

Counsel the Word

The Institute of Soteric Counseling

From the President

Know Your Limits of Confidentiality by J.R. Ensey

At our last Institute of Soteric Counseling Training Conference we had a very informative session on the legal aspects of counseling that touched on many areas that affect all pastors and Christian counselors. We must know the legal and ethical limits beyond which we must not go lest we become liable.

The Texas Supreme Court last year handed down a decision dismissing a lawsuit filed by a woman who became furious that her pastor told the church elders and the congregation about her extramarital relationship. She had sued him for professional negligence “because he was acting as her marital counselor and not as her pastor.” The point is that, although this case ultimately came down in the pastor’s favor, such situations can become quite messy and embarrassing. Churches and courts are not a good mix. We need to stay out of legal wrangles as much as possible.

An important area is confidentiality. Where does it begin and end? Almost everyone we counsel expects what they tell us to be held in confidence. This often puts the counselor in a stressful situation as he recognizes another party’s right or need to know certain information. To tell or not to tell, that is the question. What are some guidelines?

In marital counseling, the ideal scenario is that there are no secrets between husband and wife. However, the ideal may not safely be achieved quickly. Timing is important when a marriage is fragile. Our first responsibility is to help, not harm, the marriage. Your first consideration is to understand whether your counselee is one party of the marriage or both parties. That makes a difference.

Divulging certain information shared in confidence, such as a past infidelity, to the other spouse might wreck a marriage if it is quickly told. The counselor must be wise, discerning, and know where the couple is in their relationship. How tenuous is it? How long ago was the event? Was it ongoing? What has transpired since then? Did pregnancy result? How pressing does the “need to know” appear to be? Have any threats been voiced (“If I ever found out that she was unfaithful to me, I’d kill her!”)?

The counselor has to take many things into consideration when confidentiality becomes an issue. If one party is pushing hard to know “everything,” he or she may have issues themselves they have not divulged. Certain information can clutter up a relationship and impair it rather than repairing it. Potentially damaging facts that occurred before marriage that has long ago been put “under the blood” should remain there.

When certain information is shared with a counselor, he/she has to wisely know the limits of confidentiality. For instance, in most states, the law demands that information involving child abuse, elder/dependent adult abuse, threats of homicide or suicide, or any endangerment to human life, the counselor is required to divulge such information to the appropriate authorities. It is wise to do some investigation about the laws in your particular state to know what might constitute child/spousal/elder abuse or life endangerment.

Many professional counselors, and even some pastoral counselors, have their clients sign a statement before counseling begins that specifies the limits of confidentiality. These may not only be determined by the law but by the constitution and by-laws of your local church. Some include in the agreement that the counselor will not be subpoenaed into court to testify for or against the counselee, nor have their notes made in the sessions subpoenaed.

Thought needs to be given to these matters before they are allowed to impact the counseling process. Prayer and study must precede our counseling ministry. Know the Word and know the law. Attending the ISC Training Conference each year will help you become acquainted with many of the issues of Christian counseling. Plan to be at the next one!

Parenting Kids Diagnosed With ADHD

Parents are sometimes surprised when they receive a call from a school counselor, teacher, or some other authority that their child has been diagnosed with ADHD. They hardly know what to do. Most acquiesce to whoever made the diagnosis and immediately ask, “What should I do?” All too often the standard answer is in the

form of a prescription for drugs. When that is the case, parents should know that there are better alternatives.

A good deal of research has been done on this over-diagnosed condition. Parents do not have to think that their child now has a “mental illness” that must be treated chemically and/or by ongoing therapeutic counseling. There are far better alternatives. They should search the Internet or local bookstores for non-drug treatment of children who have busy minds and active bodies. There are practical parenting strategies that can be employed that do not turn their child into a zombie. They should avail themselves of this information. Advance Ministries also has books available on the subject (advanceministries.org). Parenting in the 21st century is not for the uninformed or the misinformed. Please read “Psychiatric Drugs: The Bane of Our Generation” at advanceministries.org/articles for more information on this subject.

You may also want to read an article by Shankar Vedantam published in the Washington Post on 12/14/06 entitled, “Depression drug analysis finds wider suicide risks.” The article begins by stating that “Widely used anti-depressants double the risk of suicidal behavior in young adults....The finding comes two years after the agency ordered a ‘black box’ warning on the drug labels following the discovery of a heightened risk of suicidal behavior among children taking the pills.”

While you are reading to inform yourself, read the New York Times article by Alex Berenson titled, “Drug Maker Accused of Cover-Up.” It unmaskes the Eli Lilly strategy of covering up studies that show anti-depressant drugs have very harmful side effects. A number of articles have recently exposed the drug manufacturers’ policy of giving doctors perks for pushing their products. We must never fall prey to the idea that if a doctor tells us we should take an anti-depressant drug that we have no choice. Studies show a person will show signs of recovery just as rapidly, or even faster, by avoiding the drugs. You can just say NO. The choice is yours.

Wake up, America! Wake up, Apostolics! Many are merely compounding their problems with these drugs rather than solving them.

The Ministry of Restoration

by Lynda Allison Doty

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. –Galatians 6:1

God has recently been dealing with me about helping Him in His ministry of restoring His people. But, Sister Doty, isn't that what you've been doing all these years? I have had a healing ministry. By applying the Word of God, I have seen countless women healed of past emotional wounds. The Word of God will do it every time if we are willing to obey the word we receive. Jesus walked and talked and taught His disciples for three and a half years; but it was not till after His resurrection that He was able to bring Peter to the state of restoration. It was not until then that Peter was ready to be restored. Until that time, Peter was full of himself. Peter had all the answers. Peter was impulsive and unstable in many ways.

And what was it that Jesus Christ Himself did for His beloved disciple Peter? In John 21:15 we read, "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs."

Just as I did last summer in the midst of a debilitating sickness, I had come to the place where I felt of no more use to God, Peter felt that he had truly blown it. No, not even His master could forgive the horrible thing he had done!

When God gets through with the restoration process, His people are not just restored to a former position: they are in a BETTER position. Higher than before. Peter was able to do far more after his restoration than he could ever have dreamed about before. In other words, sometimes we have to fall DOWN to go UP. The problem is, when we are in that "down" place, we do not think properly. We can hurt too much even to pray. We need someone to come alongside us and help guide us to the proper path.

One cannot talk about restoration without looking into the patriarch Joseph. We know how

we first find Joseph. He is young and arrogant and spoiled, the favorite of his father. With personality traits like these, what would happen if he were put over a vast feeding program—so large that he had within his hand the power of life and death? Have you ever known anyone like Joseph? Perhaps a younger brother or sister? Someone at work or church? These people are very easy to hate. I would not doubt that Leah and her maids did not also hate Joseph. After all, he was given things their sons would never have.

But we follow along with Joseph and see him utterly betrayed by his brothers. They threw him into a pit then sat down to eat their meal. I believe Joseph was wailing and begging them to release him; still they sat and ate. What kind of people can do this to a brother?

Rather than kill him, and have their brother's blood on their hands, they sold him into slavery. I can just see Joseph now—riding in that caravan down through the land, from Dothan to Egypt. Their path could very well have taken them not far from Shechem, where he had been living with his family. I can imagine Joseph seeing his home over in the distance—so close yet so far away! And the homesickness that gripped his young soul!

Nothing he did—nothing anyone could do—would deserve this type of treatment. But we can be blinded by hatred and jealousy. It is not for us to try to figure out how his brothers could do it, and what was so twisted within them to drive them to this. We see Joseph betrayed again—by his master's wife, and by his master. He was thrown into the dungeon for doing the right thing. By the time he encountered Potiphar's wife, we know for certain that Joseph was focusing on his God. This young red-blooded fellow ran from the seductress because he refused to betray his master and his God! This was not a time to sit down and quote Bible verses in order to fight temptation. There is a time for that, but Joseph teaches us that when we are squarely faced with the enemy we are to flee! Paul concurs with that when he tells Timothy to flee youthful lusts. 1 Timothy 2:22

He was betrayed again by the cupbearer, whom he had asked to try to help him get out of this awful place. He was forgotten for two more years.

And then we know how he was thrust into the spot of the second most powerful man in the world. Joseph was being restored! In fact, upon the birth of his first child, Joseph found he was able to put the hurt out of the way. He named this child Manassah, because he “made him forget all his toil and all his father’s house.” Genesis 45:51. We know that Joseph never forgot his father or his brethren. What he forgot was the pain of it all, much like a mother forgets the pain of birth once she holds that child in her arms. I’ll always remember the fact that I was in horrible pain when I brought my children forth. But as for remembering “how” it hurt, I simply do not! Joseph was able to put it all behind him and leave it with his God.

After bringing his family into Goshen and after the death of his father, his brothers started getting nervous. Now that Daddy was gone, they were afraid Joseph would turn on them and make them pay for what they did to him those long years ago. They still did not have a clue that their little brother had been totally restored, and that can never happen without forgiveness.

In Genesis chapter 50 we read that they sent a messenger to Joseph saying, in verse 17: Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him. It was like, “Have I been so long time with you and you still don’t know!” In verses 19-21, we read: Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.

The key to forgiveness is the revelation given by Joseph in Genesis 50:20: “But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.” Once we can get that mindset—and help our counselees to get it—the battle is won. That is the key to forgiveness, and forgiveness is the key to restoration.

Galatians 6:1 - Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Are video games “drugs”?

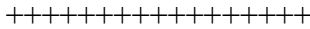
Why are so many people, children included, being diagnosed with “mental illness” or quirky “disorders” and “addictions”? Are such “sicknesses” contagious and spread by coughing or shaking hands? You would think so the way the American Psychiatric Association tosses the words around.

Diagnosing every behavioral problem as an illness is a way of keeping the burgeoning psychology/psychiatric industry in business. For them it is job security. For the families of those who are thus diagnosed it can be a nightmare. A recent Associated Press article states that some physicians are lobbying for obsessions with video games to be listed as a disorder. Just think how many more potential clients such a diagnosis could add to a professional counselor’s clientele. And the drug companies love it

because they can hear the “ka-ching” of the cash registers as they ring up their drug sales.

Let me be quick to admit that video/computer gaming is a problem in many homes, including Apostolic homes. A lack of a sense of responsibility, an absence of self-discipline and parental control are the major contributors to this problem. This means that it is a behavioral matter and not one of mental disorders or chemical imbalance. Let’s keep the word “addiction” out of our vocabulary as much as possible. Video gaming is not an “addiction,” in the sense one becomes dependent on certain drugs.

Please take the time to read “Addiction: The Power of Choice” at advanceministries.org/articles for more information on this subject.



New book!



**Gaining Control of Your Mind Through the
Mind of Christ**
by Beth Marie Rexford

Beth, an Apostolic lady in Illinois, has shared her experience with psychiatrists and psychiatric drugs, confirming that the real problems can better be dealt with by going to God and His Word for the answers. She boldly states that she has learned that a relationship with the One who created the mind has the power to heal the mind. Her new book is a product of her desire to share with others the powerful truths that will open the invisible prison doors of the mind, save the soul, mend the broken heart, and enable the reader to walk in newness of life. 175 pages. Order from advanceministries.org. Only 11.95

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