources, and the five steps of the methodology. The questions from the pre/posttests were on key areas

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<sup>3</sup> See appendix 5.

<sup>4</sup> See appendix 9.

<sup>5</sup> See appendix 10.

of the Intensive. These questions reinforced the topics that were also emphasized in the fill-in questions on the Outline.

The pre/posttest analysis showed a marked increase in confidence (questions 2 and 3), although several participants indicated that they would like more training. The following 6 questions were on the five steps themselves and they identified the step and the logic behind the step. Question 10 was answered with accuracy as it was on follow-up and it was a pretty fresh topic as it was one of the last things discussed before taking the posttest. I was also encouraged as there were key terms and phrases used in the Intensive also appeared in the posttests, (i.e., Scripture saturation, target the heart, data gathering). In looking through the posttest questions on resources, there was a marked increase in the knowledge of biblical counseling and this projects methodology. The posttest had an additional question (question 11) on if the participant perceived themselves capable of replicating this process in a discipleship/counseling situation.

The first question was on resources and the Recommended Resources which were briefly discussed in each of the five step sections of the presentation. The Intensive opened up new horizons of fresh insight into God's Word. I got the impression that the participants were hungry for more resources. A reference that I often used prior to the Intensive was Powlison's "X-Ray Questions." The Intensive participants mentioned these questions in the posttest, which further shows the importance of this resource. One of the suggestions on the posttest was inhouse (the Orchard) resources (i.e., GriefShare, CR, and corrective groups) added to the Recommended Resources document. This would apply to in-church resources at other churches where this might be presented.

Question 2 and 3 pre/posttests were on confidence about using the 1 John methodology in ministry: question 2 was on the importance of having a plan and question 3 was on understanding the process. Each of the five steps had its own questions (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9), except step 2 had 2 questions: one on the presenting problem (question 5) and one on the core problem (question 6). One of the most significant and affirming question

was insight into the process. I have the impression that mature Christians do not want to engage in counseling because they do not know how to proceed. It is as if they are to just passively listen and let the counselee guide the process. The counselor will try to alleviate any distress by listening and making suggestions. Rather, this methodology is a process that is about achieving goals, and how Jesus Christ through His Word redemptively works through their struggles.

The final question (question 10) on the pretest was relational on the importance of follow-up with the counselee and the correct answer was discussed in class and written in the Outline. The question that I was most interested in was a question on the posttest that was not on the pretest (question 11) which was: do the participants see themselves replicating this process? Question 11 on the posttest was the most encouraging as the question was about personal application and then applying this study in a discipleship setting. Even though many of the participants indicated that they wanted more help, resources, and/or oversight, there was a confidence and willingness to do counseling and serve as a lay counselor. The follow-up interviews affirmed this, as many saw that with a starting point, a process, and ending point, this 1 John framework along with an overall trust in God's Word gave them confidence. In other words, with the help of the church or pastoral oversight, the Intensive participants were seeing themselves competent to counsel.

### **Goal 3: Follow-Up Interviews**

After the Intensive, the participants are currently going through the Handbook on their own. The participants were given the follow-up interview questions at the Intensive, I could tell that several of the participants took time prior to our follow-up call to reflect on these questions. I did not realize in preparing for this Intensive that I did not have a feedback loop for the Handbook. The first and fifth question were too similar, so since this was done over the phone, I was able to redirect the question towards the Handbook.

All the participants emphasized the importance of the structure. They could see themselves more competent to counsel because there was a start, a process, and an end, and even though that goal can/will change (i.e., movement from a presenting problem to the core problem), there are benchmarks along the way. In my conversations and follow-up interviews the participants were somewhat relieved as being asked to counsel congregants is intimidating and the methodology took the mystery out of counseling.

Through the follow-up interviews, I learned that thirteen out of fifteen participants are already putting the material to use. The Handbook that was incorporated into the Intensive is a work in progress and participants are expecting an updated version of the Handbook in the near future. Prior to updating and distributing a new version of the Handbook I plan on personally connecting a second time to seek out corrections, insights, and possible future feedback loops that can be incorporated into this process and potentially improve the Handbook.

I believe I could have done better with time management during the Intensive, with that said, further insight is needed from the participants and expert panel on the quantity of information. The more I reflect on the project the more I want to add to it. I need input on how much material is enough information. In addition to what was presented, two participants mentioned that there should be a resource on “being stuck” (i.e., what to do when progress does not appear to be occurring).

Creating a topical study through a Care Plan seemed to be insightful to several participants. I believe that some of those participating were drawn to the Orchard due to expository preaching and they want to do LIFE Groups or be in discipleship situations that likewise go verse-by-verse. The importance of structuring a topical study was brought about by discussing the importance of doctrine. That is the heart issues are related to doctrinal truths. This was done through the illustrations used in the Intensive. For example, a fear of man should be redirected to a fear of God, or a desire to control should be replaced

with a trust in God's sovereignty. The priority was on how to explain why doctrine is so important in counseling and then how to develop a topical study on doctrine.

I realized that most of the participants were older, retired or near retirement age and I specifically asked two men in their early twenties to join us and only one was able to make it. The young man on the posttest mentioned how he loved the idea of applying this to his own life before applying it to others. This redemptive view of trying this on oneself and then others was greatly appreciated and could possibly be something to emphasize to get a younger group of participants.

I will be able to additionally monitor, guide, and evaluate how well this Intensive will manifest in these participant's different ministry settings. I did not realize it until I was summarizing the follow-up interviews, but nine participants actually gave names with whom they were meeting with and will start assimilating this curriculum into their meetings.

The participants, their use of the Handbook, and these evaluations function as feedback loops for the betterment and usefulness of this project. Several of the participants have academic backgrounds and are giving relevant feedback on the Handbook (briefly discussed below). The pre/posttests showed a marked increase in knowledge of biblical counseling, and overall, this Intensive helped create an eager expectation to incorporate what they learned to their ministries.

### **Strengths of the Project**

The main strength communicated was the structure, having an open Bible with a starting, ending, and process. This project is centered on immanence, that is the indwelling presence of Jesus Christ in His followers. There is a redemptive aspect to faith: one will know God better through this counsel that is founded on God's Word. Each step pursues concrete ways to manifest one's faith in their lives and to impact their relationships with others.

A final strength worth noting was the participants. All that attended had a trust and commitment to God's Word; they were selected because their leadership is grounded in Scripture. This confidence in God's Word and belief that this curriculum is biblical created an enthusiasm for this Intensive to succeed. I believe in this methodology, but I also know the greatest strength is a congregation's enthusiasm and faithfulness to the Word. The hope is that this methodology will increase this dependence upon the Word.

### **Weaknesses of the Project**

The main weakness of the intensive was time constraints. Two out of my fifteen participants were comfortable with the amount of time and information shared, the other thirteen communicated that this was too much information in too short of period of time. Two participants (different from the ones just mentioned) are the leaders of the Care Team and did not see this information as "new." The point I wish to make here is even participants who were familiar with my teaching (i.e., the two leaders of the Care Team) still felt this was not enough time to process all the information.

Furthermore, in regard to time, this was a group of Christians very active in lay ministry and who had valuable examples that enhanced the presentation. One was a deacon who attempted to do marriage counseling. He drew the group's attention to an introductory paragraph in the Handbook on "Leadership" and shared an example of how a highly emotional couple overwhelmed him and his wife every time they met with this struggling couple. The deacon had no basic instructions on how to counsel and had given up in exhaustion. The methodology gave him structure and he believed the outcome of his efforts would have been different if he had a plan, such as the 1 John framework, in place to guide the process rather than being reactionary. His short testimony was invaluable in the training process. In the future, a time and space should be made for the participants to give these insights and testimonials.

I originally thought I should incorporate into the Handbook an article/essay on leading a person to Jesus through a salvation prayer. The participants appeared to

understand and grasp that one needed to be regenerate in order for the Word to have an impact upon the counselee. In my presentation I started to incorporate how to lead someone to Christ by committing themselves to the Lord through a salvation prayer. A participant's question hijacked that part of the discussion, that was not so much about conversion, but on how to motivate a marginal Christian. I sensed through fielding several questions that the entire group wanted to spend time on this subject of helping marginal Christians take the Word more serious. Unfortunately, I did not have time to spare and the addition of, or development of a new resource to motivate counselees in pursuing the Lord appears to be something that would be valued by these participants.

I should have included feedback questions for the Handbook, but I was able to guide the follow-up interview to include the Handbook. Two participants identified a few typos. I included too many footnotes and was asked to make them endnotes. I originally thought it good to have the Outline pages and Recommended Resources pages not bound to the Handbook, so participants could toggle back and forth between these documents. But participants struggled with this toggling between these documents and there was a preference to build the Outline (i.e., the fill-in-the blank, bullet point definitions, and summaries) and Recommended Resources right into the Handbook. Future copies will have the Outline content in the front of each section and Recommended Resources at the end of each section with the end notes. I believe that overcoming these issues mentioned in this "weaknesses" section will occur fairly easily before handing the participants a new draft of the Handbook. I was encouraged that the participants were reading the Handbook on their own and I believe that I will be gleaning more insight in making it better through these faithful participants.

Finally, the Handbook on 1 John needs to have an explanation, a commentary, on at least verse 3:9. Other verses that lay leaders may want more explanation are potentially 3:19–22 and 5:6–7. I read out loud the text of 1 John as we went verse-by-verse through the steps, and I sensed that the class was not comfortable in the way I rushed



through verse 3:9. In future teachings it would be beneficial to have some commentary on difficult verses in 1 John, so that there is an option of going deeper into the text or participants can read or rereading through the commentary after the teaching.

### **What Would I Do Differently?**

A couple of personal observations in the preparation and execution of the Intensive were mentioned in chapter 4, for example, a more thoughtful teaching on determining if the starting point should be repentance or faith, skipping the 3R hermeneutic, giving more attention to the purging and practicing mentioned 1 John 2:28–3:3, and providing a resource for developing Care Plans. The items covered in the previous section of this chapter under weaknesses are all things that can be corrected (i.e., go from a one day intensive to seven-week class, 1 John and its relationship to the Gospel of John, essays on tough verses in 1 John, a greater emphasis on sanctification, and potentially a website with an online course and mentoring). A major theme of this chapter is insight in how to improve this curriculum. Three more areas that are worth digging deeper is to develop: (1) a training hierarchy, (2) a lay leadership buy-in/ownership culture, and finally, (3) can this process of using a book of the Bible or perhaps a major section of Scripture develop future curricula for biblical counsel.

The Orchard has a very healthy LIFE Group ministry. The success of these LIFE Groups is partly due to the fact that there is a training process for new LIFE Group leaders and quarterly training for existing LIFE Group leaders, along with coaches, deacons (who coach the coaches), and a LIFE Group Binder and Coaches Binder. Likewise, this LIFE Group hierarchy could have been deployed through training key lay leaders in this method prior to the Intensive. Ideally, I should have mentored potential leaders one-on-one first while developing and honing the Handbook. This is not to say that I cannot still do this as I believe many of the Intensive participants could serve in mentoring roles. The selection of participants was due to their potential leadership abilities, but would have liked to have had this vision in place and capitalize the momentum going into the Intensive.

Only two participants felt that the examples and illustrations of the Intensive were sufficient. The majority thought the presentation could have used more testimonies, illustrations, and more participant interaction. I mentioned that the plan was to include a couple of table discussion questions that I needed to bypassed due to time shortage. Ideally, if this becomes at least a seven-session class, it would be good to have mentors to be table leaders that facilitate table discussions. These table leaders could potentially even serve as mentors to the newer counselors.

Biblical counseling is new to the Orchard, and it is important to have well trained leadership in place. One of the participants, brought to the Intensive two members of his LIFE Group as he accurately sees leadership potential in these two men. Both stressed appreciation for the vulnerability, transparency, and testimonies in this Intensive that does not seemingly occur in other Orchard trainings. This too, rightly places a dependency upon Jesus Christ in the counseling process. I believe the correct way forward is the development of a ministry culture that both creates ownership or ministry buy-in and a valuing of and enthusiasm for biblical counseling while at the same time creates a greater dependency upon one's relationship with Jesus Christ.

Up to this point, the focus has been on whether the 1 John methodology can be replicated in counseling. As I was putting together this Intensive my LIFE Group was studying Philippians; could a methodology come from Philippians on conflict resolution? A lay leader was blindsided by divorce and now does some marriage counseling and we have been discussing a curriculum based on Ephesians for marriage counseling. Prior to developing this 1 John methodology, I have used entire psalms in counseling, and would like to encourage large sections of Scripture be used to create a counseling process (e.g., the Sermon on the Mount).

### **Theological Reflection**

Counseling is discipleship. This is one of the biggest obstacles that biblical counseling faces. First John is not a counseling manual, but counseling is discipleship

and there are discipleship steps in 1 John that apply to counseling. The concern, that was really apparent even though I did not realize until after the Intensive was how psychologized the participants were. I did communicate briefly some flaws in secular psychology, but I do not think the participants (myself included) realize how immersed we are in popular psychology. I believe I need to seek out or develop a resource to aid in understanding and give self-awareness to how our popular psychology culture has influenced Christians.<sup>6</sup>

I ran out of time but would have liked to include in the Intensive a section on the relationship between 1 John and the Gospel of John. I mentioned in chapter 2 that I was following the theory that John's epistles were similar to cover letters which potentially accompanied the Gospel's distribution. So, the theology of 1 John and the Gospel of John should and do elucidate each other, and this can be brought out in the counseling sessions. Using the Gospel of John to illuminate 1 John should be included in future drafts of the Handbook. I believe that these five steps of Immanence could be more illuminated through the Gospel of John and John's amplifying style (how he writes in a manner in which he revisits or circles back on topics) is important in the counseling process.

One of the most significant realizations that was reinforced throughout the process of developing this methodology and Intensive is the role of human agency. That God desires to work through His people. Serving is part of sanctification, the Lord is growing His people through their care for one another. This is something I knew, but it is taking on a greater meaning through equipping others to lean into the Lord and know His Word in such a way that they can be an "extension" (through the Holy Spirit) of the Lord's ministry.

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<sup>6</sup> Broger, *Self-Confrontation*, 74.

## **Personal Reflection**

When I came to faith thirty years ago, I was a self-loathing alcoholic, a broken person incapable of serving and loving anyone other than myself. I am grateful that God is sovereign and that He also works through human agency, and He is present and working for His peoples' good. God's love is transformative; His love changes people and through the forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit, heals and redeems lives. My hope is that others too, will know the joy, love, and purpose of the Lord working through them. This project has several real-life illustrations and the greatest joy that I know is that the Lord is not only at work within me, but also to participate in the redemption of others. Through God's Word and His Spirit, followers of Christ are called to participate in the sanctification of others.

The most obvious insight is an even greater trust in God's Word. The methodology came from 1 John, but the real starting point of this project was 1 Corinthians 1:3–6. I believe those who participated in the intensive have this similar calling. The illustrations in the project are real; they represent a small sampling of people who have benefited through this counseling method. My hope is that future disciples will see what I know that counseling out of the Bible is the only way to counsel and to develop this counsel through a Bible study. As a result, more methodologies will emerge, more lives will be redeemed and restored as people come to know God through the study of His Word.

I mentioned an anti-marketing bias that I had and a focus on the methodology being hermeneutically sound and reproducible. With that said, several of the attendees were retired or semiretired successful business men. They were selected because they disciple others, but they were also helpful, in that they were making suggestions and asking questions to help me focus on the bigger picture. From these initial conversations they were directing me towards the creation of a website in which corrected material can be free and downloaded. With the potential of video courses, the potential of one-on-one mentoring, training through video calls, and similar suggestions to maximize the potential of this methodology. At least two manuals are needed: one is a guided study through 1 John with

an emphasis on pursuing a personal goal through the five steps. A second manual would be a leader's guide that corresponds to future intensive or seven-week class and/or online trainings.

### **Conclusion**

The emphasis of this project has been on the Lord's presence and this was done through a theology of "abiding." This study assisted the Orchard, Barrington to become more competent to counsel. My hope is to advance this project by putting into place improvements discussed in chapters 4 and 5. A secondary hope is that future generations will take this idea of developing a counseling methodology using a book of the Bible a step further, whether making the 1 John methodology better and more efficient or developing a methodology from a different book or section of the Bible. This does not mean that counselors do not use the full counsel of Scripture, but rather incorporate relevant Scripture into a counseling framework that is derived from a book or section of the Bible.

The main take away is that this curriculum in its current state is that it is not ready for deployment, but it is on track and the current list of improvements seems extensive but are easily doable. Chapter 5 gives insight into thoroughly revising this project and Handbook. My focus was on the methodology which is effective, but the overall impression of the LCD Intensive is mixed. That is, this project's reception was positive and promising. But upon reflection and the initial feedback, the training was too much information given in too short of a time. The next step is to update and distribute the Handbook to the participants and incorporate feedback loops to continue to develop the process. Going forward, a Handbook for teaching this curriculum, a study guide for 1 John, and a website with video teaching on how this curriculum works with downloadable Handbook and 1 John study guide. At the same time, seek out opportunities to incorporate more counselors.

## APPENDIX 1

### EXPERT PANEL EVALUATION RUBRIC

The following evaluation rubric was distributed to a review panel which consists of a vocational Christian counselor, a biblical counselor, and a key ministry leader that are familiar with the Orchard. These evaluations were collected before the intensive in order to properly assess, critique, and potential improve the Lay Counseling Intensive. This panel evaluated the project curriculum to determine if it is biblical, methodologically sound, thorough in scope, and applicable for lay counseling and care.

EVALUATION RUBRIC: evaluation of lay counseling curriculum.					
Evaluation Tool					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
<b><u>Biblical Faithfulness:</u></b>					
Is the content of the curriculum hermeneutically correct?					
Is the content of the curriculum theologically correct?					
<b><u>Teaching Methodology:</u></b>					
Were the five steps in this methodology well-defined?					
Was the progression through the steps well-defined?					
Does this intensive seminar give direction in proceeding through this process?					
<b><u>Scope:</u></b>					
Did the curriculum address the counseling topics biblically?					
Will the content of this study increase biblical literacy in the participants?					
<b><u>Applicability:</u></b>					
Does this intensive seminar provide opportunities for personal growth?					
Does this intensive seminar give participants the ability to counsel a person biblically?					

Please include additional comments:

APPENDIX 2  
PRETEST SURVEY AND AGREEMENT  
TO PARTICPATE

The following presurvey measured the participants of the Lay Counseling Intensive on the levels of knowledge, confidence, and motivation in providing care and counsel to the congregation. It contains a series of short answer questions in order to monitor changes in each participant's biblical and theological knowledge, as well as a knowledge of counseling skills. It is nearly identical to the posttest (the posttest has an additional question on reduplicating the project's methodology) and a post intensive follow-up interview.



## Agreement to Participate

The following survey is designed to provide information on your current understanding of counseling topics and confidence in addressing these topics in a ministry setting. This research is be done by Luke Trifilio for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. You will be asked the same questions before and after the training. All information will be kept confidential and the information gathered will be used anonymously. In completing this survey, you are giving consent to use this information in the evaluation of this ministry project.

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

### PRE-TEST

1. Where would you go to find more biblical resources if needed to address a counseling issue?
2. If someone from your congregation approached you for help with a counseling issue, do you have a plan or process to walk them through? (if yes please briefly describe)
3. Do you feel competent to biblically shepherd a disciple through a counseling process? Why or why not?
4. Why is reorientating a disciple to Jesus the first priority of a biblical counseling process and how would you do it?
5. What is a biblical approach to addressing the presenting problem?
6. How do you typically go about pursuing the cause (core problem) of a given counseling issue?
7. Why is counseling with an open Bible a priority?
8. How can you counsel your counselee to new responses?
9. As a counselee is making progress, what are some steps that this person can do to participate in serving others?
10. After completing a counseling process, how and how often should you follow-up with your counselee?

### APPENDIX 3

#### POSTTEST SURVEY

The following posttest survey measured the participants of the Lay Counseling Intensive on the levels of knowledge, confidence, and motivation in providing care and counsel to the congregation. It contains a series of short answer questions in order to monitor changes in each participant's biblical and theological knowledge, as well as a knowledge of counseling skills. It is nearly identical to the pretest (the posttest has an additional question on reduplicating the project's methodology) and a post intensive follow-up interview.

## Agreement to Participate

The following survey is designed to provide information on your current understanding of counseling topics and confidence in addressing these topics in a ministry setting. This research is be done by Luke Trifilio for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. You will be asked the same questions before and after the training. All information will be kept confidential and the information gathered will be used anonymously. In completing this survey, you are giving consent to use this information in the evaluation of this ministry project.

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

### POSTTEST

1. Where would you go to find more biblical resources if needed to address a counseling issue?
2. If someone from your congregation approached you for help with a counseling issue, do you have a plan or process to walk them through? (if yes please briefly describe)
3. Do you feel competent to biblically shepherd a disciple through a counseling process? Why or why not?
4. Why is reorientating a disciple to Jesus the first priority of a biblical counseling process and how would you do it?
5. What is a biblical approach to addressing the presenting problem?
6. How do you typically go about pursuing the cause (core problem) of a given counseling issue?
7. Why is counseling with an open Bible a priority?
8. How can you counsel your counselee to new responses?
9. As a counselee is making progress, what are some steps that this person can do to participate in serving others?
10. After completing a counseling process, how and how often should you follow-up with your counselee?
11. Do you believe that this study can be applied to your own life and then reduplicated in the lives of others? Why or why not?

APPENDIX 4  
FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW

The following posttest survey measured the participants of the Lay Counseling Intensive on the levels of knowledge, confidence, and motivation in providing care and counsel to the congregation. This was done in a follow-up interview. These questions were included in the Intensive Handbook.

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Was the Lay Ministry Intensive relevant to you and potentially helpful to people your ministry?

Did you find the topics new and insightful? If so, How?

To what extent do you feel the Intensive objectives were achieved?

Are there any improvements that you would like to suggest would enhance future Intensive Lay Counseling Trainings?

How likely do you see yourself doing this study in a ministry setting?

## APPENDIX 5

### INTENSIVE OUTLINE

The outline has fill-in spots and places for taking notes. This was handed out to the participants after the participants handed in the pretest and signed the permission form.

## OUTLINE

### INTRODUCTION:

- Goals:
    - a. Introduce Pre & Posttest (follow-up interview)
    - b. This presentation to be a resource for participants to overcoming issues.
    - c. Through this presentation: I want to personally be a resource for the participants.
    - d. I have had success with this process and want to know if this can be replicated in lay ministry.
    - e. Participants to give insight into making this methodology better.
  - Why 1 John & Gospel of John?
    1. Amplification:
    2. Immanence:
    3. Redemption
- \_\_\_\_\_ *of Immanence*
- ABC's of Lay Counseling
    1. Preparing for first meeting: Introductory Session
    2. Biblical Counseling Basics: Strategies for Caring
    3. Hospitality of Silence

WALK IN THE LIGHT:

1. Reestablish, \_\_\_\_\_, and/or prioritize the disciple's \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Address the \_\_\_\_\_

- Reorientate the disciple to the Lord: it is Jesus who is the \_\_\_\_\_ and biblical counsel will not work on those who are \_\_\_\_\_. (1 John 1:5-7)
- Pursue the Presenting Problem?
  - Mostly: Repentance & Faith? (1 John 1:8-2:2)
  - Seldom: Faith & Repentance? (1 John 5:1-5)
- Goal: \_\_\_\_\_  
Christlikeness: *it takes God to be godly* (2:3-6)

Mental Note: start thinking/looking up Scripture that addresses the presenting problem.

1 John: 1:1-4 Jesus (not the counselor) is the Healer.  
1 John 1:5-6 Walking with Jesus is the priority  
1 John 1:7-2:2 Repentance is obedience

Important Note: if the issue the counselee wants to address involves loss, trauma, and triage, then I would *not* go to repentance (1:7-2:2) but rather to faith (5:1-5).

1 John 2:3-6 Walk with and become like Jesus

Homework: Repentance Worksheet

4. To transition to the next step: start noting: what is the resistance to repentance?

It takes: \_\_\_\_\_.

*Do you need to consult Recommended Resources?*



PRACTICE TRUTH: involves \_\_\_\_\_ to the truth, as the disciple attempts to be faithful to the Lord, what is stopping him/her from doing so? What are the barriers to becoming more like Jesus? This will occur by looking at: 1. affections and 2. cognition (thoughts/thought processes), to discover the heart issues behind the presenting problem.

1. Affections:

1 John 2:7–14 What to love

1 John 2:15–17 What not to love

Emotions: \_\_\_\_\_ !

Homework: Prayer & Praise Worksheet

2. Cognition:

1 John 2:18–2:25 False teachings/teachers (antichrists)

1 John 2:26–27 Anointed teaching/ the Word

Noetic Effects of Sin:

Replace: Bad Thoughts with \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ *REVEALS THE HEART!*

*Do you need to consult Recommended Resources?*

KEEPING THE WORD: \_\_\_\_\_ the disciple with Scripture:

1. through 1 John (Battling sin through the Word [2:28–3:10) and
2. specific Scripture from the Bible that is relevant to their struggles.

David Powlison: X-Ray Questions

1 John: 2:28–3:3 \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_ through the Word

1 John 3:4–10 Battling sin through the Word

Note: 1 John 3:4–10 is about addressing sin in general; this is a good place to address Scripture that applies to the disciple's specific issues.

1 John 3:19–24 Replacing false thoughts/teachings through the Word

3 Examples: Pleasing  
Identity  
Promises

1 John 4:1–6 Test the Spirits (Discern through the Word)

Homework: Assign daily \_\_\_\_\_ Scripture reading

*Do you need to consult Recommended Resources?*

LOVE FIRST: disciples are called to \_\_\_\_\_ in love and this section is about \_\_\_\_\_.

New Responses:

- Love Test
- Increasing in Love
- Love Homework

Homework: Love Test  
                  Increasing in Love

Homework: New responses

1 John 4:7–8 Conduit (incarnating God’s love)

1 John 4:9–11 Perfecting (sanctifying love)

1 John 4:12–21 Love and obedience

*God \_\_\_\_\_ of Himself to make us like Him!*

*Jesus Christ not only \_\_\_\_\_ our relationship with God, but also with one another.*

*Do you need to consult Recommended Resources?*

LIVE THROUGH HIM: this is to become an \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus's ministry—  
that He is not only at work in the disciple, but working through the disciple.

- Redemption / Extension of Christ's Ministry
- Serving others (testimony, prayer, accountability, ... presence) (1 John 5:1–21)

1 John: 5:1–5 Redemptive Faith (overcoming the world)

1 John 5:6–12 Testimony

1 John 5:13–15 Prayer

1 John 5:16–17 Accountability

1 John 5:13–19 Confidence

1 John 5:20–21 Presence

- Follow-Up: *Tests of Life*
- Reasons for Concluding Counseling
- Union with Christ
- Past, Present & Future Sanctification
- Role of the Holy Spirit
- Guidance of the Holy Spirit
- The Church
- My Identity in Christ
- 100 Promises
- Recommended Resources

\* \_\_\_\_\_ *as needed (this is different from person to person)*

*weekly to every other week to monthly to quarterly to yearly*

## APPENDIX 6

### INTENSIVE RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

The Recommended Resources was placed in the folder of the binder so that participants could easily access this document. This resource was touched upon in each of the training sections.

## **Recommended Resources**

### **Websites:**

Unlocking the Bible: is packed with great resources, you can go to the search window and type in a key work like anxiety, fear, and worry and be directed to a variety of resources including Pastor Colin's sermons on these topics.

The Gospel Coalition: this has many resources that go beyond discipleship, but including this as there is so much good information from this trusted source.

### **Biblical Counseling Organizations:** these organizations see counseling as discipleship

CCEF.org this is trusted / recommended organization that has vast amount of resources on a variety of different topics. They train counselors and their resources are gospel centered, and produced with a pastoral heart. Their search engine can lead you to a vast amount of resources on special issues (i.e., search: panic attacks, anxiety in children, social anxiety, ...). Great authors that are associated with CCEF are David Powlison, Ed Welch, Mike Emlet, click for full listing.

ACBC.org is affiliated with CCEF, they too train biblical counselors and have a ton of great resources for counseling issues.

BCC.org large quantity of biblical resources

IBCD.org large quantity of biblical resources

### **Well Known Authors / Speakers:**

Kevin Carson Nancy Guthrie Robert Kellemen Paul Tautges Paul Tripp

**Daily Devotional:** Some publishers have entire series of monthly devotionals that specially on a specific topic:

**Publishers/Series:** some really great authors have created daily devotionals on a variety of different and specific issues

P&R: has 12 different topics: 31-Day Devotionals for Life;

New Growth has several: Small Book Devotionals on different topics).

Welch, Ed. *A Small Book for the Anxious Heart: Meditations on Fear, Worry, and Trust*. Greensboro: New Growth, 2019.

### **Individual Devotionals:**

#### **Monthly:**

Bridges, Jerry. *31 Days Toward Trusting God*. Colorado Springs: NavPress. 2013.

Yearly:

Tautges, Paul. *Anxiety: Knowing God's Peace (31-Day Devotionals for Life)*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2019.

**Mini-Books / Booklets:** short, direct, easy to read, and written with a pastoral heart, several publishers (i.e., P&R series: Resources for Changing Lives, and Resources for Biblical Living; New Growth Press: mini books; Focus Publishing: Booklets) and organization (i.e., CCEF; these are available at Amazon and *should* be available through kindle.

Jones, Robert D. *Angry at God? Bring Him Your and Questions*. P&R. 2005.

Jones, Robert D. *Bad Memories: Getting Past Your Past*. P&R, 2004.

Jones, Robert D. *When Trouble Shows Up: Seeing God's Transforming Love*. New Growth, 2013.

Jones, Robert D. *Why Worry? Getting to the Heart of Your Anxiety*. P&R, 2018.

Kellemen, Robert W. *Anxiety: Anatomy and Cure*. The Gospel for Real Life Series. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2012.

Scott, Stuart. *Anger, Anxiety and Fear: A Biblical Perspective*. Bemidji, MN: Focus, 2009.

**Related Resources**

Emler, Michael. *Prescriptions and Descriptions: A Biblical Perspective on Psychiatric Diagnoses & Medications*. Greensboro: New Growth, 2017.

Miller, Paul, E. *A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World*. Nav Press 2017.

Powlison, David. *God's Grace in your Suffering*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway. 2018.

Powlison, David. *Safe & Sound: Standing Firm in Spiritual Battles*. Greensboro: New Growth, 2019.

Saxton, David W. *God's Battle Plan for the Mind: The Puritan Practice of Biblical Meditation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2015.

**Great Books / Trusted Authors:**

Lowe, Julie. *What to Do When You Worry Too Much: A Kid's Guide to Overcoming Anxiety (What-to-Do Guides for Kids)*.

Julie Lowe: Why does social media seem to create such anxiety in teenagers?

Fitzpatrick, Elyse. *Overcoming Fear, Worry and Anxiety*.

Mack, Wayne. *Courage: Fighting Fear with Faith*.

Tripp, Paul David. *Suffering: Gospel Hope When Life Does Not Make Sense*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018.

How to Care for Someone Struggling with Anxiety and Depression  
(Tripp/Powlison)

Welch, Ed. *Running Scared: Fear, Worry, and the God of Rest*. Greensboro: New Growth Press. 2007.

Ed Welch: Is It a Sin to Be Afraid?

**Recovery Organizations:**

- Teen Challenge: <https://teenchallenge.cc/>
- Recovery Centers of America in St. Charles has a good inpatient program. 844-488-2968
- Rosecrans in Rockford does too. They have multiple locations. 888-928-0212



APPENDIX 7  
INTENSIVE HANDBOOK

The following is the Handbook that was given to all participants. They were encouraged to write in as well as give feedback on this Handbook during the Intensive as well as during the follow-up interview. This is a draft and participants were asked not to share and promised an updated and revised copy after this project has been completed.

LIGHT CONQUERING DARKNESS  
TRAINING LAY COUNSELORS UTILIZING



A FRAMEWORK DERIVED FROM 1 JOHN  
INTENSIVE LAY COUNSELING SEMINAR

AUGUST 3, 2024

LUKE TRIFILIO

## INTRODUCTION:

### Personal goals:

1. This presentation is to be a resource for participants in overcoming issues.
2. I want to personally be a resource for the participants.
3. I have had success with this process and hope it can be reduplicated in lay ministry.
4. Participants are to give insight into making this methodology better.

### Why 1 John & Gospel of John?

4. Amplification:
5. Immanence:
6. Redemption:

### ABC's of Lay Counseling

5. Preparing for first meeting: Introductory Session
6. Biblical Counseling Basics: Strategies for Caring

This intensive presents five maxims from 1 John that guide the new lay counselor through a counseling process that emphasizes the presence of Jesus Christ. In 1 John, “to be in God,” corresponds *to have* as in “to have God” or “have the Son,” “to know God,” “fellowship with God,” and even being “from God”; these are statements of immanence (indwelling, interiority, abiding-in). Schnackenburg calls these statements “formulas of immanence” as they relate to “abiding” or “to abide” and “existing” and “existing in.” Of these so-called formulas, Schnackenburg states,

In view of this it may not be methodologically wrong to include within our purview those sayings which speak of “abiding” in other entities closely connected with God, such as “truth” (1:8; 2:4); “His Word” (1:10; 2:14; cf. 2:24; 5:10); “His anointing” (2:27); “His seed” (3:9); “eternal life” (3:15); “love” (4:12; cf. 2:5; 3:17). But each of these formulas of immanence requires separate investigation.<sup>1</sup>

One attribute Schnackenburg did not mention that I believe should be included in this list is: “light” (i.e., “abides in the light” [1 John 2:10] and “walk in the light” [1:7]). In creating a methodology with intentionality, I removed from Schnackenburg’s list “anointing” and “seed” (2:27; 3:9) as these entities are given by God and Christians do not control them. But Christians can, and are called to:

1. “walk in the light” (1:7)
2. “practice truth” (1:6)
3. “keep the Word” (2:5)
4. *love first* (4:19)
5. “live through Him” (4:9)

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<sup>1</sup> Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Johannine Epistles: A Commentary* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 64.

Each of these phrases are based on an imperative or contain an imperatival force.<sup>2</sup> These five maxims focus the counseling process on immanence which facilitates transcendence. The thesis of this methodology is that this modified version of Schnackenburg’s so-called “formulas of immanence,” can form a series of progressing steps—a counseling method—which are especially ideal for training lay counselors as these attributes give direction and application.<sup>3</sup> In other words, the pastoral counsel John gives to overcome false teachings/teachers in 1 John is also a useful guide in counseling.

In this presentation I give examples in which I used 1 John as the framework (the five maxims) and 1 John was the content of the counsel. But even though these sequential maxims are derived from 1 John, the content of the counsel is not dependent upon 1 John, rather the counselor should select relevant Scriptures that speak to the counselee’s specific issues. That is, the counseling framework comes from 1 John, but the specific (relevant) Scripture to address the issue(s) may be selected from other biblical books by the lay counselor. The following five sections in this outline will address these five maxims in sequential order and clarify their relevance for counseling. With each step, the counselee will learn a competency which will help progress to the next.

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<sup>2</sup> *Love first* is not in quotes because it is not found in 1 John; it is unlike the other four maxims which are direct quotes. But in teaching this process to beginning/lay counselors, a goal is to keep these maxims consistent by short memorable statement (i.e., *love first*) which is similar to its literal counter parts. *Love first* is taken from 4:19, which commentators state has an imperatival force.

<sup>3</sup> These attributes that a Christian is to abide in (light, truth, Word, love, and life), are predicated: *walk in the light; practice truth; keep the Word; love first; and live though Him*. These are also names or titles for God: Jesus is the light (1 John 1:5; John 12:44–46) “the Word of life” (1 John 1:2), “the logos” (John 1:14), “the truth” (John 14:6; 1 John 5:20); “Spirit of Truth” (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 1 John 4:6; 5:6); love (1 John 4:8, 16); life (1 John 1:2; John 11:25; 14:6); and eternal life (1 John 5:20). These attributes that are predicated should also be pursued in the pursuit of godliness.

## INTRODUCTORY SESSION

Prayer: God, not the counselor, is the healer. The biblical counselor must model a dependency upon God. The counselor should start and close every session with prayer. The counselor should be praying for the counselee outside of the session. The counselor should model prayer, even praying Scripture and eventually asking the counselee to pray (in the session)—depending on the counselee’s spiritual maturity (the counselor should encourage the counselee to pray in the session out loud). It shows humility, a trust in the Lord and a need for wisdom and insight.

Notes: the counselor should let the counselee know that he/she will be taking notes. In taking notes, the counselor shows care that the counselor is tracking with the counselee, and the counselor can review a previous session. It shows that there will be direction to the counsel (goals will be set). It is good to have a standard form that assists this process.

Leadership: take control of the counseling session: the counselor leads the session, keeps on track, has direction and that the interaction is appropriate (especially in marriage counseling when couples are in conflict). Leadership is done in a gentle but correcting way as in marriage counseling when one spouse is aggressive— appropriate leadership gains trust with both spouses.

Bible: God identifies Himself through His Word. The Bible is inspired, inerrant, authoritative and sufficient. There will be homework and it will involve God’s Word. Personally, I am a pastor who does counseling— I purchase ESV Study Bibles by the case and give them away as needed. God does speak to His people through sermons and the counselor, and Christian family and friends, but He primarily and overwhelmingly speaks through His Word (1 Pet. 1:23). The counselee should be bringing his/her Bible to the sessions and daily reading/study is encouraged.

Jesus Christ: He is the center of the Bible, our counsel and our lives. There are many different reasons to initiate counsel but the ultimate hope and result of our counsel is for the counselee to be conformed into the image of Jesus Christ (Rom 8:29). We are created and redeemed by Him and we are not only to imitate Him (1 John 2:6), but also learn how to depend upon Him (Matt 5:3) and be living for Him (1 Cor 3:16). In Christ, our trials our redemptive (James 1:2–4), there is purpose in our hardships and sufferings (1 Peter 3:8–9).

Salvation: ask about their salvation experience (can they articulate the Gospel?). Regeneration is necessary for biblical counseling— if the counselee has not given his/her life to Jesus Christ than their salvation needs to be the first priority. Their greatest need is to be reconciled to God (forgiven: Eph. 4:32) and standing right before Him (Justified: Rom. 5:1). The Gospel is not only right standing (position) before God (being forgiven and justified), but it is also about being regenerated (1 Pet. 1:3). In Christ the counselee is now in the process of sanctification. Faith and repentance are necessary for salvation and also growth. The counselor should be ready to explain the Gospel— our church has a prescribed method of sharing the Gospel that we practice/rehearse. God changes people, so if the counselee is not reconciled to God through the cross, then they are still enemies of God (Rom. 5:10) and dead in their sins (Eph. 2:1).

Hope: using Scripture develops a confidence that God is at work in His people. He cares (1 Pet. 5:7) and He acts on His promises (2 Pet. 3:9) and there is growth in Him (1 Pet. 3:18). God responds to His people in grace; it is about Christ's work and not based on one's performance. Circumstances do not always change and there are consequences to sin but our God redeems (Gal 3:13), renews (2 Cor. 5:17) and restores (1 Pet. 5:10). Hope should lead to living out biblical convictions.

Homework: the counselee is expected to be in the Word, praying, possibly in a LIFE Group (our version of small group ministry) and attending church (hopefully participating in the life of the church). There is a goal to counseling and future sessions, developing or increasing faith in Christ (not the counselor) is the priority and the counselee should know that ultimately, he/she needs to move from the counseling to the body of Christ.

## BIBLICAL STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP A CARING RELATIONSHIP

Concern: demonstrate genuine concern for the counselee. The Apostle Paul, was emotionally connected to his church and saw his service toward them as his service to God (Acts 20:19); he calls congregants to be personally connected to each other (Rom 12:15). The Apostle Peter encourages his congregation in empathy— “through unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind” (1 Peter 3:8). A key way of showing care is through listening, and active listening comes from humility (James 1:19). The counselee should feel cared for.

Prayer: care is shown by taking the counselee to the Lord in prayer. The most important relationship in the counseling is between the counselee and God (not counselee and counselor). Christians are told to pray without ceasing (1 Thess. 5:16), and it is possible to develop an internal prayer while in the session. We are also to be interceding for the counselee outside of the session on a regular basis (Rom. 15:30; Col. 4:2–3).

Convictions: encourage is “to give courage” that is, give courage to live out biblical convictions.

The counselor should let the counselee know that the counselor has biblical convictions and acts on them. The counselee can trust God, and His Word, that God keeps His promises and can trust in Him (Heb. 11:1)— that God’s ways are right (2 Tim 3:16). Trust God because He is trustworthy (1Cor. 2:13). The counselor can model God at work in his/her life and how to respond to difficult situations in repentance and faith (James 4:17).

Involvement: they need support, guidance and correction to navigate through their problems. The counselor should see themselves as a servant (Matt 20:20). The counselor should show sympathy through genuine concern and express empathy (1 Peter 3:8), lead by example (John 13:1–7) and assist in caring burdens (Gal 6:1). Counselors are to place their counsees interests above our own (Phil 2:4).

Give Hope: God is present (Heb. 13:5) has a plan (Jer. 29:11) and will finish what He has started (Phil 1:6). Progressive sanctification takes time, change does not happen overnight, but the counselor should point out growth areas (2 Peter 3:18), signs of fruit (Gal 5:22–13) and how the counselor see’s evidence of the Gospel at work in the counselee’s life (2 Cor 1:3–5). Avoid labels and remind that habits can be broken.



WALK IN THE LIGHT: First thing is to reestablish, reorientate and/or prioritize the disciple's relationship with Jesus.

1 John: 1:1–4 Jesus (not the counselor) is the Healer.

1 John 1:5–6 Walking with Jesus is the priority

1 John 1:7–2:2 Repentance is obedience

1 John 2:3–6 Walk with and become like Jesus

Important Note: if the issue the counselee wants to address involves suffering and loss, then I would *not* go to repentance (1:7–2:2) but rather to faith (5:1–5).

The thesis of this first section is to “walk in the light” requires orienting or reorienting the counselee to Jesus. Walking in the light is relational (1 John 1:5–6), and reflective (1:6). The counselor's priority is to address and potentially redeem the presenting problem through repentance and faith (1:9). To “walk in the light” (1:7), being “in the light” (2:8–9), and “abiding in the light” (2:9–10) represents being in union with God through Jesus Christ and pursuing its implications.<sup>4</sup> Walking in the light is transformative — sanctifying as it addresses the presenting problem in the reprioritization of one's relationship with the Lord, and this in turn, creates new responses to the counselee's issues.

The counselor in training is to be aware that there tends to be a “root” issue (i.e., the underlying issue, also known as the core or heart problem) relating to the presenting problem. To get to the root problem the counselor must pay careful attention to the resistance—that which hinders one's walk with Jesus, since this resistance gives insight into the root problem. This is not to say the root issue behind the presenting issue isn't relational too, but to discover this underlying root issue often requires an unfolding of experiences and descriptions such as gathering data, explications, synthesizing themes,

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<sup>4</sup> Robert Law wrote an influential commentary (originally published in 1913) in which he objects to commentators who simply state that light is about God's magnificence, and excellencies; they neglect the implications of fellowship and symbolism, that light is both immanent and transcendent:

Light is that which reveals; darkness, that which conceals. Light is the medium in which we come to see as God sees, to have a true perception of all moral objects—qualities, actions, and persons. To “walk in the light” is therefore, to have, in the first place, the will to see all things in the Light of God, and to acknowledge and act up to what is thus seen to be the truth. To “walk in darkness” is the effort, instinctive or deliberate, not to see, or the failure to acknowledge and act up to what is seen; to withdraw ourselves, our duties, our actions, our character, our relation to the facts and laws of the spiritual realm, from light which God's self-revelment sheds upon them. And to do this is, ipso facto, to exclude the possibility of fellowship with God. (Robert Law, *The Tests of Life: A Study of the First Epistle of St. John* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982], 56–66)



etc.<sup>5</sup> This is sequentially demonstrated in the next section on “practicing truth” (whereas *alētheia*: *lēthe* means to cover up or hide, hence *a-lētheia*, truth, etymologically speaking as an uncovering or revealing).<sup>6</sup> The counselor needs to note the resistance to the first maxim: to “walk in the light” in order to be able to move to the second maxim of “practicing the truth.”

For example, Anthony a new husband was experiencing panic attacks. One situation was with other church couples at a monthly board game night. We rehearsed conversations and/or how to initiate conversations in order to create a relational response (a response that relies on Jesus Christ), in which Anthony was taking the focus off of himself and focused on representing Christ in these situations. Walking in the light provided some relief and functionality—the first step, and Anthony was able to reflect in the situation that previously intimidated him. As we discussed the negative impulses involved, and rehearsed different scenarios, what was essential to this process was tracing resistance. That is the “why” (motivation) behind the panic attacks: “why the distress?” “Why fear?” “Why anger?” Noting these presenting issue(s) and resistance to “walk in the light” which lead to the root issue in the second maxim “practice the truth.” That is, Anthony’s distress, fear, and anger (presenting issue) led to deeper (root) issues: “Why the need for control and self-protection?”

Fellowship with God is a necessary component for fellowship with one another (1:6–7). God is the Redeemer, as healing does not occur through the counselor/counselee relationship. The counselee comes into a relationship with God through faith for the propitiation of sins (2:1–2). This occurs through regeneration and sanctification—a process of becoming like Jesus. Jesus Christ is the focal point of this relationship even though the process of renewal and sanctification occurs through the Holy Spirit. While Jesus describes this relationship in terms of a friendship (John 15:14) and mutual or reciprocal abiding (1 John 2:27, 28; 3:6; 4:12), it is governed by a loving dependency, trust, submission, and obedience. Strengthening one’s relationship with the Lord is manifested in one’s relationship with the Lord’s people (1:6); Jesus Christ not only mediates our relationship with God, but He also facilitates our relationships with one another (1:5–6).

To walk in the light in 1 John is a response to confessing one’s sin and restoring one’s relationship with Jesus (2:7–9). Reflection is a process in which one can meditate on (2:24), question (3:17), evaluate (2:5b–6), and contemplate (John 11:50). It is also

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<sup>5</sup> Wayne Mack states,

This process involves two basic elements: accurately analyzing or conceptualizing the data and explaining it to the counselee. In other words, one aspect of interpretation involves what goes on in our minds as counselors. We must analyze the data gathered during the inventory phase so that we can understand it from a biblical viewpoint. And we must decide what should be done about the problems according to Scripture. (Wayne Mack, *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically* [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005], 147)

<sup>6</sup> Hans Hüber, “ἀληθῶς,” in *EDNT*, 1:58.

relational and intimate as God promises understanding (5:20).<sup>7</sup> So with walking in the light it is necessary to focus on prayer, confession, and tracing resistance.

In *Knowing by Heart*, Steinbock includes different forms of reflection and while his analysis is (descriptive) phenomenology, there are implications for counseling.<sup>8</sup> Reflection is conscious and intentional while reflexion is unintentional and unconscious—it is an “in the moment” reaction. The reflection is about pursuing one’s motivations, desires, and drives, in regard to the presenting problem and in light of biblical illumination.<sup>9</sup> Steinbock notes a pre-reflection, one’s state before one reacts; he suggests a consensus in phenomenology that the pre-reflective state is one’s true self (this pre-reflective state is often unclear in which one does not fully know or understand oneself or why one responds in a certain way). The point here is that reflection should lead to new (biblical—Christ-honoring) responses. It is important to note when the new responses are difficult; this is because at this point, we want to start tracing resistance. In other words, when obedience to the Lord is difficult, we want to understand the “why” behind the resisting.

The hope of this project is that followers of Christ will respond to their counseling issues in a manner that is Christ honoring (that unregenerate responses will change to

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<sup>7</sup> Critical Commentators often speculate on the warning against idolatry in 5:21 as it seems to come out of nowhere—it appears to be unrelated to 5:20. Versions of the Bible (i.e., *Nestle-Aland 27ed.*) will indent 5:21 as a new paragraph as they see it as disconnected from 5:20. But, *dianoian* is used only once in 1 John 5:20 in the context of John’s warning about idols (5:21) and this term occurs three times in the short passages on the “Idolatrous Elders Condemned” (ESV heading) in Eze 14:1–4. That is, in the Ezekiel passage, the prophet has an ability to have insight into the idols of the hearts of the exiled Hebrews. Ezekiel and John use this term slightly different: the Hebrews are to approach the prophet in Ezekiel in regard to their personal idolatry in Ezekiel 14:1–4; the Christians are to understand (*oidamen*) that they are given insight (*dianoian*) into knowing (*ginōskōmen*) and being in Jesus. If we read 5:20–21 together (in context) than knowing Jesus (salvation) also gives the Christians insight into their own personal idolatry (5:21)—their sin nature and need for sanctification. This fits into the greater context of the letter, Jesus is sinless “and he appeared in order to take away sins” (3:4) and “destroy the works of the devil” (3:9).

<sup>8</sup> Anthony J. Steinbock, *Knowing by Heart: Loving as Participation and Critique*, Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, 2021), 169–73.

<sup>9</sup> Jeremy Pierre explains,

Jesus redeems people’s thinking by granting them new core beliefs that lead to an entirely new interpretation of their situations. Rather than understanding the world from a limited set of beliefs formed from the opinions of family and culture, observations made over the years, testimonies accepted as trustworthy, or the priorities of the media, the Holy Spirit helps Christians perceive the world from a different center of beliefs. . . . They believe that a good God makes the gracious effort to explain how people best function sexually, vocationally, relationally, and ethically. Christians believe that people are not the center of the universe, and their concerns are not the highest purpose of life. Christ re-centers people’s deepest structures of belief around what God reveals as most important and most true. (Jeremy Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life: Connecting Christ to Human Experience* [Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2016], 77–78)

saintly responses).<sup>10</sup> In being born again and in a relationship with Jesus Christ, that is, reflection requires reception (1 John 2:27; 3:22; 5:9), and in turn practice (1:6; 2:29; 3:4–10). To be receptive, is to confess one’s sins and seek personal insight from the Lord. That is, a main emphasis in 1 John is Jesus’s purpose (for the incarnation) and John’s writing (2:1) is aimed at overcoming sin (3:5–6, 8–9; 5:19). Reflection increases one’s capacities for new reactions.<sup>11</sup> This receptivity and increased capacity requires and convicts new responses (John 16:8). That is, the light of God’s revelation of Jesus Christ and the self-realization of abiding in this relationship creates new motivation and responsibility. This is not so much about being active or passive, but about being receptive to the Lord through His Word.

New action/reaction manifested is a work of Christ. The expectation here is relational, that intentionality (consciously directing one’s attention along with dependence upon the Word and Spirit) on Jesus will intuitively guide one in Christlikeness. Before addressing the heart problem, the counselor will make sure the counselee has learned what is necessary in the Christian walk by demonstrating repentance and faith.<sup>12</sup> The counselee should understand that repentance and growing in faith are necessary for one to “walk in the light” (1:5–10) and are components to the next steps already introduced in the first stage (i.e., reflection and tracing resistance) as the next step “practicing truth” will be manifested through resistance.

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<sup>10</sup> While all Christians are saints, John Cottingham suggests that the term applies to mature believers, those who have gone through trials and hardships and through obedience have a new and greater knowledge of the Lord. To Cottingham, saints have had experiences that has produced wisdom and they are examples that are to be emulated. John Cottingham, “Saints and Saintliness,” in *The Oxford Handbook of The Epistemology of Theology*, ed. William J. Abraham and Fredrick D. Aquino (Oxford: Oxford University, 2017), 79–96.

<sup>11</sup> See “Unknown Habits” in Greg E. Gifford, *Heart & Habits: How We Change for God* (The Woodlands, TX: Kress Biblical Resources, 2021), 14–15.

<sup>12</sup> Kelly Kopic shows a pattern, for example, in the narratives of the Gospels as they start with John the Baptist’s repentance and then God’s revelation of Jesus Christ. Kopic uses the term “often” as there is no guarantee that God will reveal one’s motivation or cause behind the sin. Kelly M. Kopic, *A Little Book for New Theologians: Why and How to Study Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2012), 75.

## REPENTANCE

Repentance literally means to change direction (i.e., adjusting your course), or even turning completely around (about face). So, with our walk with the Lord, it means to stop doing specific sins (or even stop doing life in my own self-reliant / self-absorbed way), and turn-to (repent) — to doing life God’s way. Repentance is an act of faith because you are trusting, relying, depending, having confidence and hope that God’s way is the right way of proceeding. Faith and repentance go together, they do not just occur at our initial entrance into the Christian life— they are a daily outward expression of the Christian life (Matt 6:12). Repentance is a heart attitude that is a reflection of our conversion in which we have turned from sin and to God.

Here is the problem with this document: I am providing a checklist ... and you do not want a “checklist.” The Holy Spirit convicts people of sin, judgment and righteousness (John 16:8), and this checklist might cause us to take on a messiah complex or attempt to fill the role of the Holy Spirit— we have an innate desire to play God. Repentance is about obedience and we need to take very seriously the scriptural warnings and tragic fate of those in disobedience (i.e., Esau never repented [Heb 12:17]). But the reality is that people will not repent the way we want them too! This is important! Repentance is an act of obedience, but it is through a changed heart— that is, change occurs through the Holy Spirit working in the soul (Rom 8:9–11; 1 Cor 15:45; 2 Cor 3:17), not simply modifying behavior— this is very important and worth saying again: people will not respond the way we are expecting! Do not play God when it comes to repentance.

Wisdom is needed! This document is more of a guideline for self-examination and/or (I think this is what we talked about) an intentional way of stirring up a conversation to help a person think through reconciliation (the *goal of repentance is forgiveness* and the *goal of forgiveness is reconciliation*). In reading God’s Word and what Jesus sacrificed for our sakes— it is important that we take forgiveness very seriously as God takes forgiveness very seriously! At the same time, we do not want to become legalistic in using Scripture. As the adult, parent, and disciple of Jesus Christ; your goal is to love wisely: three (brief) considerations (wisdom!) before we get to “the list!”

- “Love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8), so not every issue needs to be addressed (God does not correct everything all at once).
- “Fathers do not exasperate your children” (Eph. 6:4); shepherd them and grow them in this area (again do not attach this document/list to a clipboard and check it off). Do not let this checklist turn you into a control freak! Remember it is “God’s kindness that leads to repentance” (Rom 2:4).
- Even when “tough love” is necessary, it must be done in the fruit of the Spirit: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law” (Gal 5:22–23).

Ok, now on the other hand, we want to get past the simple “I’m sorry” attempts at reconciliation. “I’m sorry” does not appear in the Bible (repentance does), apology in the

original language (the meaning has shifted over time) means “defense” as in a court of law — as in, “to defend one’s actions.” I am not saying “I’m sorry” is completely wrong either as we want children and adults too) to show contrition— so the point is the heart! So again, this is a wisdom issue: that is, “I’m sorry” is good if it is taken seriously (relationally) reflective, that is, (inwardly) thoughtful, and (outwardly) empathetic; of course— not so, if it is dismissive, superficially external, or about avoiding consequences.

- An attitude of “pursuing peace” (Rom 12:18): Scripture tells us that we do not know ourselves, we make mistakes, we do wrong without even realizing we are doing wrong! With that said, we need attitudes of humility and are called to initiate reconciliation:

*So, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. (Matt 5:23–24)*

So, we do not determine if we wronged someone, if someone believes that we have wronged them than we need to take that seriously. We do not determine their hurt or assume we understand the consequences of our actions and the affects it has on other people. Rather we must do our best to make it right.

With that said too, wisdom is needed as we too want to be cautious that people can be manipulative.

- Counsel: often in conflict we do not see our own sin, or our contribution in strife and friction— Scripture is clear to get counsel from a trusted mature follower of Jesus Christ (Prov 15:22; 2 Tim 3:16–17; Gal 6:2). In general: give people the benefit of the doubt (1 Cor. 13:7), treat them better than we ourselves should be treated (Phil 2:3–4), it is really about humility and expectation to be right with others (James 4:6).
- Contrition: it is a feeling of remorse, but more than a worldly sorrow of getting caught or in trouble, but rather knowing this is displeasing to God and it will result in changed behavior (cf. 2 Cor. 7:10). We want to take this to the Lord, so that this is not simply a way of making amends, or being penitent, ... we want heart examination that leads to conviction. On the other hand, too, this is a spiritual process so remember— do not expect someone to do this the way I have it here— I am just being a bit exhaustive as this is such an important topic and discussed at great length in Scripture (Ps 34:18; 51:17; 147:3; Is 57:15; 66:2).
  - ✓ Listening to what has occurred (perhaps with a child being able to paraphrase or summarize what happened and why it is wrong). (Prov 18:13,17).
  - ✓ Ownership: being responsible for and personally owning one’s part in the issue (Prov 28:13; Gal 6:5).

- ✓ Recognizing hurt, there are consequences to others (this is an important balancing act... caution (!) as to not crush a person with guilt or shame (Rom 8:1), but in-part instilling empathy (Matt 7:12; 1 Pet 3:8; Eph. 4:32; Rom 12:15;). The goal of repentance is not punitive (Psalm 37:8; Jam 1:20; 1 Thess 5:9), but redemptive (James 1: 2–4; 1 Pet 1:7) and reconciliatory (Rom 5:10; 2 Cor 5:20).
- Contemplation & Conviction: take this to the Lord and understand that sin is first and foremost against God. Self-examination is necessary. It is a hatred of sin and a zeal to do right.

Our hearts are deceitful and hard to comprehend, we need God’s help in discerning our own motivation (Jer 17:9; cf. 1 Cor 2:14; Rom 1:21). So, we want to examine what was going on in our hearts (especially in light of Scripture and prayer) that caused us to harm or rebel in the situation (Rom 7:19), we need God to help us understand our own motivations in the midst of the conflict (James 4:1).

How we treat people is a reflection of how we treat God (James 3:9–10), in other words: if we are not confessing our sins to one another (James 5:16), then we are probably not confessing our sins to God (1 John 1:9).

- Confession: this term can be confusing in our vernacular; we think of TV crime shows ... like a “who-done-it?” ... when we do not know who the culprit is and we want them to confess. But confession is not about new information ... confession in the original language means “agreement.” We want the repentant person to be in agreement that what they did was wrong, serious, and deserving reconciliation. God is omniscient (all-knowing), He knows what we have done— He wants us to be in agreement that what we have done is wrong. So, we want to confess our sins to God and one another— repentance is about renouncing sin.
- Changed Behavior: this will not happen perfectly, but it needs to be taken seriously. We do not want people to be making promises (to change) that they cannot keep, but we do want them to pursue obedience. This is a process because the change needs to be about the heart rather than simply behaviorism.

*For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, (Titus 2:11–12).*

We do not understand fully why we do what we do and sometimes we simply do things out of habit, other times we do things because our hearts are not in the right place, what we want is a faith response to the situations in life. Sometimes with habitual sin, (i.e., lying!) a good indicator of progress is quicker repentance, more humility, and the ability to receive and extend grace.

- Compensation: if harm was done, or if there are consequences of the behavior that affects another person. Compensation is about righting a wrong, but a balance needs to occur when we create consequences so that helping others is not seen as a punishment. The hope is that we are longing to make this right (2 Cor 7:8–11).
- Community (this teaching came from a sermon in which I tried to alliterate all the applications with “C” words – this is probably better to say “go public” with the regret), if I sin against someone publicly, than I need to do my best to make amends in front of, or reach-out to those who publicly witnessed this.
- Cross: our sins are forgiven at the cross— this does not mean we do not take repentance very seriously, but we do not let the enemy have a foothold. We do not let remorse consume us. We do not walk around in defeat (Rom 8:1). Rather this should lead us to being more thankful, thoughtful, humble and dependent upon God; we should have joy— especially with a child— encourage and show grace in repentance. That is, you want your child to be able to trust you, be able to make mistakes, and be able to take instruction from you, ... what I am trying to say ... never glorify sin, but celebrate repentance (Luke 15:10).

Also, if the offended person is holding a grudge, or giving the “cold shoulder” — then *move-on!* You looked at Scriptures, followed biblical guidelines, if necessary, gotten other people’s perspectives (counsel), been patient, and prayerfully took it to the Lord, so if all that is done ... do not be manipulated by people! In other words, watch out for people pleasing (just as you do not want to burden a person with guilt or shame); be careful too that we are God pleasing instead of people pleasing.

#### Obstacles to Repentance:

I find that one of the biggest obstacles to repentance is pride! All the “self” centered words spring from pride (i.e., self-sufficiency — turns into self-justification— turns into self-righteousness— etc.), it just spirals downward — the more prideful we become the more worldly we become. Repentance is the opposite of pride; it is about humility and it is about the heart. There are some examples of God grabbing a hold of His people (often in a dramatic way [i.e., Paul on the Damascus road]) ... but more often it is about us humbling ourselves (dying to self) and yielding to the Holy Spirit.

#### Heart of Repentance:

The main issue is the heart, the world (like a bad Hallmark card), tells us to “follow our hearts,” but God’s Word tells us that we need to guard our hearts.

*Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. (Prov 4:23)*

The reality, is that our hearts are our driving force, it is what we long for and the greatest influence on a person will be to help them to develop a heart that loves and prioritizes God. The key to change is one’s union with Christ and this occurs through the Holy Spirit that is at work in our souls.

When it comes to shepherding a child— I might add the word, Courage! You are teaching the child that God’s ways are the right ways (that’s faith); it takes courage to do the right thing! The word “encourages” (en = in) means to “in-courage” – it is literally “to give courage.” How do you give someone courage to do the right thing? Encourage:

- Comfort (Matt 5:4): if a person is taking to heart a wrong committed, then fear and shame should naturally follow disobedience. So too, recognize that God pardons sin (Psalm 130), and so do we! (Eph 4:32).

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup> who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. (2 Cor 1:3–4).*

Acceptance: God knows everything and everything about us (1 John 3:20), He knows everything we have done and every dark thought and evil deed and yet He has still chosen us! He has chosen to be part of us (John 14:20; 17:23; Col 1:27). His presence is with us and He never abandons us (Heb 13:5–6). He is not ashamed of us (Heb 2:11). He knows we will fail and yet He loves us and calls us to keep pursuing Him and His ways.

- Holiness and the heart: God works through grace! He is not holding our wrongs against us, but wants us to grow-up and mature into the image of His Son (2 Peter 3:16–18). God is for us! His plan is greater than ours! He wants to make us like Him and He does this by sharing Himself with us. God is love and He is growing us to be more loving (Luke 6:27–36). God is mercy and He is growing us to be more merciful (Matt 5:7). God is wisdom and He is making us wiser (Eph 1:17). God grows us to be like Him (Eph 5:1). Our growth is for His glory and our trials are to make us more like Him (1 Cor 11:1):

*And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. (2 Cor 3:18).*

He uses our trials to move us closer to Him. We want to be independent and self-sufficient, but God wants us dependent upon Him. He is the best thing for us and we need to pursue Him.

- Modeling holiness: Basically, in discipleship— one needs to follow in order to lead. That is, if you want to see repentance in your family you need to model repentance (2 Thess 3:9). This follows many attributes that the Lord shares with us: the merciful will see mercy (Matt 5:6); the forgiven must be forgiving (Eph 4:32); the humble receive grace (James 4:6); ...
- Listening, as a person repeats and tells the narrative — possible several times if appropriate, then this helps a person process. Also, we have said many times



know that often a person will not know or understand why they do what they did. Listen to emotions and trace those emotions to the heart: did they act out of fear? Anger? Pride? How does God's Word speak to these things? Remember: wisdom comes from listening and listening comes from humility.

- Enter into the struggle: “truthing” — in Ephesians 4:15, it tells us that maturity (Christ-likeness) occurs through “speaking the truth in love.” The word truth in this verse is actually a participle (it is a word usually translated with “ing” but “truth-ing” is not good English – maybe better translated “prove true”). Basically, this verse is saying how has God's Word in this area worked in your life? How has a faith response in trials “proven true?” Truthing is being vulnerable and transparent in struggles, but also showing how God works through faithfulness.

The heart in conflict: in James 4, the apostle uses Old Testament language to describe repentance, (i.e., ashes and sackcloth). The language is striking and a person might not relate to this description of mourning over sin (the way an adult gets it). But what I would emphasize is that James tells us the source of our struggles is our own hearts.

*What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? (James 4:1).*

In other words, we are in conflict because there is conflict with-in us. We are in battles because there is a battle with-in us. But God is faithful and when we humble ourselves, He gives us grace. In James 4:6 the pattern is the more we humble ourselves the more grace He gives.

- Blessing: the Word bless literally means “to speak highly” to “praise” when your person confesses— let them know they have done the right thing. Repentance is about obedience. So too, in developing a lifestyle of repentance trust is needed, in order to encourage more good behavior. Trust is necessary for developing transparency and vulnerability because we are ultimately wanting to discuss the heart behind the repentance (or the heart behind the lack of repentance!).
- Worship: the main problem is what we worship the wrong things (idolatry).

Much of this is about wisdom as we take seriously the command to live at peace with one another as best as you can (Rom 12:18) and develop a lifestyle of repentance (Is 55:6–7). The hope is that this is not a checklist, but a means of developing a greater trust in the Lord and His Word, and the main take-away in shepherding is that when it comes to repentance: target the heart!

## REPENTANCE: *SIN, SINS, AND SINNED*

### The Word of Life

1 John 1:1–4 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the Word of life—<sup>2</sup> the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—<sup>3</sup> that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup> And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

### Walking in the Light

1 John 1:5–7 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.<sup>6</sup> If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.<sup>7</sup> But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

Confess: in 1 John, the apostle starts with confession — confessing sin is imperative: how it resides in us (1:8), how it affects others (1:9) and God (1:10). The word confession means “agreement”; it is to acknowledge and come clean about abusive behavior. It is not that God does not know what has been done, rather it is to “agree” with God that abusive/oppressive behavior is sinful: it is transgression and rebellion against God and His people.

1 JOHN 1:8–10 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.<sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.<sup>10</sup> If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his Word is not in us.

Sin is mentioned 3 times in 3 succinct verses, but there is a different nuance to each use:

In 1:8, sin is singular: “sin”; it is speaking of one’s sin nature.<sup>13</sup>

In 3:4, John tells us that sin is “lawlessness.” This lawlessness is very serious— it is satanic, it is self-rule, a rejection of God to put oneself on the throne. It is the motivation, attitudes, beliefs, and values that manifest in unrighteousness.

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<sup>13</sup> Stephen S. Smalley, *1, 2, 3, John*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 51 (Waco: Word, 1984),

In 1:9, sin is plural: “sins”; it is specific sins that we are called to confess.

In verse 1:9 and in 5:17, sin is “unrighteousness”, and this unrighteousness is the result of having sinful (lawless: self-ruling) hearts. It is how sin manifests: who we sin against and how we sin against them. God never attributes sin to circumstances, no one causes us to sin, rather it is our deceptive hearts that produce’s this unrighteousness (Mark 7:20–23; 2 Tim 3:1–5).

In 1:10, sin is in the past tense: “sinned” (it is the perfect tense showing a completed action). The context refers to the ongoing consequences of unrepentant sin.

It points to our hypocrisy: the difference between our beliefs and actions. The cycles of behaviors that separates us from God and others. Unrepentant sin is especially terrifying because it shows one’s true allegiances (1 John 3:8–10).

It then follow’s the categories of sin mentioned in 1 John 1:8–10 that may assist a person who is “self-deceived” (1:8) and/or “lying” (1:10) about abusive behavior:

Event, conflict, trigger, incident: the context of the abuse:	1:8 Sin nature: the human heart is lawless — self-ruling and ant-god:	1:9 Specifics sins: the unrighteousness, that flows from an idolatrous heart:	1:10 Hypocritical and divisive patterns that are produced by unrepentant sin:



PRACTICE TRUTH: involves tracing the resistance to the truth, as the disciple attempts to be faithful to the Lord, what is stopping him/her from doing so? What are the barriers to becoming more like Jesus? We will look at one's affections and cognition (thoughts/thought processes), to discover the heart issues behind the presenting problem.

- 1 John: 2:7–14 What to love
- 1 John 2:15–17 What not to love
- 1 John 2:18–2:25 False teachings/teachers
- 1 John 2:26–28 Anointed teaching/ the Word

The triune God is not only the source of truth, but God the Father (John 17:3), the Son (John 14:6; 1 John 5:20), and Holy Spirit are truth (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 1 John 3:24; 4:2, 6; 4:13; 5:6, 8); disciples are in a personal relationship with the Truth. Christians historically have believed that knowing truth comes through knowing God as God alone can accurately and factually define reality.

Unfortunately, humanity's sin nature is complicit upon and perpetuated through self-deception (1:8). When one lies, they lie to themselves first, and even secular psychologies assert man's thoughts are at best, opinions. As previously noted, *Alethia* has an alpha primitive; this negates the meaning and is combined with *lēthia* (the *hidden* mythical river). Truth means to un-conceal, or to reveal; its antonyms are to be forgotten, to be unaware, and oblivious.<sup>14</sup> In 1 John self-deception is intentional ignorance regarding sin (1:6, 8).<sup>15</sup> The opposite of truth: "is not found simply in error or falsehood but in lying: wanting to keep, in addition to the true, the false, because one loves it as much as, indeed more than, the true" (cf., John 3:19–21).<sup>16</sup> Since, the presenting problem is addressed in reorientating the counselee to Christ, the underlying root issue may be identified through un-concealing the resistance to the lordship of Jesus. This step on "practicing truth," is to align one's behavior (practice) with one's beliefs (i.e., truth—biblical convictions). To practice truth is to pursue truth, which in turn is to pursue the Lord.

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<sup>14</sup> Lee McIntyre's *Post-Truth* is helpful as it identifies the subversion of truth (from falsehoods to willful ignorance to lying), much like a slippery slope from ignorance to intentional deception. Lee McIntyre, *Post-Truth*, MIT Press Essential Knowledge (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2018), 7–15.

<sup>15</sup> Linda Zagzebski in seeking out motivation behind desire for autonomy and authority: "The ultimate authority over the self is the self." Linda T. Zagzebski, "Authority in Religious Communities," in Abraham and Aquino, *Oxford Handbook of The Epistemology of Theology*, 97.

<sup>16</sup> Jean-Luc Marion, *In the Self's Place: The Approach of Saint Augustine*, trans. Jeffrey L. Kosky (Stanford, CA: Stanford University, 2012), 111–12.

A dad sought counsel regarding his young adult son struggling with depression, suicidal ideation, and wanting to pursue gender transition. The dad was consistently (even egregiously) disrespected and estranged by both his sons (he has three young adult men). It appeared that the dad was struggling with “people pleasing” (he stated both sons verbalized this). He had a disconnect in his thinking as he did not agree with the people pleasing diagnosis, but at the same time, could not explain his people pleasing behavior. The people pleasing was a blind spot to the dad—it was self-deceptive—the dad intentionally denied what was so obvious to myself and one of our deacons (who was discipling the dad).

Tracing the resistance requires a “reality” check, identifying the separation between what one believes and how one behaves (3:18). Other terms may also work well with uncovering resistance, such as “blind spots” (lack of self-awareness), idolatry (assigning excessive value to someone or something—a God replacement), or the term “hypocrisy gap” (never referring to the counselee as a hypocrite but being self-referential in personal illustrations showing one’s own separation between belief and behavior). The truth often is situated in this “gap” or to be more precise “practicing truth” should close the gap—reduce one’s hypocrisy. Shepherding is an appropriate term in drawing a counselee out of resistance to disclose the root issue. The counselor does not demand repentance, yet truth is necessary for repentance. Powlison and Welch are particularly helpful here in uncovering the cause, drive, or rationale in “X-Ray Questions.”<sup>17</sup> The dad in the above example, was conflicted by being made aware of the people pleasing, yet denying this “reality.” Progressing out of this self-deception requires gentle shepherding as the counselee tends to avoid the resistance—the counselor must continually keep the counselee on a path forward (practicing truth versus self-deception, avoidance, detachment, etc.).<sup>18</sup> This is about connecting the counselee and the Lord; God is truth, to resist truth is to resist God (John 14:17).<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> David Powlison, “X-Ray Questions: Drawing Out the Whys and Wherefores of Human Behavior,” *Journal of Biblical Counsel* 18, no. 1 (Fall 1999): 2–9. Edward Welch speaks of not simply diving into Powlison’s “X-Ray Questions,” “but instead create a dialogue in which motivations and desires can be traced through the emotions.” Edward Welch, “Questions about Questions,” *Journal of Biblical Counsel* 33, no. 3 (2019): 3.

<sup>18</sup> Marion notes, “In short, to not hate the light, it must be loved more than oneself, at least more than the self, whose traits it accuses. If in contrast, I love myself, however deformed, more than the light that accuses me, than I will have to hate it, since it will continue to accuse me, and I will also have to love myself as deformed. And in this way, I will end up hating myself as much as I hate the truth.” Marion, *In the Self’s Place*, 113.

<sup>19</sup> In his chapter on prayer (“Wounded Speech”), Jean-Louis Chrétien unpacks the truth about prayer: in praying the Christian is making truth statements about God. Praying shows a belief that God is omnipresent, omnipotence, immanent, and transcendent. Prayer makes a statement about one’s dependence upon God and need for mercy:

To ask God, to accomplish in speech an act of a question and request, means that, as we speak to him, we at one and the same time say something about him and something about ourselves inseparably. We make ourselves manifest to ourselves; we are through speech made manifest to ourselves as we manifest ourselves to him. To ask is actively to acknowledge that we are not the origin of every good and every gift. . . . All prayer confesses God as giver, by dispossessing us of our self-centeredness, in

Reframing is about changing distortions, perceptions, and reversing negative thought patterns, by realigning and reorientating the counselee to the God of truth (1 John 3:18–19).<sup>20</sup> God defines reality, but with finite man, truth is to be agreed-upon (i.e., two witnesses; cf., Deut 19:15; John 8:17; Rev 11:1–14), and confessed (1 John 1:9; 2:3; 4:2, 3, 15). Needed is a faithful subordination of one’s perceptions to truth defined by the Lord (2:4) through His Word; God is right, and one must align one’s perceptions to the truth (John 8:43–47). My experience in pastoral counselling is that followers of Christ typically detach (a cognitive processing that emerges—weighing, examining, and evaluating truth’s implications) that moves towards self-realization and a Christ honoring path forward.<sup>21</sup> In the above example, this “uncovering” identified a gospel issue: the dad believed he deserved to be punished (even by his sons); the dad blamed himself for the divorce that occurred years prior due to his sinful behavior. Discernment and correction are necessary to practice truth, along with the humility and acceptance of not perceiving oneself as the source of truth.

Truth necessitates responsibility. Jerry Bridges has put forth the concept: responsible dependency.<sup>22</sup> It is clarifying to list and distinguish between one’s duties and one’s dependency upon the Lord. This is particularly helpful both for those who attempt to control situations and for those who tend towards passivity; it aids in thinking through and being intentional in responses. Dependent responsibility amounts to self-control (instead of attempting to control others) and faith (a dependence upon the Lord). The dad’s goal for counsel was to change his child and this has not happened. In the illustration previously mentioned, the dad came to the realization that God has forgiven

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a speech that at every instance the addressee alone, in our eyes, makes possible. By returning to me, prayer does not speak to me of myself alone. (Jean-Louis Chrétien, *The Ark of Speech*, trans. Andrew Brown [New York: Routledge, 2004], 21–22)

<sup>20</sup> The American Psychiatry Association writes,

Reframing: A process of reconceptualizing a problem by seeing it from a different perspective. Altering the conceptual or emotional context of a problem often serves to alter perceptions of the problem’s difficulty and to open up possibilities for solving it. In psychotherapy, for example, the manner in which a client initially frames a problem may be self-defeating. Part of the therapist’s response might be to reframe the problem and the thoughts or feelings that the client associates with it, so as to provide alternative ways to evaluate it. (American Psychiatry Association, “Reframing,” April 19, 2018, <https://dictionary.apa.org/reframing>)

<sup>21</sup> Marion states, “Bearing it does not mean making it mine, however, nor letting myself be reducible to it; rather, it means not denying my deformity and, by admitting it, finding myself at once free from it. In recognizing it, I am detached from it, and in seeing myself in its light, I appear to myself illuminated by it.” Marion, *In the Self’s Place*, 113.

<sup>22</sup> Jerry Bridges taught at The Orchard-Barrington, and explained that the motto “let go and let God” is flawed and put forth the concept of dependent responsibility. In several of Bridges’s books he used a term dependent responsibility. Jerry Bridges, *The Discipline of Grace: God’s Role and Our Role in the Pursuit of Holiness* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2006) 129–46. Paul David Tripp has this concept under the heading “Clarifying Responsibility,” and has a drawing which is simply a circle within a circle: “This inner circle represents the things that God has called me to do that I cannot pass on to anyone else. The only proper response is to seek to understand and to faithfully obey.” Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2002), 250.

his past, and if God is not punishing him, then he should not punish himself. But in “practicing the truth” the dad is responding responsibly and in dependence upon the Lord, and has restored his relationship with his other (non-transitioning) son, navigating through the difficulties of loving his younger son while not attempting to manipulate him.

## THE NOETIC EFFECTS OF SIN

The noetic effects of sin, means sin effects our minds and thinking, that we do not understand our own hearts, Jeremiah says the heart is deceitful and sick; who can understand it (Jer 17:9), it means we do not understand our selves (Rom 7:18–20). *Nous* is simply Greek for the mind (understanding, intellect, reason), but the noetic effects of sin suggest that the mind is not working as it should. Man is created in the image of God (questions #9), and therefore a reflection of his Creator. But due to sin, man is separated from God, this separation is increases idolatrous, and self-deceptive. He is futile in thinking and foolishness in hearts, man lacks knowledge of God and of self (Ro 1:21). Man does not do good, and has a bitter, idolatrous and self-serving wickedness (Ro 3:10–18). Through a hardness of heart unregenerate humanity is unreceptive to the Lord, the mind struggles with futility. This sinful heart leads to sinful actions (Eph 4:17–19). Hardened hearts and veiled minds. Wisdom is the beginning of self-knowledge; (James 1:5 1 Cor 8:3) and fearing the Lord (Prov 1:7).

When a person comes to saving faith in Jesus Christ, they are regenerate (Ex 36:26; Titus 3:5. The Holy Spirit now resides in their soul, they come to know God through Jesus Christ, His Word (both through its public proclamation or private study), prayer, discipleship and community. The knowledge of God comes through knowing Jesus (John 14:9), Scripture tells us that we have the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16; Phil 2:2–5). As new creation (Rom 6:4; Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17–21), we gain wisdom through knowing and applying Gods Word and to grow, mature, and be transformed in our thinking (Phil 4:8; Rom 12:1–2; 1 Peter 1:13). Christians also have a different perspective, for example: in Christ— Christians, are able to see things from an eternal perspective, suffering is redemptive, and obedience leads to blessing. Holiness is a commitment to God, to His ways and glory.

In Christ, Christians have a new identity, faith is living-in, and trusting-in God's promises, learning to die to self and be dependent upon the Lord. There is a certain reciprocal relationship, and God works in and through the believer— in which one imparts their blessings onto others— he who receives mercy gives mercy, he who has been forgiven is called to forgive, he who has received comfort is called to comfort others... through the Word we are able to think God's thoughts after Him.

Psychologists do not understand the noetic effects of sin, they suppress the truth, ... living for self and simply denying sin (Matt 23:13–15; 1 John 1:10). The noetic effects of sin, it's like being lost and not knowing your lost. There is self-deception, sin makes people think they're ok (1 John 1:8). Due to the noetic effects of sin, people are presumptions about relationship with God (James 4:13–16).



## X-RAY QUESTIONS

The following is taken from *How People Change*; it is a shortened version of an article by David Powlison called “X-Ray Questions.”<sup>23</sup>

The questions that follow can help you do this more effectively. Repentance is not true repentance unless it is specific and intelligent. We do not sin in the abstract; we sin in concrete, particular ways. Since that is true, we need to take an honest look at our lives—both heart and behavior. Spiritual awareness is a blessing. Through it, we can experience change. Use these questions to turn away from idols and turn to the mercy and power of Christ. ...

1. What do you love? Is there something you love more than God or your neighbor?
2. What do you want? What do you desire? What do you crave, long for, wish? Whose desires do you obey?
3. What do you seek? What are your personal expectations and goals? What are your intentions? What are you working for?
4. Where do you back your hopes? What hope are you working toward or building your life around?
5. What do you fear? Fear is the flip side of desire. For example, if I desire your acceptance, then I fear your rejection.
6. What do you feel like doing? This is a synonym for desire. Sometimes we feel like eating a gallon of ice cream, or staying in bed, or refusing to talk, etc.
7. What do you think you need? In most cases a person’s felt needs picture his or her idol cravings. Often what we have called necessities are actually deceptive masters that rule our hearts. They control us because they seem plausible. They do not seem so bad on the surface and it is not sin to want them. However, I must not be ruled by the “need” to feel good about myself, to feel loved and accepted, to feel some sense of accomplishment, to have financial security, to experience good health, to live a life that is organized, pain-free, and happy.
8. What are your plans, agendas, strategies, and intentions designed to accomplish? What are you really going after in the situations and relationships of life? What are you really working to get?
9. What makes you tick? What sun does your planet revolve around? Where do you find your garden of delight? What lights up your world? What food sustains your life? What really matters to you? What are you living for?
10. Where do you find refuge, safety, comfort, and escape? When you are fearful, discouraged, and upset, where do you run? Do you run to God for comfort and safety or to something else? (To food, to others, to work, to solitude?)
11. What do you trust? Do you functionally rest in the Lord? Do you find your sense of well-being in His presence and promises? Or do you rest in something or some else?

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<sup>23</sup> Timothy Lane and Paul David Tripp, *How People Change* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2006) 142–45. Powlison, “X-Ray Questions.” Welch speaks of not simply diving into Powlison’s X-Ray Questions, “but instead create a dialogue in which motivations and desires can be traced through the emotions.” Welch, “Questions about Questions,” 3.

12. Whose performance matters to you? This question digs out self-reliance or self-righteousness. It digs out living through another. Do you get depressed when you are wrong or when you fail? Have you pinned your hopes on another person? Are you too dependent up the performance of your husband, wife, children, or friends?
13. Whom must you please? Whose opinion counts? From whom do you desire approval or fear rejection? Whose value system do you measure yourself against? In whose eyes are you living?
14. Who are your role models? Who are the people you respect? Who do you want to be like? Who is your “idol” (In our culture, this word is used for role model.)
15. What do you desperately hope will last in your life? What do you feel must always be there? What can’t you live without?
16. How do you define success or failure in any particular situation? Are your standards God’s standards? Do you define success as the ability to reach your goals? The respect and approval of others? Is it defined by a certain position or the ability to maintain a certain lifestyle? By affluence? By appearance? By acceptance? By location? By accomplishment?
17. What makes you feel rich, secure, and prosperous? The possession, experience, and enjoyment of what would make you happy? The Bible uses the metaphor of treasure here.
18. What would bring you the greatest pleasure? The greatest misery?
19. Whose political power would make everything better for you? Do not just think in a national sense. Think about the workplace and the church. Whose agenda would you like to see succeed and why?
20. Whose victory and success would make your life happy? How do you define victory and success?
21. What do you see as your rights? What do you feel entitled to? What do you feel is your right to expect, seek, require, or demand?
22. In what situations do you feel pressured or tense? When do you feel confident and relaxed? When you are pressured, where do you turn? What do you think about? What do you fear? What do you seek to escape from? What do you escape to?
23. What do you really want out of life? What payoff are you seeking from the things you do? What is the return you are working for?
24. What do you pray for? The fact that we pray does not necessarily mean we are where we should be spiritually. On the contrary, prayer can be a key revealer of the idols of our hearts. Prayer can reveal patterns of self-centeredness, self-righteousness, materialism, fear of man, etc.
25. What do you think about most often? In the morning, to what does your mind drift instinctively? When you are doing a menial task or driving alone in the car. What captures your mind? What is your mind-set?
26. What do you talk about? What occupies your conversations with others? What subjects do you tend to discuss over and over with your friends? The Bible says that it is out of the heart that our mouths speak.
27. How do you spend your time? What are your daily priorities? What things do you invest time in every day?
28. What are your fantasies? What are your dreams at night? What do you day dream about?

29. What is your belief system? What beliefs do you hold about life, God, yourself, others? What is your worldview? What is the personal “mythology” that structures the way you interpret things? What are your specific beliefs about your present situation? What do you value?
30. What are your idols or false gods? In what do you place your trust or set your hopes? What do you consistently turn to or regularly seek? Where do you take refuge? Who is the savior, judge, controller of your world? Whom do you serve? What voice controls you?
31. In what ways do you live for yourself?
32. In what ways do you live as a slave to the Devil? Where are you susceptible to his lies? Where do you give in to his deceit?
33. When do you say, “If only ...”? Our “if onlys” actually define our vision of paradise. They picture our biggest fears and greatest disappointments. They can reveal where we tend to envy others. They picture where we wish we could rewrite our life story. They picture where we are dissatisfied and what we crave.
34. What instinctively feels right to you? What are your opinions—those things that you feel are true?

## What To Love & Not To Love

### Emotions

Emotions are personal responses to situations that come from our thoughts and actions— they are an overflow of the heart. Humanity is created in the Image of God (Gen. 1:26) to reflect and glorify Him. Scripture is clear, God has emotions and being in His image and likeness we want our hearts to align with His heart— we want to love what God loves and hate what God hates. Therefore, Christians want their emotions to align with His. Human emotions are not necessarily sinful, but because of sin and living in a fallen world— emotions can control people. Feelings are an emotional response to our experiences or perceptions and emotional responses are often habitual. They are very important in counseling because they are indicators for what is occurring in the heart.

The emotions overflow from the heart, counselors can follow their counselee's emotions to better understand the counselee's heart. They are an indicator as to what a counselee believes and perceives. Special care must be taken as the term “feelings” can be misleading because our culture uses this term for things that are not emotions. For example, “I feel wronged” is not accurate, one has been wronged or perceived that they have been wronged— “wronged” is not an emotion. Another issue in contemporary culture is that people are encouraged to act on their feeling (one is inauthentic if not acting on their feelings)— this can be sinful and destructive in relationships. A goal in counseling may be self-control; maturity is not being emotionless, but showing the appropriate emotions at the appropriate time.

Emotions that often have negative consequences are not necessarily sinful, for example, being angry is not necessarily sinful (Eph. 4:26). Sinful emotions have a self-focus, like a child losing his temper after losing a ball game. Emotions are righteous when focused on God and His glory. Jesus in the temple, overturning tables was not self-focused, but it was controlled and an expression of jealousy for God's holiness (John 2:15). It is important to get thinking and beliefs lined-up with a person's actions. Christ is our model and we want to emulate Him, so we want to align our thoughts with His (through His Word) and align our actions or reactions with His to create godly responses.

Strategies: as stated we want to align our responses, (which require aligning our beliefs and perceptions) with God's truth— Christians want to think God's thoughts and have the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16; Phil 2:5–8). Perceptions should be aligned with theological truths, a person who struggles with fear should seek to understand God's sovereignty, someone struggling with anger should study God's mercy, or overcome depression with hope... etc. Following the emotions are a good strategy to understanding the heart, they are indicators of what one believes. Scripture gives insight into how to control emotions: prayer is an antidote to anxiety (Phil 4:4–6), fear is to be replaced with faith (Psalm 32:8), neediness with gratitude (Psalm 69)... etc. Spiritual change occurs also through character change: to imitate Jesus is to walk in the Spirit and bare the fruit (show the results) of the Spirit (Gal 5:22–23). God's Word affirms certain emotions, for example in the psalms the author is often crying out to God— in other words crying out to God is part of the human condition. After all, Jesus wept at Lazarus's grave (John 11:35). Followers of Christ should be increasing in holiness (acting on biblical convictions), loving

what God loves and hating sin (Phil 1:6). Christians hate sin and not other people, loving others— even those who do not love us back (Luke 6:27–36) is part of growing in sanctification. Right beliefs will lead to right actions which in turn should lead to right feelings.

## THE NEW COMMANDMENT

1 JOHN 2:7–11 Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard.

<sup>8</sup> At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.

<sup>9</sup> Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness.

<sup>10</sup> Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling.

<sup>11</sup> But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

- How do you define success or failure in any particular situation? Are your standards God's standards? Do you define success as the ability to reach your goals? The respect and approval of others? Is it defined by a certain position or the ability to maintain a certain lifestyle? By affluence? By appearance? By acceptance? By location? By accomplishment?
- What would bring you the greatest pleasure? The greatest misery?

## SANCTIFICATION

1 JOHN 2:12–14

<sup>12</sup> I am writing to you, little children,  
because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake.

<sup>13</sup> I am writing to you, fathers,  
because you know him who is from the beginning.

I am writing to you, young men,  
because you have overcome the evil one.

I write to you, children,  
because you know the Father.

<sup>14</sup> I write to you, fathers,  
because you know him who is from the beginning.

I write to you, young men,  
because you are strong,  
and the word of God abides in you,  
and you have overcome the evil one.

- Whose victory and success would make your life happy? How do you define victory and success?
- What do you really want out of life? What payoff are you seeking from the things you do? What is the return you are working for?

## DO NOT LOVE THE WORLD

1 JOHN 2:15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

- Who are your role models? Who are the people you respect? Who do you want to be like? Who is your “idol” (In our culture, this word is used for role model.)
- What do you desperately hope will last in your life? What do you feel must always be there? What can’t you live without?

1 JOHN 2:16 For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.

- What do you think you need? In most cases a person’s felt needs picture his or her idol cravings. Often what we have called necessities are actually deceptive masters that rule our hearts. They control us because they seem plausible. They do not seem so bad on the surface and it is not sin to want them. However, I must not be ruled by the “need” to feel good about myself, to feel loved and accepted, to feel some sense of accomplishment, to have financial security, to experience good health, to live a life that is organized, pain-free, and happy.
- Where do you find refuge, safety, comfort, and escape? When you are fearful , discouraged, and upset, where do you run? Do you run to God for comfort and safety or to something else? (To food, to others, to work, to solitude?)

1 JOHN 2:17 And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

- Whom must you please? Whose opinion counts? From whom do you desire approval or fear rejection? Whose value system do you measure yourself against? In whose eyes are you living?
- What is your belief system? What beliefs do you hold about life, God, yourself, others? What is your worldview? What is the personal “mythology” that structures the way you interpret things? What are your specific beliefs about your present situation? What do you value?

## WARNING CONCERNING ANTICHRISTS

1 JOHN 2:18 Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore, we know that it is the last hour.

- In what ways do you live as a slave to the Devil? Where are you susceptible to his lies? Where do you give in to his deceit?
- In what ways do you live for yourself?

1 JOHN 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.

- What are your idols or false gods? In what do you place your trust or set your hopes? What do you consistently turn to or regularly seek? Where do you take refuge? Who is the savior, judge, controller of your world? Whom do you serve? What voice controls you?

1 JOHN 2:20–22 But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge. <sup>21</sup> I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth. <sup>22</sup> Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son.

- Whom must you please? Whose opinion counts? From whom do you desire approval or fear rejection? Whose value system do you measure yourself against? In whose eyes are you living?
- Who are your role models? Who are the people you respect? Who do you want to be like? Who is your “idol” (In our culture, this word is used for role model.)

1 JOHN 2:23–25 No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also. <sup>24</sup> Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. <sup>25</sup> And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life.

- What do you trust? Do you functionally rest in the Lord? Do you find your sense of well-being in His presence and promises? Or do you rest in something or some else?
- Whose performance matters to you? This question digs out self-reliance or self-righteousness. It digs out living through another. Do you get depressed when you are wrong or when you fail? Have you pinned your hopes on another person? Are you too dependent up the performance of your husband, wife, children, or friends?

1 JOHN 2:26–27 I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. <sup>27</sup> But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need

that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.

- What do you pray for? The fact that we pray does not necessarily mean we are where we should be spiritually. On the contrary, prayer can be a key revealer of the idols of our hearts. Prayer can reveal patterns of self-centeredness, self-righteousness, materialism, fear of man, etc. What do you see as your rights? What do you feel entitled to? What do you feel is your right to expect, seek, require, or demand?





KEEPING THE WORD: Saturating the disciple with 1 John and specific Scripture for their specific struggle.

1 John: 2:28–3:3 Purging & Practicing through the Word

1 John 3:4–10 Battling sin through the Word

Note: 3:4–10 is about addressing sin in general and then it too is a good place to address Scripture that applies to the disciple's specific issues.

1 John 3:19–24 Replacing false thoughts and teachings

1 John 4:1–6 Test false teaching in light of the Word

Note: the brief 1 John outline skipped verses 3:11–18 which may fit better under the next section: “Love First.” This study is flexible, that is I might be using Scripture from other parts of the Bible to address the core issue here. On the other hand, I might simply read through this section (3:11–18) with the disciple—remember that amplification is part of John's style and so it is ok to revisit topics and note that we will be doing a deeper dive on this topic of love in the next “Love First” section.

The previous section spoke of dispossession, this section is on “keeping,” a term nuanced with possessing.<sup>24</sup> This is internalizing the Word and applying it to specific issues—the lay counselor will use the Word in each counseling session and the counselee will increase in biblical literacy which will aid in studying, applying, and obeying Scripture. The thesis of this section is that “keeping the Word” implies an integrative hermeneutic that requires a receptive heart developed through constancy in the Word. Testimonies will be discussed in the concluding section, but the anticipation in this section is that the counselee will prove the Word true by applying it to their struggles.

Keeping the Word requires constancy.<sup>25</sup> In 1 John, Christians, have the Word “in us” (1:10), they are “abiding in the Word” (2:14), “keeping the Word” is acting upon it and is equivalent to abiding in the triune God (the Word in relation to the abiding and indwelling Spirit: 3:24). Regarding allegiances (John 17:14–16), one is “from God” (1 John 2:27; 4:6), not from the world (2:14, 16; 4:5) when one “listens” to (heeds) the apostolic message (4:6). Sin is disobedience. John’s adversaries (those denying their sinfulness and who left the congregation [2:19]) do not have the Word or truth (1:8, 10). This obedience is related to “keeping” Jesus’s “commandments” (2:7, 8; 3:23; 4:21) and “abiding” in the Father and the Son (3:24).

This constancy in keeping the Word (internalizing, acting upon, and being responsible to it) should grow the counselee in Christlikeness: the *teteleiōtai* (perfecting, completing, fulfilling) occurs in obedience to His commandments (i.e., the Word) (3:11, 22) and this *teteleiōtai* occurs through abiding in God (by the Holy Spirit) (3:24; 4:16). The result of this *teteleiōtai* is love (2:5; 4:18) (discussed in the next section). In other words, doing the will of God (obedience), keeping the Word, and abiding in the Lord results in a dynamic love (2:3–4).

In *The Words of Christ*, Henry, on the “intelligibility” of the *Logos/logos*, started with (1) Christ’s words about humanity (the human condition). Then (2) Christ’s words

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<sup>24</sup> The Orchard is EFCA committed to the denomination’s statement of faith. See Evangelical Free Church of America, “EFCA Statement of Faith,” accessed December 1, 2024, <https://www.efca.org/sof>. A resource to supplement this training is from our senior pastor hosting The Gospel Coalition’s Midwest Chapter on the Word, which unpacks the three “I”s (inerrancy, inspiration, and infallibility) as well as the acronym SCAN (Sufficiency, Clarity, Authority, and Necessity). This teaching is modified from Kevin DeYoung, *Taking God at His Word: Why the Bible Is Knowable, Necessary, and Enough, and What That Means for You and Me* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014).

<sup>25</sup> For Ricoeur, constancy, as in “keeping one’s word” is necessary for personal identity, so too, keeping God’s Word is required for Christian identity:

Self-constancy is for each person that manner of conducting himself or herself so that others can count on that person. Because someone is counting on me, I am accountable for my actions before another. The term “responsible” unites both meanings: “counting on” and “being accountable for.” It unites them adding to them the idea of a response to the question “Where are you?” asked by another who needs me. This response is the following: “Here I am!” a response that is a statement of self-constancy. (Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another* [Chicago: University of Chicago, 1992], 165)

This logic applies to keeping God’s Word, as keeping God’s Word is ethical—it entails responsibility in the way one reacts toward others. It develops identity through obedience to the Word, internalizing God’s Word into one’s thoughts, and therefore a constancy that is sanctifying.

about Himself, that is, on Jesus's claims of who He is (His divinity, which has implications on His love, ability, Word, promises, etc.). And then (3) Christ's words to justify or legitimize these words in regard to Himself and us. In training lay counselors I will be advocating a modified version of Henry's *The Words of Christ* hermeneutic and alliterate (with the letter "r") with the terms: reality, remedy, and redemption. The counselor tends to be short on time (I will be advocating 50-minute sessions) and in this short period of time he or she will be able to use Scripture to explain the human condition (reality), how a relationship with Christ addresses the particular issue (remedy), and then how to apply this to one's life (redemption). The counselor should be able to explain the issue in a universal sense (using doctrine) and then with dialoguing with the counselee, relate those doctrines to the specifics of the counselee's personal experiences. The hope here too, is as the counselor will select appropriate texts in which they can identify doctrine and then dialogue with the specifics of the counselee's issues—that this process will in turn create a skill and habit within the counselee.<sup>26</sup>

For example, a group of moms approached an elder and me about an older man and long-time member of our church who was injecting himself into high school ministry on Sundays and then would stare at their daughters in an inappropriate manner. When confronted, Allen was humble, apologetic, and compliant as I asked to meet weekly. I anticipated sexual addiction (i.e., pornography, promiscuity, prostitution?). As we progressed from "walking in the light" to "practicing the truth" Allen revealed his secret—that outside of church he was "Ali" (a man pretending to be a woman). He said he was not a homosexual, nor acting-out in masturbation or promiscuous behavior. He said crossdressing made him feel better about himself (though it caused his divorce over forty years ago), he believed his desire was related to being molested as a child. He knew crossdressing was wrong at some level, but Allen thought that his sin was not serious because he was not sexually acting out and justified his behavior as he was a child victim.

Allen became convicted as we delved into "the lawlessness" (the reality) of the human condition (1 John 3:4). He got specific as we discussed different topics from self-idolatry, perverse thought life, and sin's effects on others (i.e., high school girls), etc.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Grant Osborne writes,

The "illumination" of the interpreter is one aspect of the larger ministry of the Holy Spirit in bringing people to regeneration and daily growth in their Christian life. It is that portion of the "internal testimony" which relates to understanding and applying God's revealed Word. Technically, the *testimonium spiritus sancti internum* relates to our conviction regarding Scripture's authority, and illumination refers to understanding that Word. . . . This means that the Spirit works through the mind and study of the interpreter. However, there is no guarantee that the person will "automatically" comprehend the intended meaning of the passage. The hermeneutical tools all provide grist for the Spirit's will in the act of interpretation. (Grant R. Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction Biblical Interpretation* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991], 340)

<sup>27</sup> Adams notes,

It is the Holy Spirit who accomplishes each of these things for both the counselor and the counselee: (1) He illuminates the believer's mind so that he can interpret the Scriptures, giving ability to understand and wisdom to know how to live according to the will of God. This He does as *the Spirit of Truth* (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13) and *of wisdom* (Isa 11:2; 1 Cor 2:13). (2) He gives power both to

Allen became convicted of his sinfulness; the realization that this separated him from Jesus (and others) and saw the “remedy” in 1 John 1:9 through confession (repentance). Allen went “public” in his repentance (he did this in a manner that was beyond my expectation and without my prompting). He purged his house of woman’s clothing, deleted “Ali’s” social media, and joined a corrective small group which included an accountability partner. We spent much time working redemptively through 1 John in which we focused on the contrasts (light/darkness; love/hate; life/death; truth/lie; etc.) in daily thoughts (seeing these contrasts as decisions—choices) and personally flushing out the implications of these choices.<sup>28</sup> This is important to note, as discussing these issues with colleagues who tend to prioritize identity (identity is definitely important and biblical), but the focus of this project is on immanence—immanence is prior to identity (Allen was enmeshed in “Ali” for decades), our focus was on 1 John’s contrasts and that this redemptively equates to choices (i.e., “practicing” the truth).<sup>29</sup> It was a focus on the presence of Christ and keeping/guarding His Word in his decision making process that led to Allen’s identity in Christ.

### Children of God

1 JOHN 2:28–29 And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming. <sup>29</sup> If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.

1 John 3:1–3 See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so, we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. <sup>2</sup> Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. <sup>3</sup> And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

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will and to do that will of God whenever believers step out by faith in obedience to scriptural injunctions (Ezek 26:27). This He does as *the Spirit of holiness* (Rom 1:4). The Spirit, then gives power to know and power to do. (Jay Adams, *Use of Scriptures in Counseling* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984], 59)

<sup>28</sup> The Holy Spirit works with the Word to sanctify the follower of Christ. Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, convicts (John 16:8), corrects (14:15), reveals motivations (3:19–21), dethrones oneself (12:24–25), recognizes self-deceit (1 John 1:6, 8; 4:6) and the wreckage that it creates (1 John 1:10, 3:12–15). Scripture not only shows one’s bondage, but the way to freedom (John 8:31–38). The Spirit reminds (John 14:26); teaches (John 14:26; 1 John 2:22); guides (John 16:13). He gives knowledge, understanding (1 John 5:20), and discernment (4:6). God promises His very presence within the believer (John 14:23, 24). Followers participate in Jesus’s ministry through speaking the Word to one another (17:20).

<sup>29</sup> On immanence being prior to identity, see Michel Henry, “Those within Me: A Phenomenology,” in *A Michel Henry Reader*, trans. Scott Davidson, Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, ed. Scott Davidson and Frédéric Seyler (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, 2019), 63–64.

Dispossession, is a common term used in phenomenology that has different meanings for different authors. Marion's thesis in *In the Self's Place*, is that Augustine's goal was to replace one's self (the ego) with the Holy Spirit.<sup>30</sup> Jesus speaks of dying to oneself, and to be more precise, the part of the self that one is dying to is the ego.<sup>31</sup> Dispossession is a letting go of (stop being controlled by) a false belief, past memory, irrational impulse or fear, self-defense mechanism, etc. Truth is "practiced," to know truth requires doing or acting upon the truth. There is an identifying of oneself with the Truth, that is, He who is true.<sup>32</sup> John uses two terms that are particularly helpful: "to purify" oneself is to purge oneself of impurities (3:3) and "to practice" (to do—act upon) which is used regarding righteousness (2:29; 3:7) and truth (1:6).<sup>33</sup> The dad in the previous illustration, was attempting to control (manipulate) the situation (through people pleasing). Change occurred rapidly (almost instantly) in regard to self-realization although the change in behavior took time and accountability. Progress occurs as the discipleship focus (the dad was accountable to and being discipled by a deacon) changed from overcoming people pleasing to overcoming guilt; overcoming guilt diminished the people pleasing. The people pleasing was the presenting problem disclosing a deeper issue of guilt and shame. This dad's relationship with God, that is in properly relating to God's forgiveness and in faith, the dad's relationship with his son has changed. In other words, as the dad is properly relating to God, this dad is now appropriately relating to his children.

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<sup>30</sup> Marion and others see the soul as given—a gift from God while the ego is self-created. The ego is often associated with the development of language (I, me, and mine). This is movement from being controlled by one's ego to the Holy Spirit. Marion, *In the Self's Place*, 282–88.

<sup>31</sup> Marion, Henry, and other Christian phenomenologists perceive the development of the ego with language (this is a post-structuralist approach: that the ego is developed through the acquisition of language). That is, the "I" in the nominative, "me" as the accusative and "mine" in the genitive shows a development of the ego (cf. Henry on the "self" being given and the "ego" being a self-creation. Michel Henry, "The Phenomenology of Birth," in *A Michel Henry Reader*, trans. Michael Tweed, Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, ed. Scott Davidson and Frédéric Seyle, (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, 2019), 29–45.

<sup>32</sup> Marion, *In the Self's Place*, 112–13.

<sup>33</sup> Purifying and practicing are very much the same, as Heath Lambert states, "Adams grounded his teaching on dehabitation and rehabilitation in biblical instruction of 'putting off' and 'putting on.'" Heath Lambert, *The Biblical Counseling Movement After Adams* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 68.

## BATTLING SIN

1 JOHN 3:4–10 Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.<sup>5</sup> You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.<sup>6</sup> No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.<sup>7</sup> Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous.<sup>8</sup> Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.<sup>9</sup> No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's<sup>[b]</sup> seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God.<sup>10</sup> By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

### GOD'S WORD NOT MY DECEPTIVE THOUGHTS

The term “truth” in 1 John appears often and is in relation to God; to be “of the truth” is to be “in Christ.” He is the truth (John 14:6). So, this is a safe place— *He reassures our hearts* even if you are anxious, angry, shamed, confused, or think you have participated or responded sinfully. God knows. *He reassures our hearts*, that He has chosen you before time began (John 15:16) and he chose you knowing that you might not have been as courageous or holy as you wish you have been (1 John 4:18). And he is calling you to draw closer to Him (John 17:22), experience His love (John 4:8–9), His wisdom (John 8:12), and His path to a safer and better place (John 10:10).

1 JOHN 3:19–21 By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him;<sup>20</sup> for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything.<sup>21</sup> Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;

- If we have committed sin, and/or responded sinfully to the situation, ... what is God's remedy (cf. 1:8–9; 2:1–2)?

1 JOHN 3:22 and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.

This verse is about prayer (asking and receiving) and keeping His commandments which is explained in the next verse (3:23). But first, let us do a case study/ an example of people pleasing verses God pleasing: do a word search on how to please God:<sup>34</sup>

Pleasing: favorable, good, approved, gratifying and engaging; two terms used in the New Testament: This Godliness leads to holiness. These two terms for pleasing, not only show the inner disposition, but also the relational and vertical aspect of honoring God by loving (responding in love) to His people.

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<sup>34</sup> Lou Priolo, *Pleasing People: How Not to Be an Approval Junkie* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2007), chaps. 8–9.

- 5:21 *Little children, keep yourselves from idols.* Can people pleasing be an idol?

1 JOHN 3:23 And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.

*Commanded ... to believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ:*

1 John 3:4 *Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.<sup>5</sup> You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.<sup>6</sup> No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.<sup>7</sup> Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous.<sup>8</sup> Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.*

- *Sin is lawlessness* (self-rule, ... selfish autonomous rule), oppressive behavior reveals a heart that is not ruled by Jesus; what does be ruled by Jesus look like?
- *Jesus appeared to destroy the works of the devil*; oppression is evil! No one can practice sinning – doing evil against you. What is the proper response to oppressive and abusive behavior?

1 JOHN 3:24 *Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.*

Verse 23 is about prayer and prayer shows a dependency upon Jesus; verse 24 is about getting our strength from the Holy Spirit that abides in us. We need His strength, His love, and His wisdom.

- How do we protect ourselves and discern oppressive and manipulative behavior?
- How do we not give evil for evil (Rom 12:17)— that is, not tolerate sin but also respond in a healthy manner?
- How do we discern when the loving thing to do is leave or call for help or get others involved?

Different authors will use the term “feelings” differently, but in general feelings are things that come out of us. They reveal the heart/soul. It is a misnomer to say/think: “someone hurt my feelings.” Often (not always!), when we react to our feelings being hurt, we are reacting out of pride. I do not want to marginalize pain or in any way sound dismissive of unresolved hurts, in this list of verses I am simply trying to help us move from responding from out of our past hurts into ways that depend upon and reflect the Lord. This reaction can also be a reaction of self-defense. Previous pains can cause habituated responses too, it is an automatic response because we have been hurt in the past, so we want to control the present. The goal here is to be forward thinking — it is to be driven by our faith, our responses need to be rooted in pleasing the Lord and through loving others (1 John 3:4, 23; 4:7, 11, 12).

Always remember, it is the Son who ultimately pleases the Father, so we cannot get discouraged in pleasing God, rather be thankful that our Lord is a God of grace and reconciliation. He is pleased with us because He is pleased with Jesus (Mark 1:11; Matt 12:18; 17:5) and we are born of Him (1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:4, 18). Responding in our own righteousness is always disastrous, but rather a righteousness (being in a right relationship) in Christ — should bring about humility in us, and blessing from our Lord (Col 1:19).



## TEST THE SPIRITS

1 John 4:1–6 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. <sup>2</sup> By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,<sup>3</sup> and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. <sup>4</sup> Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. <sup>5</sup> They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. <sup>6</sup> We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

## Love First



LOVE First: disciples are called to grow in love and this section is about new responses and/or reactions in love.

Remember: 1 John: 3:11–18 can be discussed in the previous section on Keeping the Word, or it can be discussed here under “love first.”

### Love Test

4:7–21 Love First: new responses and reactions

“Love first” is like the other four maxims in this project as Christians are called to “abide” in God’s love, just as one is to “abide” in the light, truth, Word, and His life. Love, like the other attributes light, truth, Word, and life, is an attribute of a triune God (i.e., God is love: 4:8, 16). “Love first” may seem counterintuitive in a variety of situations and yet this imperative requires one to trust the Lord in imitating Him (1 John 4:19; cf. Rom 5:8). “Love first” is different from the other maxims as they are direct quotes while *love first* is a motto derived from 1 John 4:19. *Agapē* is the most used term for love in 1 John as an “affection” (BAGD 4) and “indicating a general attraction” in NIDNTT.<sup>35</sup> *Agapē* is not dependent upon the object of that love (the beloved), rather it is established by the person manifesting that love (the lover). Erickson states, “In general, God’s love may be thought of as his eternal giving or sharing of himself”; Erickson defines love in four dimensions of God’s love: (1) benevolence, (2) grace, (3) mercy, and (4) persistence.<sup>36</sup> The thesis of this *love first* section is that obedience to the Word engenders and increases one’s capacity to love which creates new responses motivated by the love of God and imitation of Jesus Christ (1 John 2:5; 4:12, 17–18).<sup>37</sup>

<sup>35</sup> BAGD, 4. Walther Günther and H. G. Link, “ἀγάπῳ,” in *NIDNTT*, 2:538. Also, Ingo Broer writes,

The discussions of the divine love reach their high point in the sentence “God is love” (4:8, 16). This is recognized on the basis of God’s action. God sent his Son into the world of death in order to bestow on humankind the gift of life (v. 9) God’s love is directed first at the cosmos, the world of humankind which requires salvation (vv. 9f.; cf. John 3:16). Brotherly love (ἀδελφός 5) is not confined to Church members, as 1 John 3:16f. and 3 John 5 indicate. The stress on brotherly love apparently pursues a double aim: the repulsion of false teachers by means of dependable criterion (1 John 2:9–11; 4:20) and the strengthening of brotherly fellowship among Christians. (Ingo Broer, “ἀγάπῳ,” in *EDNT*, 1:12)

<sup>36</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, (3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 262.

<sup>37</sup> Marion, sees a clear relationship to growing in sanctification and increasing in one’s capacity to love, “For, failing to love more, one ceases to love.” Marion, *In the Self’s Place*, 142.

- Look up Matt 22:37–40: What is God expecting of us?  
On a Scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate yourself on how loving you think you are in regard to others <sup>38</sup>

Min → 1 → 2 → 3 → 4 → 5 → 6 → 7 → 8 → 9 → 10 Max

Due to this project's limited space and time, I will bullet point some key components that were helpful in developing this project and different points may need to be prioritized and communicated in lay counseling training.

1. Look up the following verses: 1 Thess 3:12–13; Eph 4:13–16; Phil 1:8–9.

- Can one increase in love? Yes or No

2. The Way of Love: fill your name in the below spaces:

<sup>4</sup>Love \_\_\_\_\_ is patient and kind; ~~love~~ \_\_\_\_\_ does not envy or boast; it \_\_\_\_\_ is not arrogant <sup>5</sup> or rude. ~~It~~ \_\_\_\_\_ does not insist on its \_\_\_\_\_ own way; ~~it~~ \_\_\_\_\_ is not irritable or resentful; <sup>6</sup> ~~it~~ \_\_\_\_\_ does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but \_\_\_\_\_ rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup> Love \_\_\_\_\_ bears all things, \_\_\_\_\_ believes all things, \_\_\_\_\_ hopes all things, \_\_\_\_\_ endures all things.

Are there areas that you need to work on? Which of these deficiencies convict you the most?

- How can you get started moving forward in loving first?

On a Scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate yourself on how loving you think you are:

Min → 1 → 2 → 3 → 4 → 5 → 6 → 7 → 8 → 9 → 10 Max

3. 1 John speaks of an old commandment and a new commandment:

<sup>7</sup> Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. <sup>8</sup> At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.

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<sup>38</sup> John Broger has a love test that requires participants to rate themselves considering scriptural truths on being loving (he also suggests assessing oneself by writing out the love section of 1 Cor 13:1–13 and replacing one's name for the word love (Workbook 8). John C. Broger, *Self-Confrontation: A Manual for In Depth Biblical Discipleship* (Indio, CA: Biblical Counseling Foundation, 1991), W7–9.

The old commandment is related to Leviticus 19:8 and Deuteronomy 6:5; Jesus sums this up:

Matt 22:37–40 And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. <sup>38</sup> This is the great and first commandment. <sup>39</sup> And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. <sup>40</sup> On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

- Why is loving God necessary for loving others?

The new commandment, Jesus takes love to a new level:

John 13:34–36 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

- What is “new” about this new commandment?

Jesus gives His disciples the ability to follow-through on His commandments; This is John 15:12–17:

<sup>12</sup> This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. <sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command you. <sup>15</sup> No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup> You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. <sup>17</sup> These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

<sup>12</sup> When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, “Do you understand what I have done to you? <sup>13</sup> You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. <sup>14</sup> If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. <sup>15</sup> For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. <sup>16</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. <sup>17</sup> If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

- How can you love others as Christ has loved you?

*On a Scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate yourself on how loving you think you are in regard to others*

*Min —> 1 —> 2 —> 3 —> 4 —> 5 —> 6 —> 7 —> 8 —> 9 —> 10 Max*

4. Loving First means praying for your enemies:

Luke 6:27–36 “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,<sup>28</sup> bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.<sup>29</sup> To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic<sup>[b]</sup>either.<sup>30</sup> Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back.<sup>31</sup> And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.<sup>32</sup> “If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.<sup>33</sup> And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.<sup>34</sup> And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount.<sup>35</sup> But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.<sup>36</sup> Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

- Is only loving those who love us back a form of self-love?<sup>39</sup> How does that work?

*On a Scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate yourself on how loving you think you are in regard to others*

*Min —> 1 —> 2 —> 3 —> 4 —> 5 —> 6 —> 7 —> 8 —> 9 —> 10 Max*

- A sign of growth and maturity is loving those who might not reciprocate that love. Is this an area you can grow in? Can you give specific examples?

5. Augustine, commenting on Gen 2:18, perceived internalizing love (self-love) as perversion, there is an exteriority to love.<sup>40</sup> Christ indwells His followers through the Holy Spirit, when Christians are loving other Christians as they are loving Jesus (i.e., Matt 25:35–37; cf., Acts 9:4–8).

*On a Scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate yourself on how loving you think you are in regard to others*

*Min —> 1 —> 2 —> 3 —> 4 —> 5 —> 6 —> 7 —> 8 —> 9 —> 10 Max*

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<sup>39</sup> Marion writes, “My love always amounts to the love of myself. In other words, because in this love I love myself, I thus love concretely only love those who love me. Whence the judgment of Christ: ‘If you love those who love you, what reward do you deserve?’ Do you the tax-collectors do as much? And you hail only your brethren, what have you done that is so special. So not the gentiles do as much? (Matthew 5:46–47).” Jean-Luc Marion, *Prolegomena to Charity*, trans. Stephen Lewis, Perspectives in Continental Philosophy (New York: Fordham, 2002), 77.

<sup>40</sup> David Vincent Meconi, *On Self-Harm, Narcissism, Atonement, and the Vulnerable Christ* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2020), 103–28.

6. Christians *love first*, as God’s love is the source of their salvation and sanctification. In Johannine literature to experience God’s love is to experience salvation.<sup>41</sup> Human love is a response to God’s love.

*On a Scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate yourself on how loving you think you are in regard to others*

Min → 1 → 2 → 3 → 4 → 5 → 6 → 7 → 8 → 9 → 10 Max

7. Two concrete examples of love being sanctifying in 1 John is in regard to overcoming fear and shame. Fear and shame are ultimately a result of the Fall. In 1 John it is God’s love that overcomes these afflictions. In 1 John, shame is overcome in identity, and this identity (being a child of God) is related to God’s love (3:1). Likewise, with fear, it is God’s perfect love that removes the fear of judgment. This is being perfected “that the Spirit motivates love for fellow believers and the objective practice of love is the basis of their assurance.”<sup>42</sup> Human love is a response to God’s love. Human love is a response to God’s love.

*On a Scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate yourself on how loving you think you are in regard to others*

Min → 1 → 2 → 3 → 4 → 5 → 6 → 7 → 8 → 9 → 10 Max

8. *Loving first* is an act of obedience: sin is disobedience and it is unloving; love is an imperative and a choice.<sup>43</sup> Scripture teaches that one can grow or increase in love (Luke 6:27–36; 1 Thes 3:12; Phil 1:9–11). Human love is a response to God’s love.

*On a Scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate yourself on how loving you think you are in regard to others*

Min → 1 → 2 → 3 → 4 → 5 → 6 → 7 → 8 → 9 → 10 Max

9. *Loving first* requires wisdom and discernment: love is not optional. While how to love is important, Tripp gives insight as to when loving may seem counterintuitive—that is, occasionally the most loving thing can be confrontation.<sup>44</sup> David Powlison uses the

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<sup>41</sup> In Johannine literature, salvation and love as synonymous See W. Günther, and H. G. Link, “Love,” in *NIDNTT*, 2:546–47.

<sup>42</sup> Smalley, *1, 2, 3, John*, 260.

<sup>43</sup> Pierre explains, “Helping people seek God, therefore, means helping them cultivate greater self-understanding. Biblical self-reflection does not result in self-indulgence, but in self-discernment. When people learn more about themselves, they can then weigh their responses before the Word of God. The Word of God helps us discern between healthy, God-honoring responses and harmful, God-denying responses.” Pierre, *Dynamic Heart*, 32.

<sup>44</sup> In his discussion on comfort and confrontation, Tripp discusses that loving is not always intuitive. Tripp, *Instrument’s in the Redeemer’s Hands*, 221–37.

term love “wisely,” that is wisdom is needed in how to love others when sin is internalized in both the lover and the beloved. Human love is a response to God’s love.

*On a Scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate yourself on how loving you think you are in regard to others*

*Min —> 1 —> 2 —> 3 —> 4 —> 5 —> 6 —> 7 —> 8 —> 9 —> 10 Max*

## God is Love (4:8, 16)

The goal of loving first, that is, moving from a negative reaction to a loving one is dynamic. In participating in God's love, one can produce concrete examples of growth which in turn is encouraging and produces a testimony. New reactions can occur and build momentum: that is counseling is about resolving an issue and loving first can produce a swift change with concrete results. This new response injects "hope," that in turn adds momentum to the process. The counselee can return to the counseling sessions with concrete examples of situations in which he/she has loved first. Loving first in the midst of conflict may seem counterintuitive, but it is an act of faith that can bring a redemptive result (renewed habits that encourage trust and safety) as it is renewing the image of Christ in the follower of Christ.

1 JOHN 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.

Christians love first because God takes the initiative, *agapē* is based on who God is (4:8, 16); since God is the origin of love:

This means that our love for God rests solely upon our being loved by God, in other words that our love can be nothing other than the willing acceptance of the love of God in Jesus Christ... The relationship between the divine love and human love is wrongly understood if we say that the divine love precedes the human love, but solely for the purpose of setting human love in motion as a love which, in relation to the divine love is an independent, free and autonomous activity of man. On the contrary, ... the love with which man moves God and his neighbor is the love of God and no other; for there is no other love; there is no love which is free or independent from the love of God.<sup>45</sup>

According to Bonhoeffer, God is even the source of my love towards Him. Christians love God and are called to love one other (1:7; 2:23; 4:7, 11, 12) which manifests by loving the brothers (2:9, 10, 11; 3:10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17; 5:16). Powlison states, "He [God] insists that we learn love by being loved."<sup>46</sup> Human love is a response to God's love.

- How has experiencing love affected your ability to love others?

1 JOHN 4:8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

<sup>45</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1955), 56.

<sup>46</sup> Powlison writes,

God insists on the supreme worth and glory of who he is and what he has done. God insists that self-centered people learn love—not coping skills, not self-actualization, not meeting felt needs, not techniques of managing emotions or thought life, not fulfilling personal goals. God's morally charged categories heighten human responsibility. His willing mercy and sheer grace give the only real basis for true compassion and patience. (David Powlison, *Pastor as Counselor: The Call for Soul Care* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021], 2)



- How does imitating Jesus manifest in your life?
- Who is God calling you to minister to — who is God calling you to love?

1 JOHN 4:9–10 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

We experience God’s love through the Gospel: as we know we do not deserve God’s love; we know that He saved us so that His love would shape our lives. God is the source of love; God loves us through the Gospel. It comes from God to us and then we are called to target others with that love (4:11).

- Has the Gospel reshaped the way you understand love and the way in which you are to love sinners?
- How do we show love in stressful and difficult situations?

1 JOHN 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Through the Gospel, we have received God’s love, and we are also called to give that love to others. The Gospel engenders us to love one another.

- “How has experiencing God’s love for you given you the motivation and ability to love God and others in turn?”

1 JOHN 4:12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

God’s presence is His Glory, the Holy Spirit gives gifts, it guides and directs us, it convicts us, but what is important to note in this context is that the Holy Spirit manifests in love.

Perfect or complete love in this mortal life is not flowless love, but rather love that ‘reaches its intended goal and is fully developed which it produces the fruit of love action toward others.

- As God’s love is made complete in us, what are some of the results?

1 JOHN 4:13 By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

God gives of Himself, in order to make us like Him. Being born again (regenerated by the Holy Spirit) and imitating Jesus are major themes in 1 John. Jesus not only paid for our sins so that we are right with God. But He gives us His Spirit so that we may become like Him.

1 JOHN 4:14–16 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup> Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. <sup>16</sup> So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

Confessing Jesus means you are in agreement with that which God has done through the Gospel. Christians love first because “God is love” and humanity is in “the image and likeness” of God—humanity is designed to love. humanity has no choice but to love. Sin’s lawlessness thwart’s God’s design, the key here is to align one’s heart with the Lords (i.e., to love what God loves and love how God loves). Human love is a response to God’s love.

- How does God, revealing Himself as love affect you personally?

1 JOHN 4:17 By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world.

Loving First, 1 John does not promote impeccability (sinless is not possible, although one can sin less). Love is perfecting us, (i.e., completeness, fulfillment) comes through obedience to the Word which is not burdensome (5:3). Human love is a response to God’s love. What are barriers to loving?

- If God has choosen not to judge us, how should we approach others? How does love drive out fear?

1 JOHN 4:18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

- Does fear influence your interactions with others? How does God’s love negate that anxiety?

1 JOHN 4:19 We love because he first loved us.

- What is the connection between God’s love and human love?

1 JOHN 4:20 If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.

Loving first is calling Christians to be an extension of God’s love: Christians participate in God’s love, in Christ and through the Holy Spirit (2:8; 4:10, 11). In a CCEF lecture, Ed Welch, used the metaphor of a “conduit” (i.e., the soul as a pliable channel for God’s love), that is, Christ’s love to His disciples in turn targets others with the love that they have received.<sup>47</sup> This is a concrete reality of

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<sup>47</sup> Edward Welch, “Who Are We? Needs, Longings, and the Image of God in Man,” *JBC* 13, no. 1 (Fall 1994): 26–38. Also see David Powlison, “Love Speaks Many Languages Fluently,” *JBC* 21, no. 1 (Fall 2002): 2–11.

immanence and transcendence (4:10–12), in that the Christian experiences God’s love and then loves others. God gives of Himself to make His people like Him. Human love is a response to God’s love.

- Why is it impossible to love God without loving other believers?

1 JOHN 4:21 And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

- Reread this section and list the reasons why Christians should love other Christians. Today, how can you show love to others even when there are tensions or problem?
- How can you put 1 John 4:19 into practice?
- Get specific and list people, places, and situations?

Loving first requires wisdom and discernment: love is not optional. While how to love is important, Tripp gives insight as to when loving may seem counterintuitive—that is, occasionally the most loving thing can be confrontation.<sup>48</sup> David Powlison uses the term love “wisely,” that is wisdom is needed in how to love others when sin is internalized in both the lover and the beloved. This why human love should be a response to God’s love.

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<sup>48</sup> In his discussion on comfort and confrontation, Tripp discusses that loving is not always intuitive. Tripp, *Instrument’s in the Redeemer’s Hands*, 221–37.



LIVE THROUGH HIM: this is to become an extension of Jesus’s ministry—that He is not only at work in the disciple, but working through the disciple.

1 John: 5:1–5 Increase in faith & obedience (overcoming the world)

1 John 5:6–12 Testimony

1 John 5:13–15 Prayer

1 John 5:16–17 Accountability

1 John 5:13–21 Confidence

### LIVING THROUGH HIM

The thesis of this section is that a life in Christ is a life of sanctification (4:9; 5:11, 20) and sanctification has a redemptive aspect: it involves ministering to others (i.e., 1 John 3:14, 16–18). In short, sanctification entails participation (5:16); by *living through Him* (through the Holy Spirit) one becomes an extension of Jesus’s ministry (using God’s Word [1:2]), as well as growing in Christlikeness. While not all Christians who receive counsel are competent to counsel, all are called to serve in mutual ministry. Some first steps are listed below as well as some of the needs that are relevant in developing lay ministry.<sup>49</sup> *Living through Him* requires a dying to the self (3:14–16) and a redemptive view of sanctification (it is personally sanctifying to assist others in their sanctification).

Serving “one another” is part of being the church as Christians are not only dependent upon God, but also upon one another.<sup>50</sup> There are imperatives and actions that have an imperatival force in 1 John, in which the Apostle is expecting members of the congregation to serve one another (i.e., praying [3:22; 5:14], accountability [5:16], sharing testimony [5:9–11], and caring for individual physical needs to personal ministry [3:18]). This project is designed for The Orchard—Barrington, which presents unique opportunities such as within LIFE Groups (small group ministry), corrective (accountability) groups, discipleship relationships, as well as advocates in counseling. Particularly helpful are accountability partners which are often incorporated and encouraged in the Orchard’s LIFE Groups, in which there is a “mutual ministry” time built into the LIFE Group meeting time.

<sup>49</sup> Jay Adams, “Qualifications for Counseling,” in *Competent to Counsel: Introduction to Nouthetic Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 59–67. Robert W. Kelleman, “Appendix 2.1 Congregational S.W.O.R.D. Heart Exam,” in *Equipping Counselors for Your Church* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2011), 328–334. Jay Adams, “Test Yourself, Counselor,” in *Committed to Craftmanship in Biblical Counseling* (Woodruff, SC: Timeless Texts, 1994), 97–107. In preparation for counseling, see “Appendix 1: Opening Blind Eyes: Another Look at Data Gathering,” in Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands*, 277–87.

<sup>50</sup> Stuart S. Scott and Andrew Jin, *31 Ways to Be a One-Another Christian: Loving Others with the Love of Jesus* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd, 2019). Edward T. Welch, *Caring for One Another: 8 Ways to Cultivate Meaningful Relationships* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018).

Life in Christ is a life of sanctification. Two key commands are purifying oneself (3:3) and practicing righteousness (3:10). Being reconciled to God involves not only the forgiveness of sin, but also the ability to overcome it. There is a synergistic effort required in change: to purify oneself is to remove impurities (to purge) intentionally eliminating that which hinders one's pursuit of obedience and holiness and the growth toward Christlikeness. The Christian life is not impeccable, but intentional progress (progressive sanctification) can be made by breaking reoccurring patterns of sins.

On presence, Bonhoeffer believes that the confession is to be before a fellow believer, in this case "Our brother breaks the circle of self-deception. A man who confesses his sins in the presence of a brother knows that he is no longer alone with himself; he experiences the presence of God in the reality of the other person."<sup>51</sup> The Holy Spirit not only convicts the follower of Christ (John 16:8), but also manifests Christ's presence in the hearer.

Not only does one need to be born of God (4:7), but for God's love to be manifested (4:8) — *To live through Him* (4:9) — means to die to self. Jesus gives life by dying (John 12:26) and His disciple keeps his life by losing it (John 12:24–25).<sup>52</sup> This is an act of love.

"Because this *agapé* is inherently unselfish and servant-like, it is self-sacrificial and, in that regard, kenotic. 1 John 3:16 connects *agapé* with self-sacrifice directly: 'We know love by this, that he [Jesus] laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another.' The Spirit's witness, then points to and manifests divine *agapé* and thereby involves the kind of agapeic self-sacrifice found in the cross of Christ. In doing so, the Spirit provides evidence of God's reality and character."<sup>53</sup>

For Moser, the inner witness of the Spirit produces something concrete, a life that dies to self (ego) and lives for others—a life of sacrificial love (3:14–16). This redemptive

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<sup>51</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (New York: Harper Collins, 1954), 34.

<sup>52</sup> D. A. Carson writes,

The person who loves his life will lose it: it could not be otherwise, for to love one's life is a fundamental denial of God's sovereignty, of God's rights, and a brazen elevation of self to the apogee of one's perception, and therefore an idolatrous focus on self, which is the heart of all sin. Such a person loses his life, i.e., causes his own perdition. By contrast, the one who hates his life will keep it for eternal life. This person denies himself, or, to use another of Jesus' metaphors, takes up his cross daily (cf. Mk. 8:35 par.), i.e., he chooses not to pander to self-interest but at the deepest level of his being declines to make himself the focus of his interest and perception, thereby dying. (D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 438–38.

<sup>53</sup> Paul K. Moser, "The Inner Witness of the Spirit," in Abraham and Aquino, *Oxford Handbook of The Epistemology of Theology*, 119.

nance gives the counselee an expectation that the Lord is good, loving, and present, despite the hardships that a counselee may face.<sup>54</sup>

To *live through Him* incorporates hope into the process as one sees one's own struggles as redemptive, and this redemptiveness should further motivate and strengthen the counselee to engage in the process.<sup>55</sup> Being in Christ does not simply restore one to an original condition, as Adams states, "The stance of the Christian counselor is fundamentally asymmetrical; what he promises (and seeks to get the counselee to anticipate) is *always more than he ever had before—a better situation than ever existed in the past.*"<sup>56</sup> A redemptive perspective is the realization that God takes hardships and uses them for a greater purpose (1 John 3:16). This is significant, as walking in the light comes through the propitiation of sin; God's grace brings good out of evil.<sup>57</sup> Tripp defines redemption as: "God's ultimate goal is his own glory, Christ came to restore people to the purpose they were made for: to live every aspect of their lives in worshipful, obedient submission to Him."<sup>58</sup> Healthy fruit (results) can come out of their trials, hardships, and sufferings.

A redemptive aspect of a life in Christ involves mutual ministry and this means that Christians are called to serve one another by ministering to each other. Tripp captures this sentiment in *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change*, Tripp's book title is explained in his introduction:

"The paradigm is simple: when God calls you to himself, he also calls you to be a servant, in instrument in his redeeming hands. All of his children are called into ministry, and each of them needs the daily intervention this ministry provides. If you followed the Lord for a thousand years, you would still need the ministry of the body of Christ as much as you did the day you first believed. This need will remain until our sanctification is complete in Glory."<sup>59</sup>

The Spirit equips the church for the work of ministry (1 John 2:27), for personal growth in sanctification— to maturity in Christ (3:3).

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<sup>54</sup> Dan G. McCartney, *Why Does It Have to Hurt? The Meaning of Christian Suffering* (Philipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1998). Also see David Powlison, *God's Grace in Your Suffering* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018).

<sup>55</sup> See Edward T. Welch, "Telling Your Story," in *Crossroads: A Step-by-Step Guide Away from Addiction* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2008), 25–36.

<sup>56</sup> Adams writes, "Grace (and its effects) is greater than sin and its effects. Therefore, what Jesus Christ obtained for His people in salvation is not merely what Satan took away from Adam. Through His death and resurrection, Christ bought that—and much more. Thus, to be true to the New Testament teaching, the counselor's stance must be based on the great truth that Christ offers counselees more than they ever had before." Jay Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling: More Than Redemption* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 180–81.

<sup>57</sup> Mike Wilkerson, *Redemption: Freed by Jesus from the Idols We Worship and the Wounds We Carry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossroads, 2001), 36–37.

<sup>58</sup> Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, 6–7.

<sup>59</sup> Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, xi.

## FAITH

Faith is believing and trusting that God is who He claims He is and as He has revealed Himself through His Word. Hebrews 11:1–3 defines faith as more than acknowledging God, but believing we need to seek Him and will be rewarded for doing so— we are to pursue Him. “Trust” is a powerful nuance of faith (it’s even a synonym)— as with confidence, it emphasizes the personal nature of faith. It is a complete dependence upon Jesus Christ; that through His perfect sacrifice He has paid for sin (justified), so His followers are forgiven and accepted. This is not only the promise of eternal life but through (a life-long) process of sanctification that results in spiritual growth; a follower of Jesus will become more and more Christlike. Both justification and sanctification require faith: the initial act of trusting God is also a life-long process of growing in dependence of Him.

Justification is a onetime event that occurs when a person puts his/her faith in the lordship of Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. Salvation occurs when a person puts his/her faith in Jesus, and has trusted that sinless Jesus paid the penalty for that person’s sins at the cross. Justification is forensic, it has to do with legal standing— when one puts his faith in Jesus he is now standing (or his/her position) is right before God. Like the thief on the cross next to Jesus (Luke 23:39–43), his eternal destiny is secured— no self-effort is required— it is a free gift (grace).

Sanctification is a continues process— while one’s standing or position is right before God (justification)— sanctification is a process of growing in Christ. God rescues us from our sin, and through the Holy Spirit grows us to be more like Jesus. Christians will not be perfect in this life, but they should be growing in holiness, increasing in the knowledge of God, turning from sin and increasing in a life that is less self-centered to a life of walking in the Spirit and living for God’s glory. So, this one-time event (justification) is followed by a life-long process of spiritual growth and transformation (sanctification). Justification is completely done by God; sanctification (which too is an act of God) requires a follower of Jesus to cooperate and yield to the Holy Spirit. Cooperation has many outlets, to pursue God, through spiritual disciplines (i.e., worship, worship services where God’s Word is proclaimed, personal Bible study, prayer...). It is to seek out wisdom, discernment and growth in Christlike (communicable) attributes (Gal 5:22–23). It is to know God through His Word and in living-out biblical convictions, knowing that in Christ suffering has a redemptive purpose, and that Christians are to live with an eternal perspective. A Christian will not obtain perfection in this life, but he/she should be becoming more aware of sin, hating it, and confessing and repenting quicker. He should also be aware of what pleases God and learning how to walk in the Spirit (Questions #21-22). There will be a life-long battle between a disciple’s flesh (self-centeredness) and desire for obedience and to prioritize the things that God values.

## FAITH

1 JOHN 5:1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him.

- How do you show your love for God by loving His people?

1 JOHN 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments.

- What is the relationship between love and obedience?

1 JOHN 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.

- What is it that keeps us from obedience? Why do we resist the Lord?

1 JOHN 5:4–5 For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?



## TESTIMONY<sup>60</sup>

1 JOHN 5:6–12 This is he who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. <sup>7</sup> For there are three that testify: <sup>8</sup> the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree. <sup>9</sup> If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his Son. <sup>10</sup> Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son. <sup>11</sup> And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup> Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

## PRAYER

1 JOHN 5:13–15 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. <sup>14</sup> And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. <sup>15</sup> And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

## ACCOUNTABILITY<sup>61</sup>

1 JOHN 5:16–17 If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that. <sup>17</sup> All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death.

## CONFIDENCE

1 JOHN 5:18–19 We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him. <sup>19</sup> We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

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<sup>60</sup> Smalley states:

ἔχει τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἐν αὐτῷ “has that witness within himself.” Believing in Jesus as the Son of God is synonymous with accepting God’s (superior) testimony to his Son (v. 9). The result is that the Christian disciple “has that witness within himself.” The phrase ἔχει ἐν means “to have within oneself,” or “to have in one’s heart.” (*BAG*, 333). Such an expression immediately suggests that John is referring to the inner testimony of the Spirit (vv. 6, 8) in the heart of the believer. (So Law, *Tests*, 125; Brooke, 139; Stott, 182; Williams 57). The inward witness of God’s Spirit shows the Christian that he was right to believe in Jesus; and this “internal testimony” (of the Spirit) balances and complements the external and historical witness of the “water and blood” baptism and death of Jesus, which marks the limits of his earthly ministry (vv. 6, 8). Christian believing is subjective in character, but its origins are ultimately objective. (Smalley. *1, 2, 3, John*, 285–86)

<sup>61</sup> On the importance of biblical accountability, see Heath Lambert, *Finally Free: Fighting for Purity with the Power of Grace* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 45–57.

## PRESENCE

1 JOHN 5:20-21 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. <sup>21</sup> Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

## TWELVE EVIDENCES OF THE NEW BIRTH

The following is a slightly modified list from John Piper's *John Finally Alive*. The changes made were to extenuate the verses that focus on 1 John. This gives at least eleven evidences that a person is born again. "We could probably boil them all down to faith and love. But for now, we will let them stand the way he says them. Not every verse below uses new-birth language. But it will be plain, if you think about it for a moment, that even where the language is not present, the reality is."<sup>62</sup> Here they are:

1. *Those who are born of God walk as Christ walked.* (1 John 2:5–6)

1 John 2:5–6 but whoever keeps his Word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may be sure that we are in him: <sup>6</sup> whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

2. *Those who are born of God keep his commandments.* (1 John 2:3–4; 3:24)

1 John 2:3–4 And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.<sup>4</sup> Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him,

1 John 3:24 Whoever keeps his commandments abides in him, and he in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

3. *Those who are born of God do not hate others but love them.* (1 John 2:9; 3:14; 4:7–8; 4:20)

1 John 2:9 Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness.

1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers.  
Whoever does not love abides in death.

1 John 4:7–8 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.<sup>8</sup> Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

1 John 4:20 If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.

4. *Those who are born of God do not love the world.* (1 John 2:15)

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

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<sup>62</sup> John Piper, *Finally Alive* (Minneapolis: Christian Focus, 2010), 125–28.

5. *Those who are born of God confess the Son and receive (have) him.* (1 John 2:23; 4:15; 5:12)

6. No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also. 1 John 2:23

Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. 1 John 4:15

Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. 1 John 5:12

7. *Those who are born of God practice righteousness.* (1 John 2:29)

1 John 2:29 If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.

8. *Those who are born of God do not make a practice of sinning.* (1 John 3:6, 9–10; 5:18)

1 John 3:6 No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.

1 John 3:9–10 No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.<sup>10</sup> By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

1 John 5:18 We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.

9. *Those who are born of God possess the Spirit of God.* (1 John 3:24; 4:13)

1 John 3:24 Whoever keeps his commandments abides in him, and he in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

1 John 4:13 John By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

10. *Those who are born of God listen submissively to the apostolic Word* (1 John 4:6)

1 John 4:6 We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

11. *Those who are born of God believe that Jesus is the Christ. (1 John 5:1)*  
1 John 5:1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whomever has been born of him.
12. *Those who are born of God overcome the world.*

1 John 5:4 For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world- our faith.

## REASONS FOR CONCLUDING COUNSELING

Our hope is that the counselor and counselee will terminate their sessions on the completion of their established goals. That the counselee is better equipped to address their issues (especially if they can reoccur in the future) and embrace the body of Christ. The hope is that the counselee has become more Christlike, maturing in his/her faith, has progressed in sanctification, increased biblical literacy, positive thought patterns and increased love for God and others. Unless other issues have manifested, the priority of the counselee is to get connected to the church so that they continue in discipleship and progressive sanctification. Ultimately, it would be great if the counselee had the ability to know how to minister to others who struggle with what they were struggling with (2 Cor 1:3–7). Depending on the circumstances there may need to be a gradual withdrawal, perhaps going from weekly, to bi-weekly, to monthly to quarterly if/as needed. Personally, I am a pastor of a church that is growing, and have time restraints. I may bring in a mentor or mentoring couple to step-in and continue in the discipleship process. It is beneficial to the individual or couple who is seeking help and also to the couple that is serving. The counselee also needs to be involved in the life of the Church, not just attending weekend services but also participating in small group ministry, serving and engaging in spiritual disciplines.

A variety of negative things can happen in the sessions that may result in the termination of counseling. They may be unrepentant and need church discipline, or they may be unregenerate. A person can become inappropriately attached to the counselor. In that case, teaching the counselee about relational idolatry or tracing idolatry through Scriptures can be helpful as well as unpacking “people pleasing” or “fear of man.” But if the unhealthy attachment continues than it is not in the counselee or counselor’s best interest to continue. In this case I would attempt to point this person to Jesus Christ; it is the counselee’s relationship with the Lord that the healing comes from— not the counselor/counselee relationship. In marriage counseling and the wife may need to meet with our Women’s Director, we also have several women with lay counseling backgrounds and even some who are ACBC certified that serve our congregation.

Counselees with addictive behavior, such as alcohol and drugs may need to check into a facility in which they can be protected from their triggers, receive strong (extra) accountability, and a separation from others that might lessen the likelihood of relapsing. This can help break harmful habits and develop new ones. Counselees may also be coming from unproductive talk therapy, in which they are looking for a cathartic experience. The goal is for counselees to be doers of the Word and not just hearers (talkers). I have people who are church members that have unbelieving spouses, I will meet with their unbelieving spouses with the purpose of sharing the Gospel, if they are not regenerate then biblical counsel will not have a significant impact for lasting change (I am sure an unbeliever could receive wisdom from the Bible but it will not produce lasting change)

APPENDIX 8  
INTENSIVE HANDOUTS

The following documents were included with the Intensive Handbook (they were loosely tucked into the folder sleeves for review). They were discussed in the third step: Keeping the Word; specifically in regard with the development of a Care Plan.

100 Bible Promises <sup>1</sup>	
1. The Lord will fight for you (Ex 14:14)	51. Jesus is the resurrection and the life (John 11:25)
2. God's mercies are new each morning (Lam 3:21–23)	52. God will remain in you (John 15:4)
3. God will renew your strength (Is 40:31)	53. The Holy Spirit will guide you to all truth (John 16:13)
4. The Lord will help you (Is 41:13)	54. Jesus has overcome the world (John 16:33)
5. The Lord will be with you (Is 43:2)	55. God cares for you (1 Peter 5:7)
6. God's love will not be shaken (Is 54:10)	56. God will make you strong and firm (1 Peter 5:10)
7. No weapon forged against you will prevail (Is 54:17)	57. You have the righteousness of God (Rom 3:22)
8. You are free from darkness (Is 61:1)	58. You are under grace (Rom 6:14)
9. God will forgive your sin (2 Chronicles 7:14)	59. You are not condemned (Rom 8:1)
10. The Lord will never forsake you (Deut 31:8)	60. You are not a slave to fear (Rom 8:15)
11. God has plans for you (Jer 29:11)	61. You are a child of God (Rom 8:15–16)
12. You have received grace and peace (Phil 1:3)	62. God works all things for your good (Rom 8:28)
13. God is your light and salvation (Psalm 27:1)	63. You are more than a conqueror (Rom 8:37)
14. The Lord hears you (Psalm 34:17)	64. Nothing can separate you from God's love (Rom 8:39)
15. God will deliver you (Psalm 50:15)	65. Perfect love drives out fear (1 John 4:18)
16. God's love is abounding (Psalm 86:5)	66. God is able to keep you from falling (Jude 1:24)
17. God is your stronghold (Psalm 9:9)	67. Jesus will give you rest (Matt 11:28)
18. He satisfies your desires with good things (Ps 103:5)	68. You will have abundant life (John 10:10)
19. God's joy is your strength (Neh 8:10)	69. God's love is everlasting (Jer 31:3)
20. God will pour out his Spirit on all (Joel 2:28)	70. God's promises are "yes" and "amen" (2 Cor 1:20)
21. God will give you a new heart (Ez 36:26)	71. God will never forget you (Is 49:15–16)
22. God is good (Psalm 145:9)	72. You have a hope and a future (Jer 29:11)
23. God's love endures forever (Psalm 100:5)	73. God will teach and guide you (Ps 32:8)
24. God is sovereign (2 Samuel 7:28)	74. God is your hiding place (Ps 32:7)
25. God's Word is trustworthy (Psalm 19:7)	75. God surrounds you with songs of deliverance (Ps 32:7)
26. God is your refuge (Nahum 1:7)	76. God protects you from the Evil One (2 Thess 3:3)
27. The Lord grants favor and honor (Ps 84:11)	77. God provides a way out of temptation (1 Cor 10:13)
28. God will make your paths straight (Prov 3:6)	78. God will comfort you (Is 66:13)
29. The righteous lack no good thing (Psalm 34:10)	79. God is love (1 John 4:8)
30. God hears your prayer (Jeremiah 29:12)	80. You have victory over death (1 Cor 15:54)
31. The Lord is near (Psalm 145:18)	81. You have life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3)
32. God will give you comfort (Psalm 23:4)	82. Nothing is impossible with God (Luke 1:37)
33. God's love fills the earth (Psalm 119:64)	83. Your joy is complete in Christ (John 15:11)
34. God will forgive you (1 John 1:9)	84. You are saved through grace (Eph 2:8–9)
35. God will come near to you (Jas 4:8)	85. God will give you wisdom (Jas 1:5)
36. You are set free (John 8:36)	86. God is good (Psalm 145:9)
37. God will meet your needs (Phil 4:19)	87. You are redeemed (Galatians 3:13)
38. God works for your good (Rom 8:28)	88. God is your shield (Psalm 18:30)
39. God's peace will guard you (Phil 4:7)	89. You are a new person in Christ (2 Cor 5:17)
40. God gives good gifts (Matthew 7:11)	90. You are blessed with every spiritual blessing (Eph 1:3)
41. God will bless you (2 Corinthians 9:8)	91. God will finish the work he began in you (Phil 1:6)
42. God will give you rest (Matthew 11:29)	92. Your name is written in heaven (Luke 10:20)
43. Jesus is the way, the truth and life (John 14:6)	93. Jesus is preparing a place for you (John 14:2–3)
44. Jesus is the light of the world (John 8:12)	94. The Lord is your Banner (Ex 17:15)
45. God's peace is with you (John 14:27)	95. The Lord will watch over you (Psalm 121:8)
46. God chose you to bear fruit (John 15:16)	96. God will never let the righteous fall (Psalm 55:22)
47. You have eternal life (John 3:16)	97. You have the fruit of the Spirit (5:22–23)
48. Jesus is the bread of life (John 6:35)	98. You are chosen, holy and dearly loved (Col 3:12)
49. You belong to God (John 8:47)	99. You have a spirit of power and love (2 Tim 1:7)
50. No one can snatch you from God's hand (John 10:28)	100. Jesus is coming soon (Revelation 22:20)

<sup>1</sup> Garments of Splendor, "God's Promises," accessed on October 21, 2024, <https://garmentsofsplendor.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/100-promises-printable.pdf>.



## MY IDENTITY IN CHRIST<sup>2</sup>

### **I have been justified - completely forgiven and made righteous.**

- Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:1)

### **I died with Christ and died to the power of sin's rule over my life.**

- We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. (Romans 6:6)  
- For by a single offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. (Hebrews 10:14)

### **I am free forever from condemnation.**

- There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:1)

### **I have been placed into Christ by God's doing.**

- And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, (1 Corinthians 1:30)

### **I have received the Spirit of God into my life that I might know the things freely given to me by God.**

- Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. (1 Corinthians 2:12)

### **I have been given the mind of Christ**

- "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:16)

### **I have been bought with a price; I am not my own; I belong to God**

- Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

### **I have been established, anointed and sealed by God in Christ, and I have been given the Holy Spirit as a pledge guaranteeing my inheritance to come**

- And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. (2 Corinthians 1:21-22)

- In him you also, when you heard the Word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:13-14)

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<sup>2</sup> Trinity Community Church, "My Identity in Christ," accessed October 21, 2024, <https://trinitycc.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/My-Identity-in-Christ.pdf>.

**Since I have died, I no longer live for myself, but for Christ.**

- For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. (2 Corinthians 5:14–15)

**I have been made righteous.**

- For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

**I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. The life I am now living is Christ's life.**

- I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

**I have been blessed with every spiritual blessing.**

- Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, (Ephesians 1:3)

**I was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and am without blame before Him.**

- even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. (Ephesians 1:4)

**I was predestined - determined by God - to be adopted as God's son.**

- In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. (Ephesians 1:5–6)

**I have been redeemed and forgiven, and I am a recipient of His lavish grace.**

- In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight (Ephesians 1:7–8)

**I have been made alive together with Christ.**

- But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ— by grace you have been saved— (Ephesians 2:4–5)

**I have been raised up and seated with Christ in heaven.**

- and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:6–7)

**I have direct access to God through the Spirit.**

- For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. (Ephesians 2:18)

**I may approach God with boldness, freedom and confidence.**

- This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. (Ephesians 3:11-12)

**I have been rescued from the domain of Satan's rule and transferred to the kingdom of God.**

- He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, (Colossians 1:13)

**I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins; the debt against me has been cancelled**

- in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:14)

**Christ Himself is in me.**

- To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Colossians 1:27)

**I am firmly rooted in Christ and am now being built in Him.**

- Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. (Colossians 2:6-7)

**I have been spiritually circumcised. My old unregenerate nature has been removed.**

- In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, (Colossians 2:11)

**I have been made complete in Christ**

- For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. (Colossians 2:9-10)

**I have been buried, raised and made alive in Christ.**

- having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, (Colossians 2:12-13).

**I died with Christ and I have been raised up with Christ. My life is now hidden with Christ in God. Christ is now my life.**

- If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. (Colossians 3:1-4)

**I have been given a spirit of power, love and self-discipline**

- for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. (2 Timothy 1:7)

**I have been saved and set apart according to God's doing.**

who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, (2 Timothy 1:9)

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, (Titus 3:4–5)

**Because I am sanctified and am one with the Sanctifier, He is not ashamed to call me brother.**

For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, (Hebrews 2:11)

**I have the right to come boldly before the throne of God to find mercy and grace in time of need.**

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. (Hebrews 4:16)

**In have been given exceedingly great and precious promises by God by which I am a partaker of God's divine nature.**

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. (2 Peter 1:3–4)

## APPENDIX 9

### COMPLETED EXPERT PANEL RUBRIC

The following evaluation rubric was distributed to a review panel which consists of a vocational Christian counselor, a biblical counselor, and a key ministry leader that are familiar with the Orchard. These evaluations were collected before the intensive in order to properly assess, critique, and potential improve the Lay Counseling Intensive. This panel evaluated the project curriculum to determine if it is biblical, methodologically sound, thorough in scope, and applicable for lay counseling and care.

EVALUATION RUBRIC: evaluation of lay counseling curriculum.					
Evaluation Tool					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
<b>Biblical Faithfulness:</b>					
Is the content of the curriculum hermeneutically correct?			3		Very solid.
Is the content of the curriculum theologically correct?				4	
<b>Teaching Methodology:</b>					
Were the five steps in this methodology well-defined?				4	Yes. The steps and the relationship between them were clear.
Was the progression through the steps well-defined?				4	Yes. Steps were clear and defined as a process with a clear goal.
Does this intensive seminar give direction in proceeding through this process?				4	Yes.
<b>Scope:</b>					
Did the curriculum address the counseling topics biblically?				4	Very much so. Actions had a clear relationship to the scriptures cited.
Will the content of this study increase biblical literacy in the participants?			3		It's a good start. Should get people looking at scripture in a better way with more emphasis on life application.
<b>Applicability:</b>					
Does this intensive seminar provide opportunities for personal growth?				4	Yes.
Does this intensive seminar give participants the ability to counsel a person biblically?			3		Yes. Gives a clear plan. In a longer session possibly combine with a demonstration.

Please include additional comments:

EVALUATION RUBRIC: evaluation of lay counseling curriculum.					
Evaluation Tool					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
<b><u>Biblical Faithfulness:</u></b>					
Is the content of the curriculum hermeneutically correct?				X	Yes, all the interpretations appear Biblically sound.
Is the content of the curriculum theologically correct?				X	Yes, there was no questions of correct theology that came up.
<b><u>Teaching Methodology:</u></b>					
Were the five steps in this methodology well-defined?				X	Yes, they were well defined and easily understood.
Was the progression through the steps well-defined?				X	Yes, the progression was good and built upon previous steps
Does this intensive seminar give direction in proceeding through this process?				X	Yes, the directions were concurrent and the process flowed well.
<b><u>Scope:</u></b>					
Did the curriculum address the counseling topics biblically?				X	Yes, paying particular attention to how sins distort our beliefs/thinking.
Will the content of this study increase biblical literacy in the participants?				X	Yes, we are going to grow when we are using God's Word to point us to His Truth.
<b><u>Applicability:</u></b>					
Does this intensive seminar provide opportunities for personal growth?				X	Sanctification is our personal growth in Christ. This intensive focuses on that. Having awareness of our brokenness and sin directs us to God's truth.
Does this intensive seminar give participants the ability to counsel a person biblically?				X	Yes, it definitely gives a basis to start with the Word and continue in the Word to point counselees to God's truth.

Please include additional comments:

This is a good resource for counselors to begin to learn how to counsel biblically. Through counseling, I have come to understand our sanctification is progressive, redemptive, and healing – by His wounds we are healed.

EVALUATION RUBRIC: evaluation of lay counseling curriculum.					
Evaluation Tool					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
<b><u>Biblical Faithfulness:</u></b>					
Is the content of the curriculum hermeneutically correct?				X	
Is the content of the curriculum theologically correct?				X	
<b><u>Teaching Methodology:</u></b>					
Were the five steps in this methodology well-defined?				X	
Was the progression through the steps well-defined?				X	
Does this intensive seminar give direction in proceeding through this process?				X	
<b><u>Scope:</u></b>					
Did the curriculum address the counseling topics biblically?				X	
Will the content of this study increase biblical literacy in the participants?				X	
<b><u>Applicability:</u></b>					
Does this intensive seminar provide opportunities for personal growth?				X	
Does this intensive seminar give participants the ability to counsel a person biblically?				X	

Please include additional comments:

The scope and depth of this material displays a comprehensive knowledge of biblical counseling as well as depth of Biblical knowledge itself. This material and training will serve God's people well.



## APPENDIX 10

### COMPLETED PRE AND POSTTESTS

The participants answered pre and posttest questions. There were fifteen in attendance, but two sets of pre and posttests are not listed. One participant was slightly late and did not fill in the pretest, and one posttest is missing. Though two participants are not included in the below pre and posttests, they both did participate in the follow-up interviews.

## PRETEST (Participant 1)

1. Where would you go to find more biblical resources if needed to address a counseling issue? *I don't know any specifics I'd use the internet to do some research or what is available and see what seems biblically sound.*
2. If someone from your congregation approached you for help with a counseling issue, do you have a plan or process to walk them through (if yes please briefly describe)? *I'd refer them to speak to a pastor and offer prayer for healing from the Lord.*
3. Do you feel competent to biblically shepherd a disciple through a counseling process? Why or why not? *No, I don't know much about biblical counseling.*
4. Why is reorientating a disciple to Jesus the first priority of a biblical counseling process and how would you do it? *Because Jesus is the central figure of our beliefs. I'd use teaching from his gospel to address whatever problem the person is struggling with.*
5. What is a biblical approach to addressing the presenting problem? *Use the Bible as a base for discussion.*
6. How do you typically go about pursuing the cause (core problem) of a given counseling issue? *Talk through with the person asking questions to get them thinking.*
7. Why is counseling with an open Bible a priority? *Because our hope is in the Bible.*
8. How can you counsel your counselee to new responses? *Because our hope is in the Bible.*
9. As a counselee is making progress, what are some steps that this person can do to participate in serving others? *See what opportunities are available in the church.*
10. After completing a counseling process, how and how often should you follow-up with your counselee? *Maybe once a week, but it would also depend primary on what the person is struggling with. Different people have different needs to be addressed individually.*

## POSTTEST (Participant 1)

1. Where would you go to find more biblical resources if needed to address a counseling issue? *Unlocking the Bible, ACBC.org, Kevin Carson, CCEF.org, basically any of the resources at the end of the book.*
2. If someone from your congregation approached you for help with a counseling issue, do you have a plan or process to walk them through (if yes please briefly describe)? *Follow the steps outlined in the book and point everything in the discussion back to Jesus.*
3. Do you feel competent to biblically shepherd a disciple through a counseling process? Why or why not? *Better than I did when I started, but I definitely still need to study more and learn from experience.*
4. Why is reorientating a disciple to Jesus the first priority of a biblical counseling process and how would you do it? *Because Jesus is the center of our faith. Won't do it by pointing the counselee to relevant scripture.*
5. What is a biblical approach to addressing the presenting problem? *Finding what in the heart is causing the current problem. What sin in the heart is behind this and what does scripture say?*
6. How do you typically go about pursuing the cause (core problem) of a given counseling issue? *Talk through with the person asking questions to get them thinking. Ask thought provoking questions about past experiences. Why is someone's pride in the way? Why is guilt holding someone back?*
7. Why is counseling with an open Bible a priority? *God address our issues in scripture and we need Christ in the center of everything.*
8. How can you counsel your counselee to new responses? *Thought provoking questions, but this I an area where I can improve.*
9. As a counselee is making progress, what are some steps that this person can do to participate in serving others? *Pray and sharing testimonies are early steps. Find places to serve others in the church is also a good place to start.*
10. After completing a counseling process, how and how often should you follow-up with your counselee? *As needed. Every person is different with how often they need to meet.*
11. Do you believe that this study can be applied to your own life and then reduplicated in the lives of others? Why or why not? *Yes, it can allow me to examine my own heart and where I need to lean on the Lord more in my life. I can also use it to help others grow in their relations with Christ.*

## PRETEST (participant 2)

1. Where would you go to find more biblical resources if needed to address a counseling issue? *My church and/or my pastor.*
2. If someone from your congregation approached you for help with a counseling issue, do you have a plan or process to walk them through (if yes please briefly describe)? *I would not be able to walk them through counseling's, but make recommendations for counseling.*
3. Do you feel competent to biblically shepherd a disciple through a counseling process? Why or why not? *I do not. I feel I need more study of God's Word!*
4. Why is reorientating a disciple to Jesus the first priority of a biblical counseling process and how would you do it? *If a person does not have a relationship with Jesus, they may not be able to understand biblical counseling,*
5. What is a biblical approach to addressing the presenting problem? *Find situation in the bible.*
6. How do you typically go about pursuing the cause (core problem) of a given counseling issue? *Lead the counselee to give us much information as possible.*
7. Why is counseling with an open Bible a priority? *So that counseling can be done with God's Word as the guide.*
8. How can you counsel your counselee to new responses? *Encourage them to think of biblical solutions.*
9. As a counselee is making progress, what are some steps that this person can do to participate in serving others? *They can search for these opportunities at home or at friend/church.*
10. After completing a counseling process, how and how often should you follow-up with your counselee? *Perhaps as needed or determined by the direction they are taking, or a pre-determined time, perhaps once a month for a while.*

## POSTTEST (Participant 2)

1. Where would you go to find more biblical resources if needed to address a counseling issue? *Pastor, internet, believing friends*
2. If someone from your congregation approached you for help with a counseling issue, do you have a plan or process to walk them through (if yes please briefly describe)? *Identify issue; if I am able, help or refer to a more qualified individual.*
3. Do you feel competent to biblically shepherd a disciple through a counseling process? Why or why not? *I need to read/study God's Word more!!!*
4. Why is reorientating a disciple to Jesus the first priority of a biblical counseling process and how would you do it? *Find out where he/she stands with Jesus, Ask questions: what has the Lord done in their life or helped them.*
5. What is a biblical approach to addressing the presenting problem? *Pray about it; try to use.*
6. How do you typically go about pursuing the cause (core problem) of a given counseling issue? *Listening & questioning & getting more information.*
7. Why is counseling with an open Bible a priority? *The answers are there!*
8. How can you counsel your counselee to new responses? *Encourage to read God's Word.*
9. As a counselee is making progress, what are some steps that this person can do to participate in serving others? *Help them to identify areas of interest that could lead them there.*
10. After completing a counseling process, how and how often should you follow-up with your counselee? *As needed or as a set schedule.*
11. Do you believe that this study can be applied to your own life and then reduplicated in the lives of others? Why or why not? *Yes, this has been very enlightened.*

### PRETEST (Participant 3)

1. Where would you go to find more biblical resources if needed to address a counseling issue? *The Bible*
2. If someone from your congregation approached you for help with a counseling issue, do you have a plan or process to walk them through (if yes please briefly describe)? *Address the problem/issue with scripture.*
3. Do you feel competent to biblically shepherd a disciple through a counseling process? *Yes! Why or why not? Long term study of God's Word, prayer meditation on his Word.*
4. Why is reorientating a disciple to Jesus the first priority of a biblical counseling process and how would you do it? *Jesus is our source no other name can be accounted always thru scripture.*
5. What is a biblical approach to addressing the presenting problem? *The source of Life and Hope is in his Word look to Jesus.*
6. How do you typically go about pursuing the cause (core problem) of a given counseling issue? *Where are you with Jesus.*
7. Why is counseling with an open Bible a priority? *For your Word has given me life.*
8. How can you counsel your counselee to new responses? *Focus on Jesus, more away from the problem.*
9. As a counselee is making progress, what are some steps that this person can do to participate in serving others? *Share.*
10. After completing a counseling process, how and how often should you follow-up with your counselee? *Consistently.*

### POSTTEST (Participant 3)

1. Where would you go to find more biblical resources if needed to address a counseling issue? *Still the bible.*
2. If someone from your congregation approached you for help with a counseling issue, do you have a plan or process to walk them through (if yes please briefly describe)? *No need to have an overall view of the need and how to address scripturally.*
3. Do you feel competent to biblically shepherd a disciple through a counseling process? *Yes.* Why or why not? *To continue in his Word. To understand the full council of God.*
4. Why is reorientating a disciple to Jesus the first priority of a biblical counseling process and how would you do it? *Focus on Jesus and where you are in his presence.*
5. What is a biblical approach to addressing the presenting problem? *Where is your heart currently.*
6. How do you typically go about pursuing the cause (core problem) of a given counseling issue? *(unreadable answer)*
7. Why is counseling with an open Bible a priority? *God's Word does not come back void.*
8. How can you counsel your counselee to new responses? *Reflect yourself in the presence of Christ.*
9. As a counselee is making progress, what are some steps that this person can do to participate in serving others? *Reach out, serve.*
10. After completing a counseling process, how and how often should you follow-up with your counselee? *For as long as it takes.*
11. Do you believe that this study can be applied to your own life and then reduplicated in the lives of others? Why or why not? *Yes, totally*

### PRETEST (Participant 4)

1. Where would you go to find more biblical resources if needed to address a counseling issue? *I would go to the church pastor. Then proceed to recommended Biblical Counselor.*
2. If someone from your congregation approached you for help with a counseling issue, do you have a plan or process to walk them through (if yes please briefly describe)? *No, not really.*
3. Do you feel competent to biblically shepherd a disciple through a counseling process? Why or why not? *No. I don't know of a process.*
4. Why is reorientating a disciple to Jesus the first priority of a biblical counseling process and how would you do it? *Reorientating to Jesus is the first priority because He is the source of all hope. I would ask the questions on hearing their testimony or for to find what they are struggling with.*
5. What is a biblical approach to addressing the presenting problem? *I think asking question in life choices, priorities,*
6. How do you typically go about pursuing the cause (core problem) of a given counseling issue? *I ask lot of questions.*
7. Why is counseling with an open Bible a priority? *Because w/o the Bible, we would stray into our own wisdom.*
8. How can you counsel your counselee to new responses? *Asking mom questions leading to more questions.*
9. As a counselee is making progress, what are some steps that this person can do to participate in serving others? *Self-examination expanding in circles and intending w/o other in the church.*
10. After completing a counseling process, how and how often should you follow-up with your counselee? *Once a month / or coffee or meal.*



## POSTTEST (Participant 4)

1. Where would you go to find more biblical resources if needed to address a counseling issue? *We have been given a great outline and process that can be followed additional resources are available*
2. If someone from your congregation approached you for help with a counseling issue, do you have a plan or process to walk them through (if yes please briefly describe)? *Yes, I think so, This outline based on 1 John ins a valuable outline to be offered*
3. Do you feel competent to biblically shepherd a disciple through a counseling process? Why or why not? *I don't know if I feel "competent" but at least there is an outline; I think knowing some of important Scripture and being familiar with relevant Scripture in 1 John.*
4. Why is reorientating a disciple to Jesus the first priority of a biblical counseling process and how would you do it? — *understand the origin, faith work reference Biblical wisdom.*
5. What is a biblical approach to addressing the presenting problem? *Use the Word, trails and testimonies and the teachings of Jesus.*
6. How do you typically go about pursuing the cause (core problem) of a given counseling issue? — *Origin story as an individual. — build rapport through listening and trust.*
7. Why is counseling with an open Bible a priority? *The Bible as authority, the foundation.*
8. How can you counsel your counselee to new responses? *Show them timeless wisdom and truth found in the Word.*
9. As a counselee is making progress, what are some steps that this person can do to participate in serving others? — *Life groups, Christian community.*
10. After completing a counseling process, how and how often should you follow-up with your counselee? *Weekly, monthly or yearly depend on the person and topic.*
11. Do you believe that this study can be applied to your own life and then reduplicated in the lives of others? Why or why not? *Yes. Very illuminating and sound principles based on the Bibles and effective experiences.*

## PRETEST (Participant 5)

1. Where would you go to find more biblical resources if needed to address a counseling issue? *Ask a Biblical Leader, e.g., Laura K. or Luke T. or Philip R. or my Christian Counselor. Or would go to the Bible.*
2. If someone from your congregation approached you for help with a counseling issue, do you have a plan or process to walk them through (if yes please briefly describe)? *No not specifically*
3. Do you feel competent to biblically shepherd a disciple through a counseling process? *Not really Why or why not? My advice would hopefully be biblical, I don't actually have a process though.*
4. Why is reorientating a disciple to Jesus the first priority of a biblical counseling process and how would you do it? *The world's way is broken, Jesus is truth. Use resources or the Bible.*
5. What is a biblical approach to addressing the presenting problem? *Pray, listen, seek wisdom in God's Word, pray and stay in touch.*
6. How do you typically go about pursuing the cause (core problem) of a given counseling issue? *Ask Questions, listen, pray for discernment.*
7. Why is counseling with an open Bible a priority? *His Word is the way; the evil one is prowling if we aren't Bible centered.*
8. How can you counsel your counselee to new responses? *Ask them, "do you think X" guiding questions.*
9. As a counselee is making progress, what are some steps that this person can do to participate in serving others? *Share success, pray about the problems*
10. After completing a counseling process and how often should you follow-up with your counselee? *It depends more often at first. In person then texting or overtime.*

## POSTTEST (Participant 5)

1. Where would you go to find more biblical resources if needed to address a counseling issue? *Resources provided in back of the book.*
2. If someone from your congregation approached you for help with a counseling issue, do you have a plan or process to walk them through (if yes please briefly describe)? *1 John 5 steps. Yes, I'd listen to understand problem, seek the heart issue; walk in the light practice the truth of God's Word, be loving, live a lifetime of repentance and living in community (fellowship).*
3. Do you feel competent to biblically shepherd a disciple through a counseling process? Why or why not? *Yes – it focused on good and familiar points through the guide.*
4. Why is reorientating a disciple to Jesus the first priority of a biblical counseling process and how would you do it? *Endurance, they are saved — listen and trace the resistance to truth*
5. What is a biblical approach to addressing the presenting problem? *Trace the resistance to the truth*
6. How do you typically go about pursuing the cause (core problem) of a given counseling issue? *Go through relevant Scripture: 1 Jn and others*
7. Why is counseling with an open Bible a priority? *It's the only way that lasts*
8. How can you counsel your counselee to new responses? *Imitate Jesus is the goal, loving responses*
9. As a counselee is making progress, what are some steps that this person can do to participate in serving others? *Give testimony, serve the body, be a disciple*
10. After completing a counseling process, how and how often should you follow-up with your counselee? *It varies; first weekly, then every 2 weeks, then monthly, quarterly, yearly*
11. Do you believe that this study can be applied to your own life and then reduplicated in the lives of others? Why or why not? *Yes. Its relevant, broad(?) to apply anywhere the world needs it.*

### PRETEST (Participant 6)

1. Where would you go to find more biblical resources if needed to address a counseling issue? *Book resources: Powlison and Emlet.*
2. If someone from your congregation approached you for help with a counseling issue, do you have a plan or process to walk them through? (if yes please briefly describe). *Not really.*
3. Do you feel competent to biblically shepherd a disciple through a counseling process?  
Why or why not? *Not really. Not a good listener—get into answers too soon.*
4. Why is reorientating a disciple to Jesus the first priority of a biblical counseling process and how would you do it? *Sin is always a factor.*
5. What is a biblical approach to addressing the presenting problem? *Try to find root or heart issue.*
6. How do you typically go about pursuing the cause (core problem) of a given counseling issue? *Weakness—don't listen well enough.*
7. Why is counseling with an open Bible a priority? *Sin and discipleship failures are often the cause of felt pain.*
8. How can you counsel your counselee to new responses? *Not sure.*
9. As a counselee is making progress, what are some steps that this person can do to participate in serving others? *Where were weak can be the same source of ministry.*
10. After completing a counseling process, how and how often should you follow-up with your counselee? *Not sure.*

## POSTTEST (Participant 6)

1. Where would you go to find more biblical resources if needed to address a counseling issue? *In addition to current resources, some of the authors and books mentioned.*
2. If someone from your congregation approached you for help with a counseling issue, do you have a plan or process to walk them through (if yes please briefly describe)? *Yes and no. I understand the process, but tend to not listen well—a skill that needs practice.*
3. Do you feel competent to biblically shepherd a disciple through a counseling process?  
Why or why not? *As above — understanding the process but need actual skill.*
4. Why is reorientating a disciple to Jesus the first priority of a biblical counseling process and how would you do it? *Jesus is the answer—discipleship is about becoming like Jesus through His Spirit.*
5. What is a biblical approach to addressing the presenting problem? *Frequently repentance – per class, about 9/10 (other than suffering loss issues).*
6. How do you typically go about pursuing the cause (core problem) of a given counseling issue? *By training resistance to repentance and obedience.*
7. Why is counseling with an open Bible a priority? *Part of counseling is replacing deceit with truth.*
8. How can you counsel your counselee to new responses? *By reading and applying relevant Scripture.*
9. As a counselee is making progress, what are some steps that this person can do to participate in serving others? *Easy one is testimony—sharing with others the results of their growth.*
10. After completing a counseling process and how often should you follow-up with your counselee? *Depends — follow-up with decreasing frequency— weekly, monthly, etc.*
11. Do you believe that this study can be applied to your own life and then reduplicated in the lives of others? Why or why not? *Yes, but dependent on skill development on active listening.*

### PRETEST (Participant 7)

1. Where would you go to find more biblical resources if needed to address a counseling issue? *Powlison's work and his organization (using the Bible first).*
2. If someone from your congregation approached you for help with a counseling issue, do you have a plan or process to walk them through (if yes please briefly describe)? *No*
3. Do you feel competent to biblically shepherd a disciple through a counseling process? Why or why not? *Not really equipped with a process.*
4. Why is reorientating a disciple to Jesus the first priority of a biblical counseling process and how would you do it? *(1) Because Jesus is Lord (over everything) — and the vine and (2) Start with questions, e.g., could you please describe your relationship with Christ.*
5. What is a biblical approach to addressing the presenting problem? *2 Tim 3:16–17; but I don't have a formal approach.*
6. How do you typically go about pursuing the cause (core problem) of a given counseling issue? *Questions; "data collecting"*
7. Why is counseling with an open Bible a priority? *2 Peter 1:3–4*
8. How can you counsel your counselee to new responses? *Get time in the Word and in community (groups). Rom 12:1–2.*
9. As a counselee is making progress, what are some steps that this person can do to participate in serving others? *Group, church attendance, outreach.*
10. After completing a counseling process, how and how often should you follow-up with your counselee? *Depends on the issue, but initially weekly.*

## POSTTEST (Participant 7)

1. Where would you go to find more biblical resources if needed to address a counseling issue? *After the Bible, probably Powlison.*
2. If someone from your congregation approached you for help with a counseling issue, do you have a plan or process to walk them through (if yes please briefly describe)? *Yes ... the light, the truth, the Word, love and living through Him.*
3. Do you feel competent to biblically shepherd a disciple through a counseling process? Why or why not? *2 Cor 3:5— the sufficiency of the Holy Spirit and the Word.*
4. Why is reorientating a disciple to Jesus the first priority of a biblical counseling process and how would you do it? *Helping them see the relationship. The Word.*
5. What is a biblical approach to addressing the presenting problem? *Listening: repentance/faith (or faith and repentance).*
6. How do you typically go about pursuing the cause (core problem) of a given counseling issue? How, *I John looks great ☺*
7. Why is counseling with an open Bible a priority? *Reorientates the counselee (and counselor).*
8. How can you counsel your counselee to new responses? *Assigned Bible readings.*
9. As a counselee is making progress, what are some steps that this person can do to participate in serving others? *Testimony, prayer, and accountability*
10. After completing a counseling process, how and how often should you follow-up with your counselee? *Depends ... weekly, monthly, but something ... (looks like this person wrote a little more that was off the page).*
11. Do you believe that this study can be applied to your own life and then reduplicated in the lives of others? Why or why not? *Yes — for sure ... (crossed off word reduplicated and wrote “replicated ☺” under it).*

## PRETEST (Participant 8)

1. Where would you go to find more biblical resources if needed to address a counseling issue? *God's Word, church, bookstore, pastors, Gotquestions.org*
2. If someone from your congregation approached you for help with a counseling issue, do you have a plan or process to walk them through (if yes please briefly describe)? *I would first suggest they seek a biblical counselor, pray with them, direct them to Scripture.*
3. Do you feel competent to biblically shepherd a disciple through a counseling process? Why or why not? *Not at this time as I am not specifically trained.*
4. Why is reorientating a disciple to Jesus the first priority of a biblical counseling process and how would you do it? *Reorientating to Jesus is essential as this is our Savior. We can only be @ peace biblically through Jesus.*
5. What is a biblical approach to addressing the presenting problem? *Seeking biblical counseling, prayers, seeking specific passages for issues.*
6. How do you typically go about pursuing the cause (core problem) of a given counseling issue? *By listening, asking specific questions such as if they have sought God our counsel.*
7. Why is counseling with an open Bible a priority? *Because the Bible contains everything we need.*
8. How can you counsel your counselee to new responses? *By encouraging them to reference specific verses in Scripture to issues, center (?) on salvation, and hope.*
9. As a counselee is making progress, what are some steps that this person can do to participate in serving others? *Participating in different ministries such as grief support, Give God glory.*
10. After completing a counseling process, how and how often should you follow-up with your counselee? *Monthly.*



## POSTTEST (Participant 8)

1. Where would you go to find more biblical resources if needed to address a counseling issue? *Sermons from Open the Bible, CCEF, authors mentioned by Pastor Luke David Powlison.*
2. If someone from your congregation approached you for help with a counseling issue, do you have a plan or process to walk them through (if yes please briefly describe)? *Lead them to God's Word find out heart issue abide in Christ by walking in light, practicing the truth, keep Word, love first, live through Him.*
3. Do you feel competent to biblically shepherd a disciple through a counseling process? Why or why not? *I feel more confident after this lecture. I see why 1 John is such a thorough source for seeking biblical wisdom of Truth.*
4. Why is reorientating a disciple to Jesus the first priority of a biblical counseling process and how would you do it? *I would 1<sup>st</sup> familiarize myself with Luke's book on counseling 1 John. I see why 5 steps of abiding in Christ are helpful in leading people through this process.*
5. What is a biblical approach to addressing the presenting problem? *Identifying the heart issue, help person to see their need for Christ/salvation. Lead them to Scripture.*
6. How do you typically go about pursuing the cause (core problem) of a given counseling issue? *By listening and addressing the heart.*
7. Why is counseling with an open Bible a priority? *Because the Bible is our source for getting through life, It is inerrant truth written by God.*
8. How can you counsel your counselee to new responses? *Pray for them encourage them, provide resources.*
9. As a counselee is making progress, what are some steps that this person can do to participate in serving others? *They can use their life experiences to encourage others.*
10. After completing a counseling process, how and how often should you follow-up with your counselee? *Follow up as needed.*
11. Do you believe that this study can be applied to your own life and then reduplicated in the lives of others? Why or why not? *Absolutely. It's filled with helpful resources, scripture suggestions, examples.*

### PRETEST (Participant 9)

1. Where would you go to find more biblical resources if needed to address a counseling issue? *Pastor / Life Group Leader*
2. If someone from your congregation approached you for help with a counseling issue, do you have a plan or process to walk them through (if yes please briefly describe)? *No*
3. Do you feel competent to biblically shepherd a disciple through a counseling process? Why or why not? *No, but subject to how well known*
4. Why is reorientating a disciple to Jesus the first priority of a biblical counseling process and how would you do it? *Always refer to the Word.*
5. What is a biblical approach to addressing the presenting problem? *Heaviness / being present.*
6. How do you typically go about pursuing the cause (core problem) of a given counseling issue? *Underlying issue - time*
7. Why is counseling with an open Bible a priority? *Always refer back to the Word in total*
8. How can you counsel your counselee to new responses? *Multiple discussions*
9. As a counselee is making progress, what are some steps that this person can do to participate in serving others? *Join a church / attend a church*
10. After completing a counseling process, how and how often should you follow-up with your counselee? *Depends – but always be available.*

## POSTTEST (Participant 9)

1. Where would you go to find more biblical resources if needed to address a counseling issue? *Internet references in the back of the study*
2. If someone from your congregation approached you for help with a counseling issue, do you have a plan or process to walk them through (if yes please briefly describe)? *Do now – at least framework: light, truth, Word, love, life.*
3. Do you feel competent to biblically shepherd a disciple through a counseling process? Why or why not? *(this person underlined the Word competent) Adequate from experience / study / will be better prepared were faced with opportunity – identify goals.*
4. Why is reorientating a disciple to Jesus the first priority of a biblical counseling process and how would you do it? *To be in Christ and Christ in us.*
5. What is a biblical approach to addressing the presenting problem? *What does God's Word say—w/love & silence look for underlying problem.*
6. How do you typically go about pursuing the cause (core problem) of a given counseling issue? *Listening – hearing – understanding. Every person is individual – even if the problem is similar.*
7. Why is counseling with an open Bible a priority? *Must be focused on the Word and must be saturated in the Word.*
8. How can you counsel your counselee to new responses? *Focusing on real issue and goal*
9. As a counselee is making progress, what are some steps that this person can do to participate in serving others? *Encourage more outward focus counselee cannot others only self being Christlike (last part was hard to read): being action focused(?).*
10. After completing a counseling process, how and how often should you follow-up with your counselee? *Lifetime— as this depends on as needed. Even if just to check-in. (few more words here unreadable).*
11. Do you believe that this study can be applied to your own life and then reduplicated in the lives of others? Why or why not? *Yes, each of us is to counsel and in need of counsel.*

## PRETEST (Participant 10)

1. Where would you go to find more biblical resources if needed to address a counseling issue? *My Pastor; the Director of Freedom House Ministry; Google! Concordance.*
2. If someone from your congregation approached you for help with a counseling issue, do you have a plan or process to walk them through (if yes please briefly describe)? *Yes “Listening Prayer” biblical principles from Elijah House Ministries.*
3. Do you feel competent to biblically shepherd a disciple through a counseling process? Why or why not? *Yes and no— depending on the severity of the depth of the problem.*
4. Why is reorientating a disciple to Jesus the first priority of a biblical counseling process and how would you do it? *Because ultimately the Holy Spirit / Jesus in the counselor. Do it through prayer.*
5. What is a biblical approach to addressing the presenting problem? *The truth of Scripture, comfort for the hurting. Explaining true repentance and forgiveness.*
6. How do you typically go about pursuing the cause (core problem) of a given counseling issue? *Exploring their past; “tell me about your mother, tell me about your father.”*
7. Why is counseling with an open Bible a priority? *To clearly read verses.*
8. How can you counsel your counselee to new responses? *Support them in making better / biblical choices in relationships.*
9. As a counselee is making progress, what are some steps that this person can do to participate in serving others? *Don't know.*
10. After completing a counseling process, how and how often should you follow-up with your counselee?

## POSTTEST (Participant 10)

1. Where would you go to find more biblical resources if needed to address a counseling issue? *1 John = take the person through 1 John consult "Biblical Resource" page: ACBC.org.*
2. If someone from your congregation approached you for help with a counseling issue, do you have a plan or process to walk them through (if yes please briefly describe)? *(This person left this question blank).*
3. Do you feel competent to biblically shepherd a disciple through a counseling process? Why or why not? *Yes, with oversight.*
4. Why is reorientating a disciple to Jesus the first priority of a biblical counseling process and how would you do it? *I'm not the final authority.*
5. What is a biblical approach to addressing the presenting problem? *Use a topical study of their problem.*
6. How do you typically go about pursuing the cause (core problem) of a given counseling issue? *Get to their heart, not just the mind.*
7. Why is counseling with an open Bible a priority? *God's Word is always true.*
8. How can you counsel your counselee to new responses? *X-ray Questions.*
9. As a counselee is making progress, what are some steps that this person can do to participate in serving others? *See "Love Section"*
10. After completing a counseling process, how and how often should you follow-up with your counselee? *Weekly to every other week to monthly to quarterly.*
11. Do you believe that this study can be applied to your own life and then reduplicated in the lives of others? Why or why not? *Yes — but it'll take some study and work.*

## PRETEST (Participant 11)

1. Where would you go to find more biblical resources if needed to address a counseling issue? *Pastor Luke, google,*
2. If someone from your congregation approached you for help with a counseling issue, do you have a plan or process to walk them through (if yes please briefly describe)? *No*
3. Do you feel competent to biblically shepherd a disciple through a counseling process? Why or why not? *Yes and no in simple items yes, but for most things no.*
4. Why is reorientating a disciple to Jesus the first priority of a biblical counseling process and how would you do it? *Through all things, Jesus can heal. It all starts with Jesus.*
5. What is a biblical approach to addressing the presenting problem? *Understanding the issue, looking up or finding Bible verses to support and pray about it.*
6. How do you typically go about pursuing the cause (core problem) of a given counseling issue? *Pray and refer back to the Bible, seek advice from others.*
7. Why is counseling with an open Bible a priority? *It is the book with all the answers.*
8. How can you counsel your counselee to new responses? *Ask questions, listen and support.*
9. As a counselee is making progress, what are some steps that this person can do to participate in serving others? *(this participant left question blank).*
10. After completing a counseling process, how and how often should you follow-up with your counselee? *Weekly at first.*

## POSTTEST (Participant 11)

1. Where would you go to find more biblical resources if needed to address a counseling issue? *Pastor, search engine with ESV, This booklet you provided has a great amount of resources.*
2. If someone from your congregation approached you for help with a counseling issue, do you have a plan or process to walk them through (if yes please briefly describe)? *What I learned was prepared for first meeting, hear their story (silence), pray, follow the strategy and have an end goal.*
3. Do you feel competent to biblically shepherd a disciple through a counseling process? Why or why not? *I don't feel complexly comfortable on a complex issue but now I have a guide to help me provide a more biblical help*
4. Why is reorientating a disciple to Jesus the first priority of a biblical counseling process and how would you do it? *It will not work if they are not in Christ. Tent in Christ and target the heart.*
5. What is a biblical approach to addressing the presenting problem? *Create a loving strategy to help someone with issues. This book presents/provides so much rich information.*
6. How do you typically go about pursuing the cause (core problem) of a given counseling issue? *Pray, listen, research biblical verses and crate a plan.*
7. Why is counseling with an open Bible a priority? *I want to do it thru the Word of Jesus, Best counselor there ever was. Remove devil from and his thoughts out of the issue.*
8. How can you counsel your counselee to new responses? *By practicing the truth – trace the resistance. Repentance leads to revelation.*
9. As a counselee is making progress, what are some steps that this person can do to participate in serving others? *Saturate in Scripture work with them on topical studies. Keep it relevant.*
10. After completing a counseling process, how and how often should you follow-up with your counselee? *It is life long, follow up weekly, then monthly and yearly don't just abandon them at the end of the goal.*
11. Do you believe that this study can be applied to your own life and then reduplicated in the lives of others? Why or why not? *Yes. This gives me a great resource to help myself as well as others.*

## PRETEST (Participant 12)

1. Where would you go to find more biblical resources if needed to address a counseling issue? *Books from pastors, life groups.*
2. If someone from your congregation approached you for help with a counseling issue, do you have a plan or process to walk them through (if yes please briefly describe)? — *listen, ask some questions and reframe to make sure there is understanding, then refer to a pastor.*
3. Do you feel competent to biblically shepherd a disciple through a counseling process? Why or why not? *No, qualified and willing to listen but then make a referral to a qualified and experienced counselor.*
4. Why is reorientating a disciple to Jesus the first priority of a biblical counseling process and how would you do it? —*using Biblical stories and teaching to impact timeless and biblical wisdom.*
5. What is a biblical approach to addressing the presenting problem? — *understanding the Bible and how it applies to personal counsel in a secular world.*
6. How do you typically go about pursuing the cause (core problem) of a given counseling issue? — *listening and patience, illustrative questions, as the core issue may not be apparent to the counselor or the counselor or the counseled.*
7. Why is counseling with an open Bible a priority? *Foundational and authoritative—basis for wisdom.*
8. How can you counsel your counselee to new responses? *Build rapport, trust, openness.*
9. As a counselee is making progress, what are some steps that this person can do to participate in serving others? — *match with groups, individuals, and service opportunities.*
10. After completing a counseling process, how and how often should you follow-up with your counselee? — *open to check-ins and discussions at any time, but schedule regular check-ins and in-person meetings.*



## POSTTEST (Participant 12)

1. Where would you go to find more biblical resources if needed to address a counseling issue? *Bible, recommended books, pastors, brothers and sisters in Christ.*
2. If someone from your congregation approached you for help with a counseling issue, do you have a plan or process to walk them through (if yes please briefly describe)? – *understand the presenting problem, understand the process, build trust and open communication make referral.*
3. Do you feel competent to biblically shepherd a disciple through a counseling process? Why or why not? *No to sometimes — drawn to counseling the non-believer in a secular world.*
4. Why is reorientating a disciple to Jesus the first priority of a biblical counseling process and how would you do it? — *understand the origin, faith work reference Biblical wisdom.*
5. What is a biblical approach to addressing the presenting problem? *Use the Word, trails and testimonies and the teachings of Jesus.*
6. How do you typically go about pursuing the cause (core problem) of a given counseling issue? — *Origin story as an individual. — build rapport through listening and trust.*
7. Why is counseling with an open Bible a priority? *The Bible as authority, the foundation.*
8. How can you counsel your counselee to new responses? *Show them timeless wisdom and truth found in the Word.*
9. As a counselee is making progress, what are some steps that this person can do to participate in serving others? — *Life groups, Christian community.*
10. After completing a counseling process, how and how often should you follow-up with your counselee? *Weekly, monthly or yearly depend on the person and topic.*
11. Do you believe that this study can be applied to your own life and then reduplicated in the lives of others? Why or why not? *Yes. Very illuminating and sound principles based on the Bibles and effective experiences.*

### PRETEST (Participant 13)

1. Where would you go to find more biblical resources if needed to address a counseling issue? *Ask a pastor*
2. If someone from your congregation approached you for help with a counseling issue, do you have a plan or process to walk them through (if yes please briefly describe)? *No*
3. Do you feel competent to biblically shepherd a disciple through a counseling process? Why or why not? *Depends on the issue and the person.*
4. Why is reorientating a disciple to Jesus the first priority of a biblical counseling process and how would you do it? *Jesus is the answer to all of life's difficulties.*
5. What is a biblical approach to addressing the presenting problem? *Ask thoughtful questions and hear testimony.*
6. How do you typically go about pursuing the cause (core problem) of a given counseling issue? *Not sure?*
7. Why is counseling with an open Bible a priority? *Bible has all the answers*
8. How can you counsel your counselee to new responses? *Listen, ask questions, and pray.*
9. As a counselee is making progress, what are some steps that this person can do to participate in serving others? *Church website*
10. After completing a counseling process, how and how often should you follow-up with your counselee? *Weekly.*

### POSTTEST (participant 13)

1. Where would you go to find more biblical resources if needed to address a counseling issue? *Pastor Luke's handout.*
2. If someone from your congregation approached you for help with a counseling issue, do you have a plan or process to walk them through (if yes please briefly describe)? *Yes, five steps in 1 John.*
3. Do you feel competent to biblically shepherd a disciple through a counseling process? Why or why not? *I think so. It is kind of intimidating but I think having a structure and the Bible will work,*
4. Why is reorientating a disciple to Jesus the first priority of a biblical counseling process and how would you do it? *Jesus Christ is the Redeemer and not me.*
5. What is a biblical approach to addressing the presenting problem? *What keeps one from repenting.*
6. How do you typically go about pursuing the cause (core problem) of a given counseling issue? *There is a connection between the heart and core problem*
7. Why is counseling with an open Bible a priority? Holy Spirit inspired and so gives people power to change
8. How can you counsel your counselee to new responses? *People know they can increase in loving responses.*
9. As a counselee is making progress, what are some steps that this person can do to participate in serving others? *Saturate in Scripture work with them on topical studies. Keep it relevant.*
10. After completing a counseling process, how and how often should you follow-up with your counselee? *Tapper it off: weekly monthly, quarterly.*
11. Do you believe that this study can be applied to your own life and then reduplicated in the lives of others? Why or why not? *Yes. With this resource and the resources mentioned in presentation.*

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## ABSTRACT

### EQUIPPING LEADERS IN A COUNSELING METHODOLOGY BASED ON 1 JOHN AT THE ORCHARD CHURCH IN BARRINGTON, ILLINOIS

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Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Matthew D. Haste

First John is not a counseling manual, but counseling is discipleship and there are discipleship steps in 1 John that apply to counseling. The development of this training initially came about through a one-on-one Bible study in which a methodology emerged in the study of 1 John. This 1 John framework has a start, finish, and process that is particularly useful for training church leadership to counsel biblically. It has been repeated in a variety of pastoral counseling situations. This became a training given in a weekend intensive so that this 1 John methodology and basic biblical counseling training can be replicated in lay ministry. This intensive aided in the overall goal of training and equipping lay leadership. This methodology and training was for the Congregational Life Ministry. It can provide one-on-one, confidential, Christ centered guidance, support, and encouragement to the church family facing short-term emotional and relational challenges.

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