

Using Homework Effectively

There are 6 THINGS we want to be a part of our counselees lives when we're finished – so you should start pointing to those 6 things in the very first session #1.

Therefore you want to include these 6 things in every homework assignment:

1. We want them to be reading the Scripture daily

Ask “How many times did you read the Bible this last week?” (most common answer = 0 or 1) Also ask “How many times did you read the Bible the week before?” (ask this because sometimes when someone's in a crisis they'll pull out the Bible and start reading it – but that's not the normal pattern in their life).

Assign them places in the Bible to read each week

For example: Read Matt. 5,6,7 at least 3 times this week – and record the day and time you did it – and write out the most meaningful verse from each day's reading and be ready to discuss it – how it applies to your life

You can say, “It's the perfect sermon preached by Jesus Christ. I know you haven't heard any perfect sermons from me – so you should enjoy this one!” It'll take you 10-15 minutes each time.

Ask, “Do you have time this week to read God's Word? It'll transform your life. In this passage are the principles that can transform your marriage. I want you to be looking for them and come ready to discuss what you've seen.”

2. God's Word IN them - Scripture memory

The Scripture IN us is what helps us to quit sinning and start living righteously – so let's get it into our counselees during our times together. By the end of our counseling time together they should know 9-11 verses word perfect – and where they're found. They should also be able to explain the verse and how it applies to their life.

God hasn't promised to bless Scripture memory, He's promised to bless meditation – and when you try to memorize a verse it slows you down and forces you to think about it phrase by phrase so that you can commit it to memory – and God will bless you for that.

Quote

Explain

Tell how it relates to their life

3. Theological reading – good books, pamphlets, booklets to help understand the Bible
4. Regular church attendance

Require them to attend two services / week – either Sunday a.m. worship and SS or Sunday a.m. and p.m., or Sunday a.m. and a small group during the week.

Biblical counseling is short term – so they need to be a part of the long term general discipleship of a good church. You want to help them develop the habit of plugging into a good church.

Ask them to take notes on the sermon – and be ready to apply what they've learned and how it applies to their life.

5. “Doing”

Right from the very first meeting you want to assign them some practical task or “Doing” assignment.

For example:

- If marriage is the problem: This week I want you each to do 3 ‘loving deeds’ over and above what you would normally do. Record the date and the activity for me
- If parenting is problem: Spend ½ hr with the child on 2 occasions more than normal. Record the date and activity
- If single: Do 3 acts of kindness to someone else over and above what you normally do in a week
- If shy / low self esteem: Initiate a conversation with someone on 3 different occasions – asking them questions about themselves

Get them doing something right away.

- Best “Doing” assignment for marriage – Plan one date / week – alternating responsibilities for planning it. A “date” is a pleasing activity, lasting at least two hours, without children. Have the man start first. You plan it this week. Ask the woman to get the family calendar and mark on it each of their names on Sunday each week – alternating every other week. Doesn't have to involve \$. Make sure it's something that is pleasing to your mate when it's your turn to plan the date.

6. Consistent prayer life

In session #1 ask them – Pray on 3 occasions this week.

Pray 3 things each time you pray:

- a. Pray for yourself in this process – that you'll be teachable, humble, have a learner spirit, willing to change. Really cry out to God for your own heart
- b. Pray for your spouse – that God would give them hope and courage to do what God shows them to do
- c. Pray for me (the counselor) to have wisdom and use our time wisely and know what the issues are we need to address