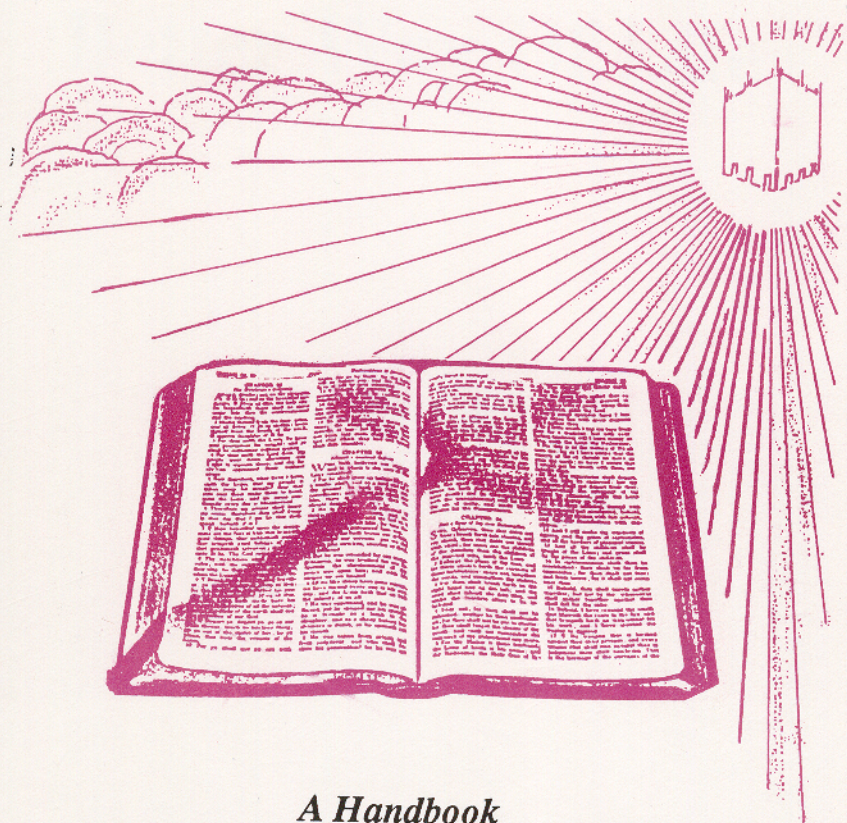


Counselling Yourself To A Better Way Of Life



*A Handbook
on
Biblical Counselling*

by

Robert D. Rawson

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Abbreviations Used Extensively In This Book

The book of PROVERBS is used extensively in this book. References is frequently made by the () symbol. The chapter and verse are located inside the symbol, and applies to the sentence and paragraph wherein they are contained.

For example; (1:8-9) signifies PROVERBS chapter 1 verse 8 and 9.

All other Bible references will be fully written out as pertaining to book, chapter, and verse. For example; (Romans 1:16) signifies the location of the book of ROMANS chapter 1 verse 16. The sentence and paragraph wherein it is found is the place of its application.

Acknowledgements

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ROBERT D. RAWSON is solely responsible for the thoughts expressed in this book and presents this book as "*food for thought*", not an edict for guaranteed success in counselling yourself to a better way of life. This book is sent forth with the hope of some good that will be accomplished as individuals "*think within themselves.*"

Dedication

My teachers impressed the power of factual information and practical application. Their dependability and patience as well as wise insights will not be forgotten and will hopefully be passed on to future generations by this book. This book is dedicated to the following:

Mis' Annie Smythe (First Grade - Kosciusko, Ms.)
Mr. Arnis Evins (Jr. High Mississippi History)
Mr. Tom Mills (Jr. High School)
Mrs. Flora Jordan (Plane Geometry)
the late, Mr. Fred Dear (Summer Baseball Coach)
the late, Mr. H. A. Dixon (Bible- Freed-Hardeman)
Mr. Howard Oliver (Biology, F-HC, Henderson, Tenn.)
Mr. Eric Stephens (Speech, Delta State College)
Mr. Henry Jacobs (Teacher Ed., DSC-Cleveland, MS)
and
Mr. Dave McDowell (Mentor of the classics)
and
Mr. Khaki McMillan (Journalism-Newspaper)

Introduction

The desire to help others is innate in some. However, the finest of gifts may be squandered without the cultivation of education which is the understanding of information gathered and the wise use of that understanding. Knowledge is attained, not innate.

Hopefully in this book, you will find some thoughts which will enable you to make better use of the information and knowledge pertaining to the good advice one should give to himself.

Preface

This book comes after eighteen years of effort to give others some advice which can be applied from the Bible. Believing that the Bible has all the answers to life's problems was not a problem to me in the ministry of Christ. However, I was afraid that too often the answer I gave to persons who shared problems was, "*Pray more, read the Bible more, and attend worship services more.*" Finally, when someone said to me, "*Robert, what does the Bible say about this subject (which was his problem)?*" I recognized that I didn't know enough to tell.

I am not suggesting that I know much more now—but, I've come to realize that God did place wonderful information in his Word which pertains to daily problems and how to overcome them.

In a manner of speaking, I was helping when I encouraged people to read the Bible more, pray more; etc. because they could have seen what I've come to see in the Bible—if they applied it to their problem. I solicit your help to acquaint me with even more of the Biblical teaching as to "*how to overcome*" any problems (sins) that occur.

The advice (counsel) in this book is not to take the place of any professional counsel which should be sought by one who either can not or will not accept a set of values by which to serve in this life. Professional counsel should be sought by all such persons and that, speedily.

The advice contained in this book compiled from the biblical text is practical advice to be taken as "*food for thought*" not an edict for success!

Bible Versions Used Within The Book

THE KING JAMES VERSION of the Bible is used throughout the book with comparisons to the AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION (1901) and the NEW BERKELY VERSION, otherwise called the MODERN LANGUAGE BIBLE (New Testament, 1944; Old Testament 1959).

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CHAPTER ONE

Counselling Yourself To A Better Way Of Life When You Think That Counselling Is Ridiculous!

“Counselling! Doesn't that require very special and highly technical expertise?” “How can I counsel myself?” “Can a person do that for himself?”

Many, concerned people ask these questions when confronted with the topic of personal counsel. These are viable questions. These are questions to which no simplistic answer should be given. Rather, a well thought and tested answer should be delivered.

Practically everyone counsels himself or herself. Decisions are made this way. Failures result from having insufficient counsel. Webster's first and primary meaning of counsel is: *“Advice.”* Obviously, the application of poor advice will assure poor results. Therefore, the advice given to self in a personal deliberation should be sound advice which will result in profitable results. This book brings ‘biblical advice’ (biblical counsel) which may help you obtain profitable results from future decisions.

(A word of caution is offered at this point. Some people can not acknowledge worthwhile values for life. This is due to a number of causes. Therefore, professional counselling, involving psychologists and psychiatrists who deal with the healing of mental disorders, is essential to those people. The sooner that treatment is begun, in such matters, the better.)

Many refuse counselling of any kind, except personal. These consider *“counselling to be ridiculous!”* They fail to recognize that they are making such a decision based on their own advice (counsel). It is poor advice, too. Good counsel is actually necessary for any endeavor to succeed.

Solomon recorded, *“Without counsel, purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors, they are well established,”* (Proverbs 15:22). As you observe

this advice, think of the many businesses that failed last year due to insufficient preparation (lack of adequate counsel information). The same negligence of counsel resulted in thousands of divorces and suicides. Counsel is necessary to succeed with any worthwhile endeavor!

The biblical advice further states there are 'deceitful counsellors' (12:5), and 'peaceful counsellors' (12:20). Recognizing this, *we should choose a number of counsellors* (15:22) so we may compare advice. We must be on guard so that we do not make decisions based on 'unsound advice'. The advice that is based upon worthwhile values can't be successfully refuted by invalid suggestions. Solomon wrote, "*There are many devices in a man's heart: nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand*" (19:22). This text presents God's values as the highest, most needful for happiness by mankind! In fact, you may have tried the devices of man's counsel only to find it lacking. Don't you think it's time to try the counsel of the Lord? Perhaps some troubles you now face will be resolved by the 'advice' (counsel) of the Lord.

Whereas, "*Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water: but a man of understanding will draw it out,*" (20:5), and "*Where there is no counsel, the people fall*" (11:14); you can see refusal to accept worthwhile counsel affects self and others. Some promotional ads appeared nation-wide a few years ago that stated: "*If you won't do it for yourself, then do it for those you love.*" The ads were urging people to keep a check on their blood pressure reading. It is a good idea. Others are affected by what you do. None of us lives in life or death unto himself alone (Romans 14:4). The failure to pursue worthwhile counsel from God and others will result in personal failure and failure for others whom you may influence. Wisdom dictates that advice should be sought from competent sources (13:16).

Safety is maintained by good counsel. The biblical injunction is, "*For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety,*" (24:6). There is virtue in 'getting the facts straight' before embarking on any plan, particularly a plan of war! Threats to human safety and dignity disturb sane people. Such adventures that involve others, of necessity, must have appropriate counsel. Plans that are made in haste often fail dramatically. However, taking time to

'sleep on it' and 'mull it over' will make a worthwhile decision even more effective. In order that safety for self and others may be assured, *counsel is necessary*.

My mother illustrated to me the *sweetness of counsel*, as we gardened a plot of ground when I was younger. She had stopped, as we entered the garden, to file her hoe. I went 'right to work' on the row and middles in front of me. She said, "*Robert, you don't need to start so quickly. You don't lose time when you stop to sharpen a hoe. You invest time when you do that.*" Later, she passed me 'snipping' off the blades of grass without disturbing the root systems of the plants. She finished ahead of me, way ahead! Solomon addressed, "*Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel,*" (27:9). You see, there is a difference between 'plunging in' which often results in a waste of time and 'investing time' which is using time to listen to helpful information (counsel). A waste of time is a loss for everyone involved. Investments pay dividends!! Seek a friend today. His counsel will sweeten your life.

THOUGHTFUL QUESTIONS

1. Who spends most of the time in counselling you?
2. What determines 'good advice' (counsel)?
3. List four values advanced in the biblical counselling of this chapter.
4. Would it be good to enter a marriage with one who has exclusively counselled himself or herself and rejects all others who try to advise?
5. Why is counsel so sweet to our lives?

CHAPTER TWO

Counselling Yourself To A Better Way Of Life When You Reject The Valuable Things In Life!

I will define 'values' in this practical work as: "Those people, or things, accepted as being worthwhile, valuable, or of personal benefit." When a value is present in one's life, it is evidenced by one's respect and service of that valuable thing. On the other hand, when a value is absent from one's life, it is evidenced by disregard and lack of service.

There are at least four *practical means of gaining values*. When a value is needed by a child, one or more of these means is used. When a value needs to be regained by an older individual, one or more of these means is used.

1. **ACCEPTING THAT SOMETHING IS VALUABLE BECAUSE OF INFORMATION** received which teaches the value (22:19)
2. **ACCEPTING THAT SOMETHING IS VALUABLE BECAUSE OTHERS DISPLAY THEY CONSIDER IT VALUABLE** (13:20)
3. **ACCEPTING THAT SOMETHING IS VALUABLE BECAUSE OF PERSONAL TESTS** which prove the value (18:1; 19:19)
4. **ACCEPTING THAT SOMETHING IS VALUABLE BECAUSE OF SUFFICIENT DISCIPLINE** that enforces respect for the valuable person, or thing (1:8-9; 19:27; 22:15).

Now, an example places the four suggested means of gaining values into one practical story: Jim and Ann are parents of John, their teenage son. They want John to have the value of good workmanship. First, they instruct him that being a good worker, regardless of the job, is needed and appreciated. They inform John that doing a good job is rewarding both emotionally and financially. John may take the information given to him by his

parents and have the value of good workmanship throughout life. It might be just that simple in his accepting this value. However, he might refuse the information. But, if Jim and Ann are examples of good workmanship by displaying their efforts and results, then John may be deeply influenced by their example to accept the value of good workmanship. Later, John may get a job that further reinforces that value. John's boss may say to him, "*You've done an extra good job today, and I'm going to add another \$4.00 to your paycheck on Friday.*" Now, John has proven to himself by a casual personal test that being a good worker is valuable to himself.

However, if John refuses to accept the value of good workmanship by rejecting the instructions, examples and personal tests, he may have Jim and Ann say to him, "*You are going to have to do good work in this, or that, or else lose some of your allowance to us for having to do it right for you!*" Now, they are enforcing the value by a discipline which insists upon his valuing good workmanship. Their consistency in maintaining the discipline that enforces this value must be done. This discipline is only a 'shadow' of the discipline that an employer will use when poor workmanship simply means the discipline of 'dismissal' from the company. John will have the advantage of knowing that poor workmanship is not rewarded.

Thus, these four practical means for creating values are used successfully over and over in making, or re-making, values. I have consistently charted the neglect of six values by individuals with whom I've worked for over 18 years. Each of these six values could have been accepted if the person had allowed *information, example, experience, or good discipline* to advise him.

Observe the following chart as to the results from a lost value of:

- 1) God (31:30;; Hebrews 12:9)
- 2) Others (14:21; 22:19)
- 3) Self (13:15; 22(19)
- 4) Family (1:8-9; 22:19)
- 5) Authority (13:16; 13:25)
- 6) Acquaintances (19:22; 22:19)

Note that in the re-gaining of that value, *information,*

examples, experiences and discipline must impress the value, benefits, help, worth, blessings, comfort and profit of that value which has been rejected. It does virtually no good to 'harp' on and on about the sorry state of that individual who rejects the value of God, for example. His failure to worship God and serve God stems from his loss of the value for God. The information given to him must reinforce the benefits, etc. for believing in the value of God! Only then will a change in value be forthcoming. *The examples* given to him must reinforce the benefits, etc. for believing in the value of God. The personal reflection upon *his own personal experiences with God* and his word must reinforce the benefits, etc. for believing in the value of God! *The self-discipline or extra-discipline* (from others) must reinforce the benefits, etc. for believing in the value of God and the great loss to be suffered for failing to serve God.

CHART: THE LOSS OF VALUES — RESULTS RESTORATION AND CHANGE.

<i>The Loss of This Value:</i>	<i>Often Results In This Conduct</i>	<i>Which Requires Emphasizing</i>	<i>For This Change</i>
God	NO regard, respect; worship, service; lukewarmness	THE worth, benefits, etc. by (1) information, (2) good examples, (3) personal testing experiences or (4) <i>good discipline</i>	HAVING regard, respect; worship, and service with enthusiasm for God.
Others	NO regard, respect; A "take 'em or leave 'em" attitude; Dishonesty, Selfishness; Assault (Murder, Rape)	(thus planting the value which has been lost into the heart of the person)	HAVING regard; and respect; Showing concern; Being truthful, sharing, and caring for others.
Self	NO regard, respect; Scorn; Low self-image; Physical, Mental and Spiritual negligence; Immorality; Proud; Suicide		DESIRE improvements; Concern and confidence; Involvement with helping self to betterment; Humbly, living the abundant life.

Family	NO regard, respect; No involvement desired; Undisciplined; Abuse (Mental, Physical, Sexual); Selfishness	SHOWING regard, and respect, being involved with family obediently. Caring, warm, and helpful to all. Sharing with them
Authority	NO respect, regard; Hatred; Rebellion; Vandalism; Abuse (Physical, Mental)	HAVING respect, and regard with concern and obedience
Acquaintances	ADD prejudice to results listed "OTHERS"	ADD impartiality and friendliness to "OTHERS"



THOUGHTFUL QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the four means of creating any value. Discuss additional means.
2. How can we plant a value into someone's life when he refuses your instruction?
3. Discuss Proverbs 14:21 with reference to conduct when the value of others is not regarded.
4. How long can parents discipline their children to reinforce a value they want their children to have?
5. How has the loss of the value of authority affected our school systems? Will any of the four means of question 1 fix this loss of authority-value?

CHAPTER THREE

Counselling Yourself To A Better Way Of Life When You Need To Overcome Any Problem In Life!

Every problem should be weighed in your mind. Some problems are light-weight at one time and heavy-weight at another. For example: spilling of milk on Monday evening at supper may not have the same stress reaction that spilling milk ten minutes before guests arrive for dinner on another evening! In fact, some problems are of such magnitude that professional counselling must be sought. Don't fail to seek counsel of a professional nature when values that are believed are consistently violated.

It is the case that you will advise yourself (counsel yourself) as to the 'weight' of a problem. In so doing, consider biblical advice as you make decisions which will help you 'bear the load' of any problem (12:5; 12:20; 19:20-21; 20:5; 21:30; 24:6; 27:9).

Problems may exist in the form of confrontations with words, situations, people, choices or a multitude of other things which threaten your present state of tranquility. *The hesitation to make a decision often becomes the decision.* In considering possible answers to the confrontation you want to explore all possible consequences of: 1) facing the confrontation squarely, 2) not facing the confrontation, but avoiding it, or 3) putting off the 'heavy' part of the confrontation till later. Jesus spoke of those who try to straddle the fence with regard to service. He said that you decide when you won't decide (Luke 11:23). Results follow from indecision, therefore seek the best information available as to what to do when a confrontation happens.

You should recognize *the longer a situation goes unresolved, the bigger the anxiety.* Usually, such stress shows in body and mind. Others become aware quickly. Your anxiety is obvious. When David played the harp to soothe Saul's spirit (I Samuel 16:16-23), he did so

because of his concern. Others may temporarily help you. But it can be ineffective in the long run as in the instance of Saul's future hardships to himself.

Assistance to others may be accepted as a precious gift (17:8; 19:6), or it may be rejected (25:20). However, if your assistance is rejected, then your help is not desired by that person at that time. The fact that you recognize that you do not provide the help desired by no means should cause you to bow completely out at this point. Suggest that you want to be of help, even if it means assisting him to find another person! If he or she will not allow such assistance, then bow out and remember the person in your prayers (28:23). To continue pressuring will only be annoying to the one whom you desire to help (29:1).

When confrontations are faced squarely, there are three possible reactions which may follow: 1) accepting the situation as hopeless and make no future efforts to change it, 2) becoming angered by the situation and retaliation with words and actions either under control, or without control, or 3) reflecting on the situation with calm thought and counsel in deciding the way to overcome the problem. Let's examine each of these three reactions.

First, *to fold under the weight of a problem has positive and negative sides.* Solomon wrote, "A live dog is better than a dead lion," (Ecclesiastes 9:4). This may be the wise course, if it is a decision to react this way. However, if you resort to refusing counsel (15:22), and become a 'mote-hunter' who is bitter toward others (Matthew 7:1-5), or refuse to admit that a problem even exists (I Samuel 15:20), then you will have problems of a greater dimension which will bring even greater confrontations in the future. To put off a decision till more information can be considered is noble. But, to put off a confrontation in hope that it will be forgotten is probably unwise.

Second, *to become angry regarding a problem has positive and negative sides.* Anger can be righteous and with control. Jesus employed this type when he purged the temple of God (Mark 3:5). Paul advised, "Be ye angry and sin not" (Ephesians 4:26). You should be within control (24:17) even in victory over an enemy!

However, anger can be out of control and harmful. "Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger

resteth in the bosom of fools” (Ecclesiastes 7:9). This is ‘out of control’ anger that hurts family and friends (18:19). It is often irreversible in its effects. Hurtful words that are hurled without control will suffer judgment (Matthew 5:21-22). “*Grievous words stir up anger,*” (15:1). To angrily face a situation (without control) is to become the victim instead of the victor!

To reflect upon the situation and take counsel so that a calm solution may prevail is a worthwhile decision everytime. Your goals of life are already in place regarding some matters. When situations arise that threaten your realization of those goals, it is time for constructive action--neither indecision nor anger “out of control” will suffice! *Happiness comes to those who exercise wisdom and understanding* (3:13) in solving problems. *Following advice of a wise person* will lead to a fulfilling life (4:20-22). Troubles are soon past for those who calmly and deliberately call for a change (11:31). Respect abounds for those who want to change bad for good (Luke 15:32). Such calmness and purpose will avoid the taking of unnecessary risks (6:27) and will insist upon the truth of the situation being upheld (23:23).

Recovery from any problem requires the attitudes of humility and the fear of the Lord (22:4). Worthwhile riches, honors, and living are in store for those who abound in such attitudes! These attitudes make possible the resolving of any confrontation with honor. Let’s examine both of these attitudes.

First, humility brings riches, honor and life (22:4). Humility is the quality of lowliness, not weakness! It may be developed by: 1) contrasting self with God (Psalms 8), 2) seeing the example of Jesus (John 12:32), 3) observing the example of a caring person (13:17), or 4) being embarrassed! (Luke 14:28-29). May God bless you with whatever it takes to possess the attitude of humility. It will result in great blessings!

Second, fear of the Lord brings riches, honor, and life (22:4). Being fearful doesn’t mean to become deathly afraid. It means to have sufficient respect! Fear may be developed by: 1) recognizing the higher power (Hebrews 12:28-29), 2) facing a constant struggle (Luke 18:4-5), 3) doubting of personal strength (Luke 21:25-26), or 4) taking to heart a worthwhile instruction (John 20:31). May God bless you with whatever it takes to possess the attitude of fearing God. It will result in great blessings

for your life.

Of course, any problem that is to be overcome requires the *change of old friends, old habits, old places, old words, and discipline* (from self or others). Summed up, the change to new friends who encourage you with words and discipline is essential to overcoming any problem in life.

THOUGHTFUL QUESTIONS

1. When is a problem a real problem for an individual?
2. How may you know whether you may assist a troubled friend?
3. Discuss three reactions to problems or confrontations.
4. What makes humility possible?
5. What do riches, honor and life mean to you in the light of this study?

CHAPTER FOUR

Counselling Yourself To A Better Way Of Life When You Are Tempted To Be Angry Without Control!

Have you ever been so mad you could 'chew a nail?' Has someone angered you to the degree you were tempted to strike him? Have you ever been tempted to 'tear up' a piece of equipment which 'refused to work'? Have you tried to 'blame your anger' on what others say to you or do to you? Consider some information about how we learn anger that is without control and what we might do to have better control.

Determine to be slow to express your thoughts. The Bible records, "A man that is slow to anger will appease strife" (15:18). The old adage "count to ten before you speak" is often recalled too late to be useful! You may counsel yourself to be kind as you discuss matters with others.

Choose acceptable words to communicate with others without malice. This is the action of a mature person. A rash person will frequently use words of 'death' (18:21) and offense (18:19) which only separate people in life. By listening to words, in private, we may note the affect those words will have upon others (Colossians 4:6). We should prepare in advance for situations which may call upon us to answer a word. For example, practically all of us drive an automobile. We know already that at some time another driver is going to come dangerously close to hitting us due to carelessness. Prepare now for what you are going to say, if anything. Another example: most of us are going to be late for an appointment someday. Prepare now for the tone of your voice as you apologize.

Avoid the company of angry and disturbed persons. The temptation will be greater to enter the fray when

you are in their company. No teaching can be communicated in this type of situation. Therefore, excuse yourself. This is a mature action. Standing 'toe-to-toe' with a furious person will promote your learning of anger and rage. The result will be that you will fall into his trap (22:24-25). When reason is set aside, excuse yourself from that conversation through pleasant words (15:1). You will be glad you did.

Confront an erroneous statement in a personal conversation. You will be amazed at how many people shout and argue only when a crowd (other persons) is around, but are meek and calm when approached privately. One reason may be that they observe your concern for truth. A private conversation may appease strife (16:14). However, if you again are engaged in an unreasonable conversation, dismiss yourself with pleasant words, and you depart! There are 'bloodthirsty' persons (29:10) who never use reason! Don't be like them! Their life is as a 'shadow' (Ecclesiastes 8:12-13).

A worthwhile adage is biblical in nature: "*The best way to win an argument is to avoid it.*" Solomon wrote, "*the prudent (wise) man seeth evil and hideth (guardeth) himself; but the simple (unwise) pass on and are punished (harmed)*" (27:12). The purpose of government is to 'avenge the good' and 'punish the evil-doers' (Romans 13:3-4). Use the governmental agencies to stop those who anger you by their words and actions. You should not take personal revenge. When the situation is involved to this degree—visit professional persons who deal with civil counsel. Personal anger should be replaced by calm determination in such matters.

THOUGHTFUL QUESTIONS

1. List three factors which stir your anger and place one prepared statement by the side of each for future use.
2. Discuss Ephesians 4:26 and contrast with Proverbs 22:24-25.
3. Why do words often begin the rageful situation?
4. What is the best way to right erroneous statements?
5. What should a young person do when a 'bully' is persistently troubling him? Can he use the school officials to help?

CHAPTER FIVE

Counselling Yourself To A Better Way Of Life When You Go Off To School, College or a Career

The big day has finally come. What with all the towels, racks and toilet articles being put into the suitcases and trunks, it would seem that hardly anything will be left in the house.

There will be papers to fill out and keys to remember. There are permits to purchase and parking spaces to avoid. You are going from home to 'commence' that new life out yonder. You've had advice about maintaining the bank account and your car; but what about "how" to be successful and safe?

Keep the determination to obtain your goal and add the willingness to make adjustments when needed. The biblical text records, "The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things," (15:28). Be sure to think of alternate routes when your main corridor is blocked. You can succeed! Go for it!

If you want to succeed in school, or career, have adequate preparation. This requires time for study. This study time must be placed aside and only spiritual values placed above it. You can not have preparation without the effort required to 'know that you know'. The 'mental wizards' are a marvel to watch, but diligence as a learner will earn success too (Isaiah 1:17). To 'refuse instruction is to despise self' (15:32). Something may be learned from every person you meet. Some things you may learn are not desirable for you—but learn why they are not desirable too! Good luck has been characterized as 10% being at the right place and 90% being prepared when you are at the right place. Good luck!

"Test the water" of new friendships before jumping into them. This will save you from potentially fatal results. Experience has already shown you 'wisdom is

valuable' (8:11). You may have already found yourself in a situation for which 'money' was not the answer. It was good for that to have happened while you were still at home. But, now you are moving away from home. You will meet people who serve only self-interest. They will not consider your feelings or welfare. Their greed has no conscience, (James 4:4,7). By pulling you to their level they will not help you to reach your goals. How can you know such people before they harm you?

First, counsel yourself to be watchful of persons before you have to deal with them. The "foolhardy" pass nonchalantly along never paying attention till they are hurt painfully (22:3). Be observant of people, and surroundings. Ask about others whom you observe. Reputation precedes most people. Seek information (15:32).

Second, trust very little to an unknown individual before you entrust a great deal. Confidence placed in a person of proven unfaithfulness is like 'eating with a chipped tooth' and walking with a 'turned ankle' (25:19). Don't place great treasures (particularly your health, wealth and life) in their hands. They have damaged little treasures repeatedly. They will damage more valuable treasures too. There is an aphorism which states, "*You take advantage of me once—shame on you! You take advantage of me twice—shame on me!*" If you are going to lose something, would you rather it be small and replaceable; or big and irreplaceable?

Involvement in more than one area of life is to your advantage. Although applying yourself to studying, or learning of a new career is important, it should not be exclusive to that one area. You will become a 'slanted person' who is out of balance with others. The foolish stick to only one pursuit in a self-centered fashion (30:8-9). Often this person may become conceited and is then scorned (mocked) by others (18:2). They will not desire to hear of your one-sided accomplishments. The big "I" and little "you" have ended many friendships and brought misery to many conceited persons. A mixture of involvement with study and extra-curricular activities will provide a balanced life. The praise that you receive from others will be powerful (27:1,2, 12). Such praise will renew your zeal for even greater achievements.

Honesty is a characteristic that successful people

everywhere realize is necessary to succeed. With the purchase of truth (23:23) comes the discipline of honesty that serves to strengthen your life. You never will have to worry about a past deed of dishonesty coming back to haunt you. Honesty is valuable to you but the obtaining of means by corruptive practices will 'profit nothing' (10:2). Wealth is profitable when it is obtained by labor (13:11). The truth and honesty of life provide solid foundation for every decision. "Buy truth and sell it not."

Check chapters 2 and 3 for information concerning "how" to create humility and values. These attitudes are necessary for any worthwhile change. Problems can be overcome.

THOUGHTFUL QUESTIONS

1. How may intimidation harm a student's desire to learn?
2. What constitutes hard work for successful results?
3. Show some tests to determine true friendship and trustworthiness.
4. What extras should be in a diligent student's career or schooling?
5. How does one learn to be honest in words and conduct?

CHAPTER SIX

Counselling Yourself To A Better Way Of Life When You Are Tempted To Commit Adultery Or Fornication

Over a million children are born out of wedlock per year in America. Without responsible assistance in being reared into adulthood, these children are often filled with rage and loss of stability, giving themselves solely to lives of crime. Contempt is held for society in general by many of these fatherless. The cost in monetary allotment to dependent children is overwhelming, yet not to be compared to the costs in terms of heartache, tears and fears within a child's heart! Will you please consider some advice (counsel) which you may give yourself when you face the temptation to add to this immoral condition in America?

The lack of understanding contributes to immorality being committed. "Whoso committeth adultery with a woman...lacketh understanding," (6:32) When understanding is placed aside and the individual operates on emotions and feelings, immorality may be in the future. When passing through an emotionally-charged situation (some friend's death, a disappointment, a loss; a happy occasion) take *sound reason with you*. Reason will not take away from any honest emotion which you may invoke but will add to your ability to be 'level-headed' under the circumstances. The outcome of immorality is not as simple as being blotted out, or wiped away (6:33). Much hurt can result physically, spiritually, emotionally and mentally.

The allurements to become involved in an affair is the action of an uninformed person (7:7). The road travelled is actually a road of death (7:27) for strong men, and women. When words of flattery are accepted (2:16), the result may be a dismal consequence of disease, or affliction. The "come on" words that insist 'you are my

only one' (7:15) have been spoken before to others and will be repeated after your day is over! The guilt that erupts from knowing that an affair is dishonorable, and that a promise made in marriage has been violated mercilessly, often brings the feeling of despair (2:19). A 'broken spirit' (17:22) may result, which can 'dry the bones' (a disappointing life, an untimely death)!

Care must be taken in courtship before marriage. A kiss isn't just a 'peck on the cheek' when it 'oozes like oil' (5:3) and entices the passions of the flesh. To enter an activity of sexuality outside the commitment of marriage (Hebrews 13:4) is not honorable before God or man. Some may reason that the physical activities are the same for the married and the unmarried persons! But that is short-sightedness! You see; hearts, minds and emotions are blended in marriage along with the physical aspect. Solomon wrote, "*Rejoice with the wife of thy youth*" (5:18) and "*Drink deeply from the waters of a moral life*" which brings satisfaction and fulfillment (5:19). On the other hand, an endless search is in store for those who, outside the commitment of heart and hand, enter into sexual conduct. It is an enslaved search with no honor nor satisfaction found (5:22).

Some things are out of place. A jewel of gold in a swine's snout is out of place (11:22). Life is out of place at the harlot's house (7:27). Supposedly, real wealth and living are in store for those who abandon all propriety and give themselves to fleshly desires. But, the truth is that only personal pleasures are obtained (6:26) and, that, in horrid places (9:17,18). Surely, you want to be committed to riches, honor and life which comes from hearts of humility and fear of God (22:4).

Secret activities are not secret when others are involved. The temptation to 'tell it' due to pride is often great (16:18). Others come to know of immorality by the law of sowing and reaping (Galatians 6:6-9). The change, from desiring understanding (3:13; 6:32) to a search of emotional constraint alone, tells others that immorality is being committed. Sharing with a true friend who is wise will help you to resist the temptation to think that such an event is ever really secret (13:20). Above all, God records the knowledge of sinfulness (I Corinthians 6:19) and disallows such activities to influence Heaven.

Seeking a friend with whom to share your concerns

and temptations will be a good step to resisting this temptation. By changing the places of solitude that you may have attended with your date, you may change the entire temptation. By changing the person whom you have dated who was not satisfied with your friendship and personality (but had to demand fleshly thrills) you may change the entire temptation. By changing your focus on self and your date to the future child that may come into this world without a full percentage (and grow up to despise the world for all the hurt suffered) you may change the entire temptation to yield to the flesh outside of marriage. By changing the allurements of the flesh to a realization of the effects of venereal disease due to promiscuity you may change your entire tempting situation.

Check chapters 2 and 3 for information concerning 'how' to create humility and values. These attitudes are necessary for any worthwhile change. Problems can be overcome.

THOUGHTFUL QUESTIONS

1. In what sense do those involved in adultery not possess understanding?
2. Name three situations which may encourage immoral affairs.
3. How may depressions occur from such involvements?
4. What kind of secrecy is involved in such conduct?
5. Give three examples of being short-changed in such affairs.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Counselling Yourself To A Better Way Of Life When You Are Going To Get Married

Wedding bells and noisy receptions are heard throughout the year. Especially is this true in the month of June, the month of brides. Families hurriedly approach preparations from dress selection to rehearsal dinner. Questions abound: *"Has everyone that's suppose to receive a written invitation, received it yet?" "Can I make it through this?" "Am I ready for marriage?"*

Good advice needs to be in your mind before you marry and afterward. Counselling yourself toward success in this area means personal happiness like none other.

Before the busy moments of preparation for a wedding event, a couple has moved steadily through a courtship which has culminated in a proposal of marriage. Solomon noted, *"Who findeth a wife, findeth a good thing"* (18:22). A good wife, or husband, *must be found after searching diligently*. Using good criteria for the search to find a suitable mate is essential. A good wife, or husband, brings bliss to the union. No magical formula can do this. Just being, and doing, good for one another will provide happiness in marriage unlike any other area of life. *The 'golden rule'*, when employed, *will enrich your marriage*. It reads, *"Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them,"* (Matthew 7:12). Many heartaches ensue when the perverted version of this rule is used. It reads, *"Do unto others before they get a chance to do it to you."* Within the period of courtship, I am sure that you wondered many times, *"Is this the right person for me?"* I suggest some practical tests by which you may evaluate your plans for a happy and successful marriage.

First, has the courtship brought out the 'golden rule' in his, or her conduct toward you and others? Are your values respected by your dating partner? Or, are your values scorned (mocked) by your date? Have you had to

compromise some of your values in order to keep the friendship? You are aware of how difficult it is for a person to change his, or her habits. If the golden rule isn't being used already, what causes you to believe that it will be used after the marriage vows are spoken? "*Confidence in a unfaithful man in the time of trouble is like a broken tooth and a foot out of joint*" (25:19). Should you have confidence in your dating partner's developing this wonderful trait of life when nothing leads you to believe it is valuable to him?

Second, has jealousy reared its head in the courtship and brought out the insecurity of your dating partner? Solomon warned, "*Make no friendship with an angry man...lest thou learn his way and find a snare,*" (22:24-25). Jealousy brings forth a particular type of anger—a rage. "*Jealousy is the rage of a man, therefore his soul will not spare in the day of vengeance*" (6:34). Jealous rage endangers the person holding it and others who are around it. It's not easily overcome and requires constant counsel (15:32)

Can you live in a perpetual state of uneasiness and accusation?

Third, has the spirit of nagging and bickering characterized the courtship? The Proverbs say, "*It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house*" (2:9). You will loathe a continuous nag (29:1) and realize the hard way that, "*Better is a dinner of dry morsels with quietness,*" (17:1) when you are married to a constant 'fuss'! How easily will you be able to do your work of the day when you come from a house where you 'walk on eggshells' constantly? Can marriage be very thrilling under this circumstance?

How have you done with the three-fold evaluation questions? I am persuaded that those three areas appear almost daily in the marriage. You will gain from departing from a courtship where the 'golden rule' is not practiced, where jealousy is the norm and where bickering is the way of life! "*Search on till find a 'good thing'*" (18:22).

Let's suppose for a moment that you recognize that some changes are in order in your life in order that you may be a suitable marriage partner for someone. You desire to bring happiness and fulfillment to a marriage union. How can you accomplish this? *First, seek good*

counsel (15:22). By getting advice and weighing the information, you may come to the desired change. *Second, let your friends know of your desire to make a change* (13:20). Good friends will assist in reinforcing your attitude and conduct which will bring about the change. *Third, make a determination* (self-discipline) *in your heart to change* (4:23). Having made up your mind to change, allow nothing and nobody to discourage you. When your prospective fiance, or fiancee, is a part of helping you to change from a poor habit, you are blessed.

Realize that you only may decide for yourself to change you - not another person. You will be foolish to enter a marriage with the idea that you are going to change the other person. In fact, the other person will only allow you to influence him only so much as he, or she, desires - no more. If he, or she, values your influence highly, it may be that *he, or she, decides personally to make a change.* But, you really will not be able to change anyone but yourself (James 1:11-14).

Choose a friend to marry (17:17). Surprisingly, many don't!! The reason for choosing a friend is because a friend, "*loves you at all times*" (17:17). This is very valuable to you. Friendship brings many treasures to a marriage. *First, marriage among friends insures the sexual faithfulness of both persons.* Physical union is pure within the area of marriage (Hebrews 13:4). Immorality within marriage is dishonorable to God and man. Friends will not desire to bring such dishonor to each other. *Second, friends bring concern to build up each other in marriage.* True friendship is not a 'yes' person proposition. A friend by insisting on your doing better may inflict pain (27:5-6). But, the pain is from faithfulness, not malice! Friends will help each other in marriage. *Third, friends will communicate with each other regarding how they feel about the issues which face the marriage.* True friends talk with one another. They don't refuse to tell each other what they desire. If changes or plans need to be made, the friend shares his feelings. Discussions often lead to selection of a better plan than either of the individuals had personally thought by himself. The number of children which can be adequately clothed, fed and educated will be discussed and planned with love. This will avoid the 'trapped' feeling creeping into the marriage. It will also ensure provision for care

of the household (I Timothy 5:8). Children will brighten the days (Psalms 127:3) and be blessed by observing that the parents are stable and rooted adults because they communicate with one another. *Fourth, friends love one another even when the other messes up.* The description of friend is one who loves at 'all times' (17:17). This distinguishes a friend from an acquaintance who merely knows some facts about you. A marriage between friends promotes tenderness and understanding. Mercy is shared with friends, first and foremost. With so many uncertain things happening in your life, wouldn't it be wonderful to know that your husband, or wife, will be a friend who cares about you a great deal, even when you mess up! You may lose your employment—or your favorite ring—or your housekeys; but you won't lose the love of a friend. Marry your friend, who shapes up as one you have picked from your search (18:22), and live happily ever after!

Check chapters 2 and 3 for information concerning 'how' to create humility and values. These attributes are necessary for any worthwhile change. Problems can be overcome.

THOUGHTFUL QUESTIONS

1. Why is 'getting married' such a busy time? Make some spiritual applications of marriage using Romans 7:1-4.
2. Name three problem traits often seen in courtship and discuss.
3. What do friends bring to a marriage union?
4. How can communication affect a stable household?
5. List the benefits of the 'Golden Rule' for husbands, wives, and children.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Counselling Yourself To A Better Way Of Life When You Face A Disobedient Child

They are so cute when only a few hours old. The word 'precious' is used by some for the 'first time,' to describe the new baby. Helpless and dependent, the baby comes into the world to receive care from others who will impart good advice or poor advice to him. In only a few years, you may need advice as to how to deal with a child who has become very disobedient.

Instead of resorting to the statement, "*If I can just live long enough to get him on his own,*" make a renewed effort to help your son or daughter, grow into a responsible young adult. The foolish will fail to respond to consistent efforts to improve their state (27:22). If your efforts are rejected, you may need to take the disobedient child to professional persons who can examine the possible reasons why the child persists in disobedience (15:32).

Foolish people are surpassed only by those who are 'wise in their own conceits' (26:12). Hopefully, your child has not already become conceited in rebellion. Perhaps a renewed effort will help him discover himself and how foolish it is to continue being disobedient (18:2).

The use of soft words instead of grievous words will replace anger with peace (15:1). By choosing your words carefully, you may put away the poorer choice of words of 'nagging'? If so, nagging words will only create stubbornness (29:1). Are your words excusing him? If so, these words will insure his being disobedient again and again (19:19). Are your words encouraging? Words should be used to praise the worthy (18:21), but not used as the only discipline for disobedience (19:18).

The use of adequate communication will replace misunderstanding with what to expect. The assumption that a child understands instructions and the knowledge that a child understands can be two different worlds! Of

the failure to communicate (openly express in words and by example) what is expected results in misunderstandings and fusses. Make sure that instructions are repeated back to you from your children so that the child understands both the message and the consequences (rewards for faithfulness and punishments for unfaithfulness). When a parent is angry with a child due to an unintentional misunderstanding on the part of that child, much harm is done to future relationships. Solomon wrote, "*Happy is the man that getteth...understanding,*" (3:13). If happiness is to be a reality in the home, then clear instructions for clear understandings must be done. A family conference held as often as necessary will go a long way to secure peace at home. Every family member must understand what is expected of him.

Punishment for disobedience should be done in each instance (19:18). However, disobedience differs from mistakes made in normal growth and clumsiness. For example, the spilling of a glass of milk differs from his rejection of your instruction to have placed the milk in a cup instead of a glass. To punish the clumsiness displays immaturity on the part of parents. This will actually show that the intolerance for a mistake is the same as for outright disregard for instruction. This is not true. Mistakes are just that - mistakes. We all make them. But, disobedience is disobedience.

In the example above, some parents would punish the child who disobeyed by placing his milk in a glass *if he spilled the milk*. But no punishment would come if he didn't make a mess, although he was disobedient. This is not consistent and will only serve to teach the child that an act of disobedience is permissible, if you don't make a mess!! Hope of punishment doing good will be lost when mistakes are equated with disobedience (19:18) and when disobedience is overlooked (19:19) haphazardly!

Punishments should vary but must be exercised for acts of disobedience. The 'peak and valley' approach where punishment is done at one time and not done the next time for the exact same offence is not wise. Punishments for those who recognize their efforts and are penitent toward the situation may be relaxed, thus giving the child reprieve. A faithful child will prove worthy of the reprieve. However, subsequent acts of disobedience within the same area will call for strict penalties if change is to occur (19:19). The Proverbs

insist on the blessing of mercy for those who 'pass over a transgression' (19:11) and the blessing of faithfulness for those who 'offer no deliverance for a wrathful person' (19:19). In fact, to deliver the wrongdoer from punishment of any type is to insure having to deliver him again and again. The reason that many continue to openly disobey is 'because sentence against their evil works' has not yet been done (Ecclesiastes 8:11-12). The evil of disobedience must be 'sentenced' (disallowed) away speedily! Extreme and persistent disobedience requires professional counsel. The separation of an incorrigible child from the parents may have to be done for growth and safety of all family members. You must assure such a disobedient child that all acts of discipline are being done because you love him dearly, not because you want to harm him. Changes can be made if you are willing to take the steps to 'sentence' persistent disobedience.

What types of punishments should be used? You should know that a variety of punishments may be employed. First, *instructional discipline should be used* (1:8-9). Be sure that the child knows the facts. Second, *"withholding favors" should be used* (19:19; 25:19). Be sure that the withheld item is used as a lesson for disobedience. Third, *"putting off favors" may be used* (25:19). Use upcoming events as leverage for a child to recognize the importance of obedience. Making a favor a reward for obedience reinforces enjoyment and responsibility. Fourth, *the use of the 'rod' may be done*. (13:24). A spanking will not be the first choice for the wise parent. Neither will a parent decide that a spanking is never in order. The learning of anger comes from those who discipline in anger (22:24-25). The parent should calmly and firmly administer discipline to enforce the motive of correction, not abuse! Some parents suggest that if they wait till they calm down, then they don't desire to punish the child for disobedience. This simply presents the immaturity of the parent who reasons in this manner. Punishment should be done for disobedient conduct, not for the soothing of a parent's pride, ego, or anger! Punishments for disobedience should vary and always be used in a calm and deliberate manner.

After punishment has been administered (regardless of the type), *the parent should have love and concern*

continue. *"Lift up the hands that hang down"* and *"strengthen feeble knees"* is the advice given to fathers who chastise their sons (and daughters) (Hebrews 12:10-13). Chastisement is not joyous, but it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness. As the text of Hebrews 12:13 suggests to 'make the path straight', I am reminded that a parent is to *'train up a child in the way that he should go'* (22:6). Training involves words, examples, and participation. Have you 'taken your child by the hand' and shown him what you expect and why? Are you just 'telling' instead of training? He should be trained for a career, a marriage, and for being a parent, not just 'told about it.'

You must be a good example of what you teach to your children. If you consider it valuable, you will have a much better impact on your child when you instruct him. Often the double standard lives of parents, who are inconsistent with what they say, create despisement by their children. In order to have peace within the family, as anywhere else, each member must be going in the same direction. *"When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him,"* (16:7). Surely, if the Lord will do this with our enemies, he will do it with those that live in the same house! Hypocrisy will ruin a child's respect for his parents.

THOUGHTFUL QUESTIONS

1. What constitutes disobedience from a child?
2. List a few words which infuriate children and adults.
3. Why should understanding be important to parents and children?
4. What assures the continuation of disobedience?
5. What holds a child's respect for his parents at a low ebb?

CHAPTER NINE

Counselling Yourself To A Better Way Of Life When You Get Hurt By Your Friend

Friendship is a dear commodity for each of us. We do many things at the request of friends. Friends can hurt us. What advice can you give yourself as to how to handle the disappointment of a friend?

Be certain to know if the hurt was intentional or unintentional. Intentionally hurting a friend is hardly an act of love, unless it is for some ultimate good in life and therefore can not be avoided (27:5-6). In view of the information that a friend loveth at 'all times' (17:17), your amazement at being hurt by a friend should cause you to wonder about yourself and/or that friendship. Perhaps you will discover that the friendship is intact and there are changes which you need to make so your future will be worthwhile. Thus, this hurt sustained is meaningful to you.

On the other hand, when the hurt is deliberate with no apparent justification, you know that a friendship is now "*past history*" for some reason. You may care to find the reason for the dissolved friendship. You may not care to find the reason. The decision is yours to make. If you care to investigate the reason, be sure to do so face-to-face in as pleasant an atmosphere as possible. Seek a detailed and specific explanation. The benefits of a personal confrontation instead of a clamor with some group of people are many and potentially fruitful (18:19; 20:19; 21:5). The *rashness of a clamor is taken away by personal insight and conversation with another person.* Use it to find the cause of a severed friendship. But, excuse yourself from any unreasonable conversation (22:24). This will only serve to anger you. The restoration of the friendship is not possible from unreasonable conversations. Future benefits are available from conversations which are calm, honest and forthright.

Don't dwell on the loss and hurt (15:13). Accept the loss of a friendship and benefit from the information gleaned (15:32). Make tomorrow a brighter day by using the lesson you have learned. By taking note of the matters which contributed to the demise of the former friendship (19:27) you may avoid future mistakes with others.

Realize that a regained friendship is an even stronger one if built upon the solid foundation of honesty. If your confrontation shows that correction can be done which will bless the friendship, then you are the richer by it. A restored friendship will show that love for you personally continued, though the differences which separated you were present. The clearing of a misunderstanding will open the door for a bright tomorrow (19:6). You have a gift made possible by a friend and you love him, or her, for it.

Resorting to the use of rash, harsh, and cruel words will only result in deeper anger and wider separation (15:1). The hurt will go deeper when you wrestle with feelings and allow words to 'erupt' that will do harm. An apology for mis-conduct or a misunderstanding is a precious gift to a friend (19:6). This gift bonds all parties involved because friendship is valued above differences (17:17).

THOUGHTFUL QUESTIONS

1. What has consideration of self to do with hurt inflicted by a friend?
2. How shakey is a friendship between friends? Compare Proverbs 17:17.
3. How may we love someone and yet 'wound him'?
4. Why do 'gifts' bring friendship? Aren't there more noble reasons for friendship?
5. List some 'grievous words' which are certain to stir up angry response.

CHAPTER TEN

Counselling Yourself To A Better Way Of Life When You Participate In Recreational Events

Viewing athletic contests is America's most widespread past time. Participation in athletic events is done by the millions who actually go on the field. Have you considered your behavior at such events? Have you advised yourself as to acceptable conduct which you will perform at the games?

There is an honest disposition which will help viewers and players at games. The biblical text records, "For the froward (crooked) is an abomination to the Lord" (3:32). The use of 'false balances' and 'fixed weights' to extract gain from others at any time is not appreciated by God or man (20:10,23). Failure to be honest as a contestant and viewer is heresy of moral conduct. Since when were you allowed to put your honesty 'on hold' for a few hours at the game? Honesty will benefit everybody. When the opponent makes a good play, honesty demands recognition. When the referees rules in a different way than you saw, honesty gives credit to them for they are closer to the foul than you. Honesty even insists that to end the game with the score against you is only for that game—not the next one.

The accompaniment of wise friends at the game will help us walk a wiser course too (13:20). They will help us see that good and clean competition is good and that a 'win at all costs' or a 'runaway win' does not do the home team a favor (26:12; 29:10). Encouragement for the teams to do their best should come heartily. Thus, satisfaction will be forthcoming in an earned victory. Satisfaction may also be present when a loss is used as a 'lesson of learning' instead of just another defeat! Don't be a sluggard (lazy person) who knows more than seven men can teach (26:16). Be willing to grow in

victory and loss. Solomon addressed, "I returned and saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong...but time and chance happeneth to them all," (Ecclesiastes 9:11). The results of a game may surprise you occasionally. If you have coasted through a victory after victory with scarcely a test, then pride may build up in your heart about the team which will hurt you deeply if the team fades (16:18). Be sure to have a wiser friend with whom you may talk over the game. That is a part of satisfaction too.

There is wisdom in refraining from too much rejoicing at the fall of one's opponent (24:17-18). The lack of concentration for the next opponent has a way of stopping the victory streak of even the best of teams. Confidence is valuable before and during a game contest. In fact, sportsmen call confidence 'MO' for momentum which may shift dramatically during a game. But, cockiness is a threat to continued success (26:12). The unwritten law is that you don't harrass a losing team because you may have to play them again in the district finals! And, it's tough to win again from that team! Such has been forgotten by many boastful players and fans to their later regret.

A spectator or player may be too close to an angry person at the game. "In the old days", it was common for an opposing team to put a player of lesser ability on the field in the early part of the contest whose sole purpose was to anger the star player - get him into a fight - and out of the game! Then the regular player would substitute for the 'verbal man' who did his job well. A player who is 'out of control' hurts his own team most of the time. His failure to concentrate makes him easy prey for foolish mistakes and failure (24:18). It is also true that spectators may sit too close to an angry viewer who can inflict anger (22:24). Instead of allowing yourself to be so flustered, give 'place to wrath' (Romans 13:1-7) and quietly inform a security guard of the potential problem. His presence in the area will have quite an effect on the furious spectator - for though he is angry, (whether due to disposition or liquor) he wants to finish the game in the stadium.

THOUGHTFUL QUESTIONS

1. What has caused the loss of the old adage "*It's not whether you win or lose, but how you play the game*"? Is the principle biblical?
2. What type of friend is a good fellow-spectator?
3. Why not celebrate madly after a win, instead of just celebrate?
4. Show the methods of dishonesty used in a game and how players and spectators have suffered from it.
5. How does conceit occur within a person's life?

Check chapters 2 and 3 for information concerning '*how*' to create humility and values. These attributes are necessary for any worthwhile change. Problems can be overcome.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Counselling Yourself To A Better Way Of Life When You Are In The Hospital For An Illness

Millions of people each year enter a hospital for personal care. This time you are entering for care. It feels a little different, doesn't it? Physicians do their best work when the patient personally involves himself by following the instructions. Physicians want to help you. Some practical counsel from the biblical text may help you to a better recovery from your present illness.

Take a positive attitude with you to the hospital. Since it goes a long way in recovery from any illness, a cheerful outlook is 'like medicine' (17:22). A smile is worth much to your recovery. Someone quoted to 'Miss Beth, my little girl in the first grade,':

*A smile is kinda strange you know,
because it always doubles.
You smile at me, I smile at you,
and we forget about our troubles.*

The fact that you have friends who are willing to serve you at the hospital is wonderful. Rest assured! They want you to recover speedily. The type of work the nurses and other medical personnel perform isn't measured by a pay-check. They feel for you and will contend with you at times so you will be ready for discharge. Solomon emphasized, "A friend loveth at all times," (17:17) and "faithful are the wounds of a friend" (27:5-6). Making requests to these friends at the hospital is not imposing a burden on them. They are more than acquaintances. They are friends who love to see healing. They stand ready to respond quickly to your need. These friendships will endure for years to come - visit with them a few months after your discharge, you'll see!

The recognition that your body and emotions will undergo changes should not surprise you. Your physician

will know what to do to relieve fears, frustrations or depressions that may, or may not, occur. Simply mention how you feel physically and emotionally when you see him, if he doesn't mention it to you first. Changes that are for your betterment should be welcomed.

Determine to rise above the disappointments which may face you (15:13). Any time that sorrows and disappointments continue to mount, it is possible to have a 'broken spirit'. The characteristic loneliness and sadness should not go unchecked. Recovery can be held back due to despondency. Rise above the disappointment. Look for the 'silver lining' within the clouds.

The maxim "*take life a day at a time,*" is a good idea. But, many find it difficult to think this thought when they have so many things coming at once! However, by continuing to be the companion of the wise (13:20) you will meet every situation one by one. Those friends will help if you will inform them. They are probably already at work to meet some of your needs.

Don't make up your mind in advance about complete recovery or complete failure. For example; Naaman the soldier of Syria needed to adjust his thinking regarding cleansing from his sickness. But he couldn't. Pride got in the way! He had already made up his mind in advance as to how he would be recovered (II Kings 5). It wasn't until he adjusted his thinking that recovery was possible. Solomon said, "*He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame,*" (18:13). When life hands you a lemon—get a glass of water and sugar for lemonade! In other words, make something good out of a bad situation. That way, whatever happens today, you know that you may weave into the fabric of your life that event, but it is not the whole fabric. As a garment of plaid, so is the pattern of our days—some yellow like the sunshine, some black as night, some green like grass and some silver as raindrops. Weave the full pattern a day at a time without regard to one single color. Change for the betterment is good.

Be a good listener to the advice you receive regarding activity you should do when you return home. A wise person 'foreseeth evil and hideth himself' (27:12). Be wise and ask what to anticipate. Continued improvement may largely depend upon following the specific advice you will be given. A relapse into sickness is more difficult to improve; so heed the instructions for

follow-up home care. Short-sightedness is common. Solomon expressed regret for those who endanger themselves by taking unnecessary chances because of pride and inability to see ahead (22:3). He urged not to be deceived by the use of wine (the drug alcohol) so that you become dependent upon it (20:1). Drugs are prescribed for specific usage and designated times. Do not abuse any drug whether prescribed or "over the counter". Your recovery will progress safely.

King Lemuel's mother admonished her family not to forget the law of the Lord (31:5). When you go to the hospital and later come home, don't forget the service of the Great Physician. He makes all healing possible. Using doctors, diagnosis, drugs, nurses and exercises, God works healing that is marvelous! Isn't it? Well, don't forget Him.

Press on to greater recovery with involvement. As 'iron sharpeneth iron, so a man the countenance of his friend' (27:17). Pleasant friendships will sharpen your mind and body to an enriched life. Involvement with others will not allow you to 'pull into a shell' which will bring heartache (17:22). After your stay in the hospital, use your life again. Recovery must not be in vain.

THOUGHTFUL QUESTIONS

1. What effects do smiles have on illnesses?
2. List suggestions of remarks to make someone in the hospital which will brighten his mind instead of create loneliness.
3. Why do patients 'hold back' how they feel when speaking with doctors and nurses?
4. How is pride the obstacle to improved health?
5. Show three characteristics that block further recovery after the return home.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Counselling Yourself To A Better Way Of Life When You Have Depression Swept Over Your Heart

Depression is a much discussed subject today. Perhaps it has been discussed with a friend when some other has become mentally imbalanced or committed suicide. You may be facing personal unhappiness now and need the assistance of professional counsel. You should not delay. The sooner you seek help, the sooner you will be in better health. Don't delay-

Descriptions of depression and depressive conduct are varied and many. They generally fit the biblical idea expressed in Proverbs 15:13 and 17:22 when a 'broken spirit' is described and that dwelling upon sorrows will cause the 'broken spirit' which affects one's appearance and health. The loss of will faster is encountered by everyone. But there are some who dwell on their losses and disappointments to the point of having a 'broken spirit.' This is not wise (15:13).

The broken spirit may be intentionally hidden to others. An individual may desire to express his feelings, or may desire to suppress them (18:1). Some will not divulge to others the true feelings of the inner person. To continue to dwell upon sorrows and disappointments is unhealthy. It will cause the broken spirit to eat away at the person till there is a 'drying of the bones' (17:22). Whether this is literally done or figuratively done, it is unwise for it to happen and is productive of harm to you.

In spite of not desiring to be depressed, some find it inevitable. Medications may offer this side-effect while it aids the physical ailments to recovery. A day with the 'blues' when recalling nostalgic events may occur. If this is a continuing unhappiness, consult professional persons who can talk in depth as to the 'proper focus' of your

day. Don't delay to do this.

Being honest with yourself may be more difficult than with others. But, it is just as necessary to have a fulfilling life (12:19). Lies are temporary and for that reason must be repeated and enlarged often. Their value to your life is exhausted at their spoken moment. No future rewards will come to you if you are a liar to yourself about how you feel inwardly about a certain death, divorce, loss of career or disappointment. The loss may be as minor as a lost animal, to others, but if it is major to you--honestly express it to your friends (13:20). You'll feel better to share it, whether they understand the depth of your loss at that point or not.

Becoming a recluse in life will be more harmful than constructive. Your feelings need to be shared with others in order to grow (3:27). You will actually hold back information which will bless your life and those to whom you share it. The *'deep waters of your heart need to be drawn forth'* for others to drink as well as you (20:5). Be wise and share your life with others. Even if you find confinement necessary for a time, the invitation to others to come and see you will reward them, and you.

Involvement with mental and physical exercise will brighten your days. Confinement for an extended period of time may serve to provide a broken spirit of depression. The extended time can pass productively if you will remember the advantages of films, books and information located at the library for check-out by you. Making an investment of your mind will provide an outlet for lingering *'blues'* (18:1). The advantages of physical exercise in the relieving of stress are many. Simple leg lifts, arm extensions, or isometric tightening of the various muscles of the body are often enough to stimulate the body and reduce stress and tension *'blues.'*

The attitudes of humility and respect are always necessary for recovery from any problem (22:4). Perhaps you are better off than you realize. You've failed to humble yourself and take a look at what blessings you have. You can be blessed with riches, honor and life only when this attitude is present in your life. Perhaps you are not as respectful of the Lord and righteousness as you should be. The results of your accomplishments are without a foundation. Your life will probably be filled with insecurity. You can be blessed with riches, honor and life only when you possess the attitude of respect

for God and righteousness which should be the foundation for your life.

You may have suffered a broken spirit from a sudden tragedy. The desire to ask, "Why?" of the sudden tragedies of life is natural. The failure for suitable answers to be found may bring great disappointments. A wise person will have *'patience in spirit'* (Ecclesiastes 7:8) and await the lesson, rather than become caught up in bitterness and act in haste (Ecclesiastes 7:9).

The assistance of friends will add courage to your life (13:20). Friends may be family members as well as others. They will help you to rise up and use your valued lessons found from times of tragedy. They will urge you to a better way of life (27:6) by occasionally wounding you rather than *'giving in'* to your sorrows. They are not insensitive, but caring when they do not allow you to give in to yourself. A betrayal of you is not the desire of a friend (17:13). By knowing your friends in the sunshine of good days, you may know whom to trust in the dark hours of night.

Steady growth and progress will result by observing others who display the "broken spirit" and going to them. The mere fact that you are alert enough to mention to another your observation of disappointments that they are suffering means much. This will impress them with knowledge that they are not alone in their temptations during such sorrows--others have passed through similar burdens, too. You will, in providing for them information about possible feelings they will encounter, find that the good advice you give to them is even more valuable to yourself. Reinforcement persons are now regulars at hospital wards where recovery from sickness will take a long time. They are basically volunteers who have had similar surgeries and experiences in days past. They inform the patient of *'what to expect.'* This relieves much anxiety about *'physical recovery'* and *'mental stress.'* Grow and help others--*"and if there be any other commandment...it is summed up in this; thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"* (Romans 9:13). Get involved mentally and physically and you will leave the *'broken spirit.'*

Check chapters 2 and 3 for information concerning *'how'* to create humility and values. These attributes are necessary for any worthwhile change. Problems can be overcome.

THOUGHTFUL QUESTIONS

1. What are some ways in which individuals cover their hidden feelings about disappointments?
2. How can a person be so bold as to be honest with self?
3. Show the results of an embittered person.
4. Name the type of friends that you can not afford to have advise you.
5. Provide an example or two of a friend who did not allow you to 'get your way' and thus blessed your life.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Counselling Yourself To A Better Way Of Life When You Have Thought Of Committing Suicide

Perhaps it was a friend, or a member of the family. But, someone you've known has already done it. Perhaps you have wondered just why others have committed suicide. Within the fast pace of life, perhaps you've had the thought to cross your mind. If so, you really need to speak with a professional counsellor. He can advise you in detail so that you may see the value of yourself. Don't delay seeking professional services today from mental health institutions in your region.

Since it is likely that you are going to 'talk (counsel) to yourself' about this subject first, take to heart some of the following biblical counsel (advice) in your discussion. There are recorded instances of suicide in the Bible—King Saul, Judas Iscariot. In each instance it shows a person in a time of great stress: King Saul was in a military battle which he shouldn't have entered, and Judas was in guilt over the betrayal of Jesus. Periods of great stress and suicide seem to go hand-in-hand in biblical examples. Periods of great stress which are prolonged should serve to caution you of the danger of turning the stress inward and harming self.

All of us have some periods of stress. But it seems that those who think of suicide have the view that their death will 'somehow' contribute to the solution of their envisioned problem. "*To make up your mind before a thing occurs*" is a foolish thing to do (18:13). Rather we should determine to entrust our decisions to an investment for the future (16:3).

You must see that your living and your effort contribute more to the solution of the problem than your demise. Human beings often think that a certain course is the right course only to find that they are sadly mistaken (14:12). Suicide is a decision from which you

can never learn anything! You may have chosen a plan which will be the answer to that stressful situation—but you will never know that it was. Surely it is always unwise to ‘saw off the limb on which you are standing.’

Pushing aside an oversized ego will lead to happiness in life (Matthew 5:3). There are attitudes that may change your thoughts and lead to successful living (22:4). Pride often inflates an ego till it causes irreparable harm (16:18). Push the ‘ego-trip’ aside this time and adopt humility and respect for the Lord so that riches, honor and life may be yours.

There are friends whom you may need to replace in your life (15:32). Friends may be wise (13:20) or foolish (26:12). Friends often use words of life and ‘death’ (18:21). You want to choose friends who care enough to provide wisdom and life to your earthly pilgrimage. The law of ‘sowing and reaping’ is illustrated when a man can’t take fire into his bosom without getting burned (6:27) and can’t take foolish friends without getting the result of death and destruction.

There may be medications which you want to have the doctor change because of the depression side-effects you are encountering. The doctor depends on you to let him know of the effects of medicine on your body and mind, as well as your emotions. Tell him immediately. Medicines are prescribed for a specific purpose, for a designated time. An abuse of any drug is unwise (20:1) and potentially fatal. Be alert and plan to live (16:3).

Since the thought of suicide is a personal thought, you are personally involved in the self-discipline that is required to guard your determination and encouragement. To allow these virtues to be robbed needlessly is the action of those who have not considered that there are alternatives and options to exercise. You do not have to give up determination and encouragement (19:4,6). They are valuable gifts that are appreciated by you. Good self-discipline says, “*I want to do all I can to contribute to the solution of this stress. I will not lie down on my personal responsibility*” (14:18). By just holding on for one more day—the answer may come. Don’t be robbed of these two virtues.

Seek counsel (advice) *before you come to a conclusion.* This is wise (11:14). The advice that you give yourself is self-discipline. The advice you seek from others is ‘extra-discipline’ which is outside of yourself.

Allow "extra-d" to be used by checking into friends who want to serve you at an infirmary, institution or hospital. Your recovery can begin today. Seek counsel!!

By realizing your stress period may 'wear you down', you will want to act on the preceding advice quickly. Solomon explained, "The race is not always to the swift and the victory is not always to the strong" (Ecclesiastes 9:11). You see "time and chance" have a way of wearing down the swift and strong and building up the slow and struggling. Take your change now—today—and run to make changes which will result in life!

When you feel guilty over some problem in your life, deal with it personally. The wicked often 'flee when no man is pursuing' (28:1). They display their guilt often before the evidence is assembled against them. Others simply feel guilty over not being able to 'do more or better.' Remember; 'commit thy ways to the Lord and he will direct thy path' (4:23; 16:3). Saying, "I'm sorry" to God resounds in the portals of glory (28:13). The Lord requires humility; and with humility, guilt is powerless (II Chronicles 7:14; Micah 6:8). Say "I'm sorry" and go on with life. Who is without sin among us?

THOUGHTFUL QUESTIONS

1. What common factor seems to be present in most suicide victims?
2. How may stress problems be blocked from powerless influence?
3. What changes are significant to one who has thought of suicide?
4. Which promotion do you feel is first for you to offer a person who is in a period of prolonged stress?
5. What part may doctors and medications play in recovery from illness?

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Counselling Yourself To A Better Way Of Life When You Are Bereaved

In an hour unexpected, death may occur. It is a shocking experience, even when expected to occur. The hurt of a personal loss is very real. The advice you give yourself at a time like this must be profitable.

You must not allow rage to abide within your heart. This will only cause great damage (6:33). You have the power to stop rage from building up (4:23) and should use that power to advantage (18:1). Rage will only cause additional hurt to yourself and others.

The acceptance in heart that a loss has occurred is very valuable to you. The acceptance may provide a clearer vision with which to serve others who are living. Solomon spoke of the helpless feeling; *"There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit: neither hath he power in the day of death"* (Ecclesiastes 8:8). The acceptance of an event which may not be changed is the sign of wisdom, not frailness (15:32).

Having an understanding of the meaning of death can be very helpful to you. Death is a 'separation of spirit from body' (James 2:26) and is a material loss to the ones who remain alive in the flesh. By understanding the true nature of death you may realize that personal friendship is not disturbed in heart because of another's death. Memories become much more valuable and important. A friend loveth his friend even when one of them must physically die (17:17). The spirit returns to God and the body to the dust (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

Analyzing the lessons which are taught at the time of death will benefit your future walk of life. Solomon spoke of the benefits of death to the living. He said, *"Sorrow is better than laughter."* He also gave the reason, *"For by sadness of the countenance, the heart is made better"* (Ecclesiastes 7:3). Perhaps sorrow is misunder-

stood pertaining to its value for the living. Though laughter is medicine for the heart (17:22), real lessons of conviction come from studious and somber moments of life! At the occasion of death, valuable lessons can be learned—lessons which will benefit your future. For example, those who trust in wealth to spare them can learn the folly of 'high walls' (18:11). Those who are careless can learn the tragic results (16:25). Those who take life for granted can learn the brevity of it (27:1) at the time of bereavement.

Expressions of sorrow in tears is noble love that showers the cheeks. To hold back one's tears when it is time to cry (Ecclesiastes 3:4) will only cause greater pain. Remember, Jesus wept! (John 11:35). An apostle of Christ admonished, "*Weep with those who weep*" (Romans 12:15). This is good advice in expressing love. It also serves you in being good for your physical health. Holding inside a heaviness of the heart may result in a 'broken spirit' (15:13) which can result in 'dryness of the bones' (17:22). This is not good for your future. If pride stands in the way of expressing sorrow, the weight will be heavy and potentially fatal to you (16:18). There is a time to laugh and a time to cry.

Having the personal support of friends at a time of loss is wonderful. Don't shut them out of your sorrow. Use the friendship (27:9) of older and younger friends. Faithful words and deeds are a blessing at a time of loss (27:6). Friends will not allow us to give in to our sadness. They will challenge you to remember that you still live and have opportunities to serve. It's not the word of a friend that is so remembered at a time of bereavement, but the remembrance of his presence that counts!

Recognize that a time of bereavement brings its own set of temptations. When emotions run high, you may be tempted to lay good reasoning and judgment and understanding aside. This is unwise. Having good reasoning will enhance your emotions, not retard them. Solomon spoke of unscrupulous persons who take advantage of others (17:13; 25:19). When emotions rule, some will be led into immorality (6:32). Be careful to protect understanding from the robbing effects of emotion.

After the funeral, you must return to responsibilities which profit life. Solomon addressed, "*Be thou diligent to*

know that state of thy flocks and look well to thy herds " (27:23). You may not live on a farm, but you have other secular tasks which need your attention. King David, after the death of his infant son, announced, "*I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me*" (II Samuel 12:32). David washed himself, changed his clothes, ate food and went to worship the Lord (II Samuel 12:20). Your life may be full—apply yourself to life's business again—take a bath, change into a new set of clothes, eat a meal, and go worship the Lord. Becoming involved with life again, you can use those lessons which you have learned (Ecclesiastes 7:3), for you know better than anyone else the folly of 'boasting of tomorrow' (27:1).

Check chapters 2 and 3 for information concerning 'how' to create humility and values. These attitudes are necessary for any worthwhile change. Problems can be overcome.

THOUGHTFUL QUESTIONS

1. May one hasten the day of death? By what means?
2. What lessons may be gained at a time of bereavement?
3. When is a person at his/her most vulnerable moments? Why?
4. Why is a friend so important at a time of bereavement?
5. What profit to you is King David's example of conduct after his bereavement?

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Counselling Yourself To A Better Way Of Life When You Skip Worship With The Church

Promises are made to be kept. I am sure that you have heard many statements which emphasize this idea. You have personally made a promise to the Lord and his church by your prior adherence to requirements which you accepted and obeyed from a sincere heart. Can you fail to keep your promise and feel good about yourself?

It is unreasonable for a person to 'bite the hand that feeds him'. Yet, this is what is done by those who go back on promises made in good faith to a friend. The reversal of conduct (3:27) is not noble. Even those who have deliverance when they don't deserve it will seek the same deliverance from a friendly source (19:19) again and again! It is reasonable to look to one who has helped in a prior time of trouble. The application of this thought is obvious: You made a promise to the Lord and his church. You have received many blessings therefrom—Is it reasonable to now violate your fundamental value and serve another, inferior friend?

You know that the legs of the lame are not even and that help is required in order for the lame to walk upright (26:7). What would you think of a lame person who refuses to accept any help? You would think that something dreadful has transpired for him to refuse any help—for the help made it possible for him to walk upright. You would want to know the reason for the refusal. Perhaps the answer was: "I'm just too lazy to use my help", or "I just don't like my help anymore", or "I don't want to walk upright anymore." You would be amazed, wouldn't you? Yet, you recognized in the past that as a sinner, you needed the help of the Saviour (Luke 19:10) to walk upright before God. You

accepted (Hebrews 5:9) that help. But now, you refuse to walk upright any more. Do you have a better 'reason' than the foolish lame person we've considered? Laziness is hardly a noble explanation (24:30-34). Lack of concern won't do (19:13). And rejection of the commitment is unacceptable (1:29; 19:20). Yet, it may be as difficult to reason with you (Isaiah 1:1-20) as it is to reason with the lame person who has help—but won't allow it.

Replacement of a friend and commitment because the 'grass looks greener' elsewhere is not noble either. Solomon foresaw some who would "desire to envy others" (24:1). Replacement of the Lord and his church for 'greener pastures' causes me to wonder, "What do those 'greener pastures' offer that is as good as what Christ Jesus offers?" The Lord is your very best friend and will help you (16:3). He isn't a deceiver (14:12) and isn't unwise (13:20). It's best to walk with Him, isn't it?

Prayer is a powerful means for an active Christian life. Faithful obedience to the Lord provided benefits supreme (John 8:24; Luke 13:5; Romans 10:9-10; Acts 2:38; Acts 2:47; Ephesians 3:20-21). But an unfaithful commitment causes even your prayers to be an 'abomination' to the Lord (28:9). Pray about that commitment (4:23; 28:13) before anything else (Acts 8:22). Prayer is the supplement for strength in your daily walk (21:13). Your dependence on the Lord may have diminished, but your reasons for the promise are still sound—and need to be carried out in your commitment. Isn't it reasonable?

THOUGHTFUL QUESTIONS

1. Out of what circumstances did you decide to make a commitment of obedience to the Lord in the past?
2. What types of explanation are offered by those negligent of worship with the church?
3. How can we overcome the look to 'greener pastures'?
4. What can you contribute to the church that you haven't yet been asked to give?
5. List prayer thoughts which will strengthen your soul when you use them in prayer.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Counselling Yourself To A Better Way Of Life When You Recognize The Need For The Way, The Truth And The Life

Human beings are not just flesh and blood. You are personally involved with your heart. Perhaps the advice you have formerly offered yourself is from faulty reasoning that involves hurtful and demeaning values. Please consider the Biblical text regarding the way, the truth and the life.

Jesus Christ offered peace to faithful followers (Matthew 11:28-30). Even persecution was to be counted worthwhile by faithful followers (Matthew 5:12-14), for they knew of the greater reward for faithfulness to the Lord. In fact, disciples were told to be 'exceedingly glad' when suffering persecution for the Lord's sake. Although authorities could be called at times for protection (Acts 22:25-26), it was only for ultimate opportunities to teach others of the Lord. Later the time might come when death was the cost for such service (II Timothy 4:6-8). The benefit of being at peace with God is a hallowed blessing, and you should consider its merit.

Assurance is the hallmark of comfort to the disciples of Christ. Jesus promised, "I am the way, the truth and the life—no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). Jesus assured those who would come through him, "I go to prepare a place for you" and "I will come again and receive you." Such assurance is needed in the heart of a mortal person. You want that type of assurance that is settled and dependable. Jesus left us a verifiable sign of his assurance—his empty tomb. You see, Jesus foretold of his resurrection from the dead (Matthew 12:40). Even his enemies knew of this teaching and set the best guard possible to prevent

any deception (Matthew 27:62-65). Yet, the tomb is empty! You have assurance (Acts 17:30-31) that is the best in all the world. Follow him for he is faithful to his promises!

Discipling is done by the process of teaching and baptizing individuals (Matthew 28:18-20). Jesus instructed that all disciples should be taught to observe 'all the things I have commanded you' (allegiance to Christ's teaching is required of his followers for he is the way and the truth and the life). Faithfulness to his instructions will involve a rejection of the temptation to be envious of wicked men (24:1). There is no other way (Acts 4:12). All other choices are inferior to him and his teaching (John 6:68). Allegiance does not remove the human right of decision-making. Allegiance to him makes sure that we make decisions based on truth (John 8:31-32) and not on the opinions of frail men (16:25). You appreciate the quality of honesty and truthfulness in others. Isn't it a joy to know that the Lord who declared, "*I am the way, the truth and the life*" calls upon each of his followers to possess these qualities of truth? Solomon advised, "*Buy the truth and sell it not*" (23:23). In a time when some would say that we can't know if anything is really true, isn't it grand to know that our Lord placed the solemn obligation upon all of his followers to "*prove all things and hold fast that which is good*" (I Thessalonians 5:21)? Isn't it time for you to give yourself over completely to the teachings of Christ?

Wise people will assist others who travel through life (13:20). The wise person knows that life isn't travelled alone. Others can be a blessing to your way or a curse. Often, which they will be depends upon how you have treated them in the past. An enemy that has been created in the past is very unlikely to be of assistance to you for good now (18:19). Therefore, it is essential that we do good unto others as we go about our pilgrimage (17:13). The seeking of others to have the same precious faith (Jude 1:3) and to fellowship with you is wise (11:30). To 'win others' by your influence will expand the good that you may accomplish in your life. The Lord intended that each become involved within the local congregation of the faith (Acts 2:47). Such involvement is wise for it serves to expand your influence and allows you to be influenced by others who are a part of the

body of Christ (Acts 2:47; Ephesians 1:22-23). Don't delay when you recognize the need to follow the way, the truth and the life. He offers peace, assurance and leadership unlike any other. Become his disciple today.

Check chapters 2 and 3 for information concerning 'how' to create humility and values. These attitudes are necessary for any worthwhile change. Problems can be overcome.

THOUGHTFUL QUESTIONS

1. Give the influence that various parts of the body exert upon the well-being of the whole body. Apply this to the spiritual body of Christ as individuals influence the whole congregation. Whom may we do without?
2. Why is assurance so hard to obtain?
3. What constitutes obedience to Christ?
4. Can you follow Christ faithfully without his teachings?
5. What kinds of inferior choices do individuals make when they leave Christ?

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Counselling Yourself To A Better Way Of Life When You Counsel Others To A Successful Life

As you work with others to help them succeed, remember that you have a great privilege and responsibility. To resort to wisdom that comes only from earthly experiences may not be sufficient to the problem of concern. Earthly experiences are varied with varieties of outcomes and consequences. You can never be so certain that you've advised well when earthly experiences are the only ones considered. For this reason, I have sought information from earthly experiences, various philosophies and cultures and from the biblical text, chiefly the Proverbs of the Old Testament. As you counsel yourself regarding the counsel of others, *remember to seek all the advice (counsel) that you can* (11:14; 15:22; 15:32).

Recognize the fact that when you meet people who desire some advice they already have had their problem for awhile. Most people say, "I thought I could handle it myself." They tell themselves that for quite awhile. The problem simply builds. When they see you, they will not be novices with the problem. You will not be able to guarantee a change overnight even though you may have much of the solution. They will have to accept that you offer some wisdom (18:1). People will not always accept your advise! In addition, they will have to personally put the solution into practice. They may be afraid to start a change. They may be too prideful (13:10). Nevertheless, they are experienced with the problem before they see you. Let them know that you sympathize with the difficulty to change—but that change is necessary to a successful future.

Rejoice in the fact that you have some part in providing a hope for change. You may not be the only one to have a part, but you have some part—they have come to you! Listen with sincerity (13:1). Over half of the solution to most problems occurs when they are specifically set out on the table to be analyzed for its causes and cures. Many will see the answers to their problems as soon as they have spoken 'all' of it to you. In fact, getting them to say 'all' of it may be the chore. Particularly is this true when one of the persons has something to hide from view (28:1) or has stubbornness (29:1) to admit that there is 'more to it'. Getting 'all of it' out on the table for analysis and advice (15:32) is essential.

Encouraging the attitudes of humility and respect (fear) of the Lord must be done in order to effect any change. These two qualities aid greatly in the pursuit of honor, riches and life (which I have observed that most problems in one way or another rob from us). These are valuable things for our lives. Humility aids in the admission that a problem exists, and respect (or fear) for the Lord ensures that the right course of solution will be the one desired by the individual. The willingness of a person to 'gain wisdom' shows love for his own soul (whole person-spirit and body) (19:8).

Requesting that a problemed person change bad friendships for good ones must be done in order to effect any change. So much of what a person does depends upon the friends that encourage him. They must be wise friends (13:20) with good words (18:21) or the person simply can't succeed at getting away from the problems. You can become one of the new friends to that person. You can't ensure that they will choose other new friends who are wise. If they go to the same old places, with the same old friends—they will do the same old things.!

Requesting the problemed person to set a discipline of self that will ensure change must be done for any change to take place. Discipline of self by personal means is good, if carried through (12:15). But, since every man does that which is right 'in his own eyes' (21:2) it is not always successful. You see, when a person has the only vote to be cast, it's easier to decide the ballot!

Therefore, extra-discipline (i.e. discipline from an outside source) is necessary for most. Each must recognize that others are not going to tolerate anymore of the problem. They are going to insist on a change (Ecclesiastes 8:11). When this is done and if there is any respect for others at all (1:8-9), a change will occur.

These words of practical advice are hoped to do much good. *They are not to be taken as any substitute for professional care* for those who can not or will not decide to follow a set of worthwhile values. These are words of encouragement to those who face problems and 'talk them over with self first'. Perhaps a suggestion herein contained will be 'food for thought' as you advise (counsel) to a better way of life.

Check chapters 2 and 3 for information concerning 'how' to create humility and values. These attitudes are necessary for any worthwhile change. Problems can be overcome.

THOUGHTFUL QUESTIONS

1. Why must the counsellor guard against being a selfish counsellor?
2. What causes a person to be humble?
3. Name some causes of fear (respect) for God.
4. Which of the suggested changes is most difficult for an individual to make?
5. What part does worship and involvement with the church have in making a change in life possible?

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Scriptural Profiles From The Practical Application Of Bible Verses Found In The Book Of Proverbs

- 1:7-8... Being prepared is the finest way to get over fears.
- 1:8-9... A mother and father exert great influence upon their children by what they instruct or do not instruct.
- 3:13... Happiness is found in the lives of those who acquired wisdom through the correct and timely use of information understood.
- 4:23... A person has great control over what he personally desires to do with his life.
- 5:3... A person may be driven into immorality by his passions.
- 6:31-32... A person who operates through life without understanding is vulnerable to immorality.
- 6:33-34... A person who reacts with rage in an angry situation has a great burden with the loss of confrontation. There is some jealous quality involved either positively or negatively in his, or her, anger that causes not just an angry response but rage.
- 6:34... A hostage taken by rageful persons will have no ransom that is high enough to satisfy his captors.
- 9:8... A scorner will despise anyone who teaches him, till humbled (22:4).
- 13:20... The desire to associate with persons who are not careless in their actions or words is a step to achieving the success desired...friends make the difference in lifestyles and life-changes.
- 15:1... The use of harsh words helps anger to begin—a person must think ahead and plan

- goods words to speak.
- 15:13... For a person to dwell on disappointments of any type may push the person into depressive-like actions.
- 15:32... A person is very unwise to reject information.
- 17:13... Anyone who returns evil to a person who has done good to him will suffer all of his life for it. This is especially true of an ungrateful child who has harmed his parents who loved him, or her.
- 17:17... A true friend is a person who loves you regardless of who you are and what you do.
- 18:1... A person who desires anything enough can achieve it whether it be good, bad, wise or foolish.
- 19:6... A person who receives a gift appreciates the help and will rarely forget the gift-giver.
- 19:18... Punishment of a child for disobedience will help unless it has been put off too long already.
- 19:19... A person who deserves punishment should suffer it, else the person setting him free will have to do it again and again and again.
- 19:22... A person's potential good in life is seen in his kindness to things small or big.
- 20:1-9... The traits of a person who has become dependent on drugs (especially liquor)—he is unaware of friends or foes.
- 22:4... Two attitudes that must be in a person's heart if true wealth, true honors, and abundant living are to be found in his life.
- 22:19... Values are important to people—to reject values is to reject worthwhile living.
- 22:24-25.. A person may learn how to be angry by seeing this example from others. Surprising to some is the fact that many abused women and children turn out to become abusers of other people—but this is true for it is learned even in the time of being the victim.
- 23:23... Desire the truth (worthwhile always) and do not take any substitute for its value.
- 24:1... People are influenced by their envy of others to change from values they have espoused to other inferior values.
- 25:19... It is foolish to place further trust in a person

- who has already proven undependable by his conduct.
- 27:1... Tomorrow isn't guaranteed for anyone—do it today if it needs doing.
- 27:5... To know what is coming is better than always being in doubt about what to expect.
- 27:12... A person is wise to look ahead and avoid trouble if at all possible—trouble can be faced on a day when you are better prepared for dealing with it.
- 28:1... The guilty person often tells on himself by being so afraid that he imagines accusations and criticisms before they are made.
- 29:1... To nag a person will result in creating stubbornness.

Check chapters 2 and 3 for information concerning 'how' to create humility and values. These attitudes are necessary for any worthwhile change. Problems can be overcome.

***THESE APPLICATIONS ARE "FOOD FOR THOUGHT"
AND NOT TO BE TAKEN AS EDICTS OF UNCHANG-
ING MERIT!!***

Robert D. Rawson

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Case Histories Demonstrate Biblical Counseling

Over the past eighteen years of listening to people who bring their burdens for me to hear I've recognized more and more the need of individuals to have someone with whom they may speak. It is so important to have a trusted friend for sharing, support, and comfort. As I present several 'case histories' to you, I'm going to do this in a little different fashion. Instead of listing names, places and a blow-by-blow description, I've decided to give a listing of events and people who were troubled by those events. I'll share with you the 'food for thought' that I discussed with them from the Bible which they may have believed to have been helpful to their situation or may have rejected as unhelpful to their situation. I only ask that you do the same—take the biblical examples for consideration in your 'food for thought'. (All references to specific persons living or dead is purely conjecture). Robert D. Rawson.

CASE HISTORY #1

[*PEOPLE: Father, Mother, College Age Son, Son's Girlfriend*]

[*SITUATION: Son calls home one day to announce to his mom that his 'live-in' girlfriend (off campus) while he's at college is going to come home with him for the summer. She is going to live in his old bedroom 'with' him, so she'll be no extra trouble in housekeeping.*]

[*PROBLEM: Mom and Dad are not agreeable to this 'forced' lifestyle. What are they going to do? Alienate their son, whom they love and wish would not have this lifestyle? Allow the son and girlfriend to live together in the old bedroom this summer*]

[*DISCUSSION: We first talked of the values of the parents. Did they value such an arrangement? They replied a resounding, "No". Next point of discussion*

was whether their son knew that they did not value this "lifestyle." They replied that he did. They further stated that they couldn't understand why he would force this upon them. I suggested their son appeared to be like the young man of Proverbs 7 who lacked wisdom and understanding, like the 'without understanding' person of Proverbs 6:32, and like the reverse of Proverbs 1:8-9 where it is stated that a son's hearing his mother and father's laws (values) serve as graceful ornaments and as chains of restraint to his life. I further suggested that their "giving in" to his request for the summer would be to do over again and again if he were like the person of Proverbs 19:19 who continuously seeks deliverance when not made to own up to his own obligations. It would appear that if the biblical standard were honored then such a 'live-in' arrangement, as suggested by their son, was dishonorable (Hebrews 13:4). Therefore, for his own good of life and soul, they couldn't fellowship such a situation (Ephesians 5:13) without falling into dishonor with God. After our discussion they went home to 'think it out some more.'

[*FOLLOW-UP*: The son and his girlfriend came home that summer. Beer was placed in their refrigerator for the first time that summer, by him. The son dropped out of college the fall semester to work some—stayed home—girlfriend stayed home too! Mom and Dad became too embarrassed to attend church worship and explain any "rumors" to congregational friends. "Maybe we can get things straightened out before long" was the last response I've had from them.

CASE HISTORY #2

[*PEOPLE*: Father, Mother, High School Aged Son, Jr. High Daughter]

[*SITUATION*: Son is very athletic—has liquor drinking problem]

[*PROBLEM*: Father and Mother don't know. The sister does know but hasn't said anything about it.]

[*DISCUSSION*: After a tragic accident one Friday night (after a post-game celebration) I was called to discuss the situation. Asking the son if he were aware of the deception of alcohol (Proverbs 20:1-8) and its enslaving grip, I was surprised to hear that till 'last Friday night' "I help it pretty well," he said. I observed that 'last Friday night' and the description of Proverbs

20 looked a lot alike to me.

He replied, "Maybe." Trying to listen wasn't easy for me as he wasn't saying much. I suggested that if a person doesn't learn from his mistakes then he is like the person of Proverbs 27:12 who is forever getting hurt because of overlooking dangers that are ahead. The willingness to "*desire wisdom*" is of grave importance in having wisdom (Proverbs 18:1). No one can actually 'make someone' do a certain thing from his heart till he wants to do it. Parents can often make the body of a youth do a certain thing—but somewhere they must instruct the worth of that value to the child. Wisdom says to listen to instruction (Proverbs 15:32). Wisdom says that happiness follows understanding (Proverbs 3:13) and knowledge. Counsel is essential to recovery from the destitution of life (Proverbs 11:14).

[*FOLLOW-UP*: Counsel was sought of a professional nature. The AA organization gained four more members where others who faced the same tragedies could share success accounts (Proverbs 13:20). The son gradually recovered.

CASE HISTORY #3

[*PEOPLE*: Father, Daughter, (Teenager)]

[*SITUATION*: Daughter was a rather unprofessional thief].

[*PROBLEM*: Father was constantly being called upon to make good the debts and thefts of daughter].

[*DISCUSSION*: I met the father. He assured me that he had beaten, grounded, and practically "hog-tied" one of his daughters because of her dishonesty and stealing. All efforts were to no avail. Exasperated! What could he do? I called attention to the consistent wrong-doing of those who have no "*sentence*" against their evil work to be carried out (Ecclesiastes 8:11-13). When I asked if his daughter resembled the person of Ecclesiastes 8 he turned his head away as though he didn't hear me. I asked if an apology ever had to be done to the persons from whom she had stolen (as well as a pay-back for the stolen item)? (Proverbs 28:13 suggests that no one prospers who doesn't confess and forsake their sins). I asked if Proverbs 28 resembled any of his daughter's actions? He said, "Yes, it does." I asked if he thought she would benefit by carrying out Proverbs 28:13—He explained,

"I couldn't ask her to apologize to somebody!—I couldn't even do that myself!"
somebody to help him out with his daughter.

[*FOLLOW-UP*: The daughter didn't get better. She got worse! She was embarrassed on numerous occasions. Finally, she married—divorced—again, and again. She resembled a nervous-wreck that last time I saw her but had several little children to follow her down the street—tears came to my eyes as I thought of the future of those little children.

CASE HISTORY #4 (You record this one)

[*PEOPLE*: You place the people now...

[*SITUATION*: You name the situation faced.

[*PROBLEM*: You name the conflict with established values.

[*DISCUSSION*: You list the locations in the Bible which resemble the circumstances presented in your situation and list what the Biblical characters did, or did not, to become free of the pains associated with the fruit of that situation. Use chapter 18 "*Scripture Profiles*."

Remember, you may not guarantee that success is like "*instant pudding*". Efforts have to be made to recover a lost value of life. In making those efforts, you and I hope that people will consider some "*food for thought*" from the Bible.

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ADDENDUM 2

REARING OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Having been asked often in the preparation of this work to sum up advice for parents in the rearing of young people, I have decided to offer this addendum to the book.

1. Prime consideration in rearing of young people ought to be given to respect and love of God (22:4).
2. love of family (1:8-9).
3. development of honesty (19:5).
4. development of the sense of personal responsibility (12:11).

Too often parents don't recognize soon enough that a child is dishonest—and undependable. I've seen non-Christian families who impressed the qualities of dishonesty and dependability on their children come to have their children obey the Gospel because when they saw it they were honest enough and responsible enough to embrace it! The same can be true of Christian homes which emphasize these two qualities along with love.

SEE CHAPTER 8

ADDENDUM 3

DEALING WITH STRESS AND WORRY

1. Stress and depression seem to have a relationship with worry (anxiety) (15:13; 17:22; 27:1).
2. The single best help to overcoming worry is found in (16:3) putting troubles into the Lord's hands and becoming involved in seeking improvement.
3. Involvement with others is so valuable to overcoming worry (13:20)—Wise people know the dangers of worry and will encourage us away from it.

SEE CHAPTER 12

ADDENDUM 4

HAVING HAPPINESS IN LIFE

1. Jesus mentions eight principles at the beginning of the sermon on the mount which he said provided blessings.
2. Happiness is found in 'getting out of selfishness' and involved with other thoughts and persons (3:13; 14:21).

3. Having others around you that are happy will be good (17:22; 18:21).

SEE CHAPTER 3

ADENDDUM 5

FACING ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE

1. Concern expressed should not prevent your insistence in change from this problem (27:5-6; Ecclesiastes 8:11).
2. So often alcohol abusers and other drug abusers do so with their friends (24:1; 22:24-25; 16:29)—friendships must be changed to overcome this problem.
3. "Going to worship" alone will not be enough to overcome this problem. This person must be personally involved in wanting to be involved with the church people and leave the old habits (18:1; 15:32; 20:1-9).

SEE CHAPTER 2

ADDENDUM 6

USING FAITH, HOPE AND CHARITY

1. Faith should not be abused into opinions.
2. Hope should not be abused into imaginations.
3. Charity should not be abused into lusts.
4. Following the Lord is to be done from a certain motive (I Corinthians 13:1-2).
5. We are to follow the Lord completely, allowing his to be our will (Hebrews 5:8-9).

SEE CHAPTER 16

ADDENDUM 7

DECIDING WHOM TO APPROACH ABOUT A PROBLEM

1. You can not teach a scorner (mocker) information without his hating you in return (9:8).
2. A highly conceited person can not be taught by anyone (26:16).
3. A good hearted and honest person gladly receives instruction (1:8-9; 19:6; 27:12; II Kings 5; Luke 15:17).
4. Therefore, check on background of the person whom you need to approach to discuss a problem. If he is rebellious, haughty, or conceited, it would probably do little good to discuss with him. If he is honest and fair-minded he will appreciate your concern and be benefited no matter what the subject discussed.

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Robert D. Rawson was born to R.V. and Montez Rawson, Jr. on January 26, 1947 in Kosciusko, Mississippi. After graduation from Kosciusko High School in 1965, he entered Freed-Hardeman College in the summer. After obtaining the A.A. degree, he entered Delta State Teachers' College in the fall of 1966. He earned a Teacher's License along with a BSE degree in Speech, Science and History. Along the way he served churches at Nile, Carthage, Philadelphia, and Durant [Mississippi] and Milledgeville, Tennessee.

After five years at Ruleville, he served at Okolona from 1971 until 1973 before returning to Ruleville for an additional five year period. He has served the Batesville [Miss] congregation since July of 1978.

Over 16 summers have been filled with baseball coaching of Little League ages, especially T-ballers! For six summers, he has directed a session at Sardis Lake Christian Camp. He assisted as coach of a high school in 1970 and enjoyed the 'coaches dream-year'.

He is married to the former Jane Hull of Jonesboro. The couple has two sons and a daughter [Bobby, Brooks and Beth]. His personal counsel work began abruptly in 1966 with a stark question, "Where does the Bible discuss a problem like mine?"

This book is an outgrowth of over 18 years with the book of Proverbs.

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