

II. Data gathering: What is it, what type of data does the counselor look for and why is it important?

Data gathering *involves extensive and intensive probing*. Verbal responses are known as core data.

Questions should grow of the facts received. But be careful NOT to ask “why” questions. Rather ask “what” questions that help you understand their thinking?” Examples are as follows:

“I feel guilty” – question: What have you done?

“I’m depressed.” – question: What caused you to be depressed?

“I can’t get along with my wife.” – question: What is your part in it?

Listening is a very critical part of gathering data. Judgment should be withheld until all sides are heard. Listen for particular clues to issues such as blame shifting, control from feelings rather than biblical thinking, belief that they are sick as opposed to sinful, or expression like “I can’t, I’m unable, it is too much”.

Proverbs 18:13, 15, 17 NIV: He who answers before listening – that is his folly and his shame. The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge; the ears of the wise seek it out. The first to present his case seems right till another comes forward and questions him.

However you must also observe and note particular nonverbal clues, tone of voice or even mannerisms to understand the matter before you. Data obtained by observation is referred to as halo data.

Every counselor must learn to look (feel, taste, smell) and listen for halo data. He looks at clothing and appearance. Changes in these may provide positive or negative indices of the direction that counseling is going. He watches for signs of embarrassment, nervousness, tension, blushes, evasion, redirections of conversation, appearance, etc. Halo data are often most apparent when the counselee is pondering an answer to a question or when he is listening to a third person speak. *The Christian Counselor’s Manual, Jay Adams*, pages 258-259

Proverbs 15:13 NIV: A happy heart makes the face cheerful, but heartache crushes the spirit.

See also **Proverbs 14:14** and **Proverbs 16:30**

“**Biblical Counseling Sunday School Class**”

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I. How do you start the process of biblical counseling?

In order to be an effective biblical counselor we must clearly establish the proper structure and flow of information from the first session. This includes the *gathering of data*, *identifying the problem(s)*, *establishing involvement*, *giving hope* and *assigning homework*.

Step One: Review with the potential counselee the Grace Fellowship Biblical Counseling brochure and the Consent to Biblical Counseling.

Biblical counseling is wisdom (application of practical knowledge) from the word of God.

James 3:17 NIV: But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

Biblical counseling is NOT Christian psychology or psychiatry. We do not give medical advice.

Review: The goals and the tools of biblical counseling and what makes the counseling effective. Finally, make sure the potential counselee understands the effort required on their part. **II Timothy 2:15 NIV:** Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

Step Two: Give them the Personal Data Information (PDI) forms to complete. Both the PDI form and the Consent to Biblical Counseling must be completed and signed before the next session.

Tell them to give particular attention to the last page (problem definition) Explain that you would like to briefly listen to each party explain their perspective on the issues and then you will pray for them as well as for yourself for wisdom.

James 1:5 NIV: If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.

Step Three: Establish involvement.

As we counsel we need to be spiritual leaders

Leadership is influence, the ability of one person to influence others to follow his or her lead. We sometimes call this spiritual influence, ministry, discipleship, shepherding, spiritual parenting or mentoring. Whatever name we use, the purpose is the same – challenging others to change and grow into Christ-likeness. The principle [of salt and light] – of making a difference in the lives of others – is that you have to be different to make a difference. You cannot change anything by adding more of the same. **Changed into His Image**, pg 210-211

As Jesus is the Great Comforter, so we need to provide comfort to those we counsel. **II Corinthians 1:3-4 NIV:** Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.

As a counselor we must put the needs of others ahead of our own. **Philippians 2: 4-5 NIV:** Each of you should look not only to your own interests but also to the interests of others. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourself.

Paul, shows us the degree to which was involved in the lives of his counselees in **II Corinthians 11:27-28 NIV:** I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches

As a counselor we must be solution oriented.

Ephesians 4;15-16 NIV: ... speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Involvement is established by being available and sensitive to the counselee's needs. We must take them seriously and be careful not to mask our own value system (the word of God). We must model biblical behavior and not be fooled or put off by the counselee's manipulations. We must accept counselees as persons important to God, and come alongside in concern and love to see their problems in order to help them find biblical solutions and change for God's glory and the counselee's benefit. **NANC track one manual**, Randy Patten

Step Four: Give hope

Hope in the Scriptures always is a confident expectation; the word hope never carries even the connotation of uncertainty that adheres to our English term (as when we say, "I hope so"). The counselor must love people. That is one reason why he counsels. Because he does, he will be deeply distressed whenever he discovers that a counselee has lost hope. A counselor must be above much else a person of hope. **The Christian Counselor's Manual**, Jay Adams pgs 40-41

Romans 15:4 and II Corinthians 4:7-9;16-18: But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed... Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Other scriptures useful in giving hope: **Romans 5:2b-5: I Peter 1:6-7: Deuteronomy 31:7-8: Psalms 46:1-3: Psalms 119:4245**

Step Five: Assign homework

Homework *should be practical* and *appropriate* for the specific issues. It should include *daily bible reading*, *meditation*, *application* and *memorization*. *Keeping a written journal* for thoughts, prayers, questions, answers, biblical principles discovered and resultant actions for accountability is a great tool. Documenting *specific actions to take as a result of biblical principles to be obeyed* is a critical part of homework. Homework should include *regular prayer* (for the counselee to change and wisdom for the counselor), *regular church attendance* (Sunday morning AND a small group)

I Timothy 4:7b-8 NIV: ... train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.