

Pa232 Counseling

Lesson Pa232-28 Christian Life: Need for Direction

Have you ever been seriously disappointed by a close friend—even betrayed? Hearing the word “betrayed,” often brings to mind the name Peter, Jesus’ disciple. One night, sometime after Christ’s resurrection, a discouraged Simon Peter decided to go fishing. Six other disciples, including Thomas, joined him. Working all that night, they caught nothing. Early in the morning Jesus stood on the shore. He called out to them, “Friends, don’t you have any fish?” They told him they had none.

Then Jesus said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” When they did, they could not pull the net into the boat because it was too full of fish.

Suddenly John said to Peter, “It is the Lord!”

When Peter heard this, he jumped into the water. The others followed in the boat since they were not far from shore. When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it and some bread. Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.” So Peter dragged the net ashore and brought some fish. Then Jesus invited them, “Come and have breakfast.” The disciples knew it was Jesus and he shared the food with them. This was the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

After they had eaten, Jesus took Peter aside and asked, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

Peter said, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

Jesus asked again, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?”

He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

Jesus replied, “Take care of my sheep.”

Again, for the third time Jesus said, “Peter, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me.”

Peter again said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my sheep. ... Follow me!” (John 21:1-17).

The example of Jesus shows us the pattern to use when we feel someone has mistreated or betrayed us. Jesus demonstrated how to repair a broken relation, when a person feels hurt or has regrets. His disciples had all left him. One had openly denied him. Now they were frightened and felt their lives were in danger. Jesus offered the disciples relief. He showed them a way to reconnect to peace in their lives.

As a counselor, you will meet people who have been abused or betrayed or are suffering with regrets. A relaxed style of counseling—a simple conversation—will give you insight into how that person is feeling and thinking. It will also help both of you sort out what is fact, what is fiction, and what needs to be put aside. Allow the person to put their feelings, thoughts, and opinions into words. This helps you to get an idea of what has happened and to understand how to

speak to the situation. It may take patience, as the person may repeat themselves. They are facing mental stress and seeking relief from the emotional pain they are feeling.

The task of the counselor is not to solve anything, but to help the counselee to manage the situation. He or she needs a more peaceful daily life. Their inner person needs healing in some way. They need to be reconciled to someone or overcome some difficulty.

People with needs may ask or expect counselors to give them answers and solutions. This does not work well. A lasting resolution will come only from the work of the Holy Spirit in that person's life. As counselors, we are listeners and teachers, working with God's help. As you pray with the person who has come to you, the Spirit will clarify how to solve life's problems. He will reveal fitting and practical ways for the person involved to live a more stable life.

When counselors tell someone what to do, it invites an increased dependence on the counselor and less reliance on themselves and God. The counselor is there for a short time. The person in need, however, will continue to live their life and will need to resolve other problems.

Counselors are most helpful when they are relaxed and open, speak plainly, and provide a safe atmosphere. This allows the one who is stressed to release built-up anxiety, as they unburden themselves and tell their "story." As the story unfolds, the person feels some relief. They are more prepared to look for and find a helpful solution to their problem. Take time to sort out the facts, thoughts and feelings of the person. This helps them clarify the concern that led them to seek for help. These steps will help the person find ways to reconcile to someone or some life problem as the Holy Spirit leads them.

What is the correct response when a person betrays the trust of others or has been betrayed? There comes a time *for forgiveness to be given and to accept the forgiveness of others*. Jesus said, "And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins" (Mark 11:25-26). Christ's example for restoring a relationship is summarized with three steps:

1. **Take care of the person's present needs and concerns.** "Friends, haven't you any fish?" the man on shore asked. After Christ (the one offended) was recognized by the disciples, he invited them to eat the breakfast he had prepared. They needed food after working all night.
2. **Address the relationship.** "It is the Lord!" exclaimed the disciples. Christ's question to Peter was whether he still loved him. Three times Jesus asked, and three times Peter responded with a positive answer. Three was the number of times Peter had betrayed his Lord.
3. **Reconcile to the former relationship.** Christ was really saying, "Let's get back to the relationship we had and carry on the work yet to be done—feed my sheep!"

Everyone has failed and come short of what is expected. We often expect more of others than we expect of ourselves—overlooking our own faults and failures. This is our weak human nature. A person who is slow to forgive, and even slower to accept the forgiveness of others, can become depressed. He may realize he has not or will not reach the standards he had hoped for.

This can create an anger turned inward, also resulting in depression. In counseling, try to help a person to accept the forgiveness of Christ. Show them how to recognize their own faults and move toward forgiveness of those who have harmed them. You will be helping them to eliminate their regret, guilt, or depression.

This lesson is **important** because we see that Jesus was concerned with his disciples' disappointment and well-being. He kindly guided them to understand that he had forgiven them for their actions. He helped them see that the broken relationship could be healed as the Holy Spirit led them to continue to follow him and do the work he had called them to.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that the Holy Spirit will guide you to help people understand their own failures. Each person must forgive others who have wronged them, so that God may forgive them.

Review Questions:

1. What is the reason for the simple counseling conversation? [Pause]
A. If you answered that it allows the counselor and the person to clarify the facts and lay aside what is not factual, you are right.
2. What is the main responsibility of the counselor, with the help of the Holy Spirit? [Pause]
A. If you said, "The counselor tries to help a person find relief and a path to reconcile broken relationships," you are correct.
3. What is the most important step for a person to take after understanding their problem? [Pause]
A. If you answered, "The person must forgive others for wrongs done toward them and ask God to forgive their wrongs too, in order to be reconciled to God and return to the path he has given them," you answered correctly.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to review it three or four times. Tell the story of Peter's return to fishing and the restoring of the disciples' relation with Christ. Share the story with others in your circle of friends, who may feel like they have failed God. Ask friends to share testimonies of how they have been wronged and how God has helped them to forgive others. Memorize Jesus' words: "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.... For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you" (Matthew 6:12-15).