

RESOURCES FOR CHANGING LIVES

INSTRUMENTS
IN THE
REDEEMER'S
HANDS

PEOPLE IN NEED OF CHANGE
HELPING PEOPLE IN NEED OF CHANGE



PAUL DAVID TRIPP

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Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change

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We might be relieved if God placed our sanctification only in the hands of trained professionals, but that is not his plan. Instead, through the ministry of every part of the body, the whole church will mature in Christ. Paul David Tripp helps us discover where change is needed in our own lives and the lives of others. Following the example of Jesus, Tripp reveals how to get to know people, and how to lovingly speak truth to them.

Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change Details

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John says

Quotes that struck me as I read:

Ch. 1: THE BEST NEWS: A REASON TO GET UP IN THE MORNING

"We must not offer people a system of redemption, a set of insights and principles. We offer people a Redeemer. In his power, we find the hope and help we need to defeat the most powerful enemies. Hope rests in the grace of the Redeemer, the only real means of lasting change." (pg. 8)

"In rejecting a biblical view of people, the world eliminates any hope of answering the 'what is wrong?' question accurately." (pg. 9)

"Sinners tend to respond sinfully to being sinned against." (pg. 11)

"Sin not only causes me to respond sinfully to suffering, it causes me to respond sinfully to blessing." (pg. 12)

"Independence, self-sufficiency, and self-absorption lead us to think of ourselves first and to climb over the fences between ourselves and our desires." (pg. 14)

"Sin also produces foolishness in us. Foolishness believes that there is no perspectives, insight, theory, or 'truth' more reliable than our own." (pg. 14)

Brett Mclaughlin says

Every bit of good news must stem from a bad state or situation. News cannot be good if it is not relative to a state that is not good, or at the least, not as good. Humans strive and seek for better marriage, more money, greater happiness; all of these seekings, then, are for improvements in an initial condition. Tripp implicitly acknowledges this when he begins his treatment of the redemptive work in and through humans with an extended discussion of sin.

The gospel saves and redeems people. That is the Christian message. And the gospel is, by its nature and definition, "good news." If good news requires a relatively worse initial state, though, what is the gospel saving from? Most Christians would point out their personal problems: abusive pasts, issues with anger, chemical imbalances, or consistently hurtful relationships. Tripp digs much deeper, though, and identifies one single common problem that all mankind faces: sin. Before the gospel can be effective good news, the bad news must be acknowledged: sin is present in all humans.

Tripp goes further, though. "Scripture [defines] sin as a condition that results in behavior" (10). Using this definition, there is no ability to shuttle sin into a corner of a particular area of life. Sin cannot be seen as "bad choices" or "trouble with the past." Instead, sin is rightly pictured as an all-pervasive, all encompassing disease that affects all behavior. Tripp puts it this way: "Because sin is my nature as a human being, it is inescapable" (10). This is the bad news that must be accepted and recognized before the gospel can be seen as good news.

So what is the good news? It must come to us from an external source. "Humans need truth from outside themselves to make sense out of life" (45). This is a monumental statement from Tripp, bearing both spiritual

and philosophical ramifications. If humans cannot define truth, then all of life is a decision-making process of the most important degree: who defines truth? There are numerous sources that would claim to provide truth: the news, religions, a pantheon of gods, spiritual beings, fellow humans, even espn.com and the iPhone. If truth must be received from outside of oneself, then the decision to listen to one source over another, or to amalgamate various sources, is the decision to believe one truth--or version of truth--over another.

This can all seem a bit philosophical and heady; theoretical, and best for writing but perhaps for not living. However, there is a practical and essential component of living wrapped up in these realizations. If humans must decide on a particular set of truths to truth, and then choose an interpreter for those truths, then man is deeply dependent upon the claimant and interpreter they choose. The Christian--choosing God for both truth-giver and truth-interpreter--is often inconsistent, believing God for some truths but rejecting him for many others. The pagan--choosing some other religion, and ultimately himself as at least truth-interpreter--must be shown the contradictions in their own beliefs. This all must occur before a particular relationship or need can be addressed. Truth must be determined before lives can be changed.

Christine Hoover says

This is a really helpful and practical book for anyone who counsels others (not just professionally) and would like to learn how to do it better.

Ernie says

One of my favorite Tripp books. Chapter four is worth the price of the book.

Dana says

2.5 stars. I liked it. He had a lot of good things to say. I just wish I could have read the abridged version of the abridged version. After some chapters I'd close the book and think "now what was he actually try to say?" ...I guess I wish he didn't go on and on sometimes, not really with the theme to his chapter...none that I could find anyways. I hope my disappointment with the book doesn't have anything to do with a subconscious unwillingness to change :-)

Paul Mackey says

A good book with great insights, but written more like a textbook or a manual than an easy to access read (as I find typical of most of Tripp's writings). This book provided some great insights into the role of our hearts in relational conflicts, as well as what it means to be instruments in God's hands for His work in other's lives. Tripp does a great job of providing a grace centered approach to ministering to others. Perhaps my favorite aspect of this book is the way that Tripp takes passages of Scripture, and then spends an entire chapter unpacking the meaning, and various applications of the text. This is especially true of his treatment of James 4. His chapter on James 4 is one I find myself returning to often.

Trisha says

I LOVED this book. I think almost every page has highlighting or notes of some sort. This book is for everyone, truly life-changing, and I especially found it helpful as a parent. Tripp is so full of grace, and you can't help but feel his passion for his subject and his compassion for his readers.

Matt Sauls says

One of the best ministry "how to" books I've ever read! If ministry is your jam, read this book!!

Becky Pliego says

Loved this one. Hard to read and then put away in a bookshelf, though. This is a book that needs to be revisited many times.

Thiago Lima says

Resenha crítica (2012): Instrumentos nas Mãos do Redentor

O autor, Paul David Tripp, é pastor na Igreja Tenth Presbyterian Church, em Filadélfia, PA. Recebeu seu M.Div. pelo Reformed Episcopal Theological Seminary, PA, e seu D.Min. pelo Westminster Theological Seminary, PA. Também é presidente do Paul Tripp Ministries, professor no Redeemer Seminary, em Dallas, diretor do Center for Pastoral Life and Care, em Fort Worth, e ex-membro do corpo docente do CCEF (Cristian Counseling and Educational Foundation).

A obra, que é dividida em quatorze capítulos, discute os fundamentos e características do ministério pastoral, mostrando sua importância, como um dever de todo o cristão, e sua maneira prática de realização que glorifica a Deus. Revela também onde está a raiz do pecado, como abordar e tratar tais assuntos, e alguns instrumentos para serem utilizados durante o aconselhamento.

Paul Tripp começa o livro lembrando o leitor de que o Evangelho é a melhor notícia que existe, e é essa mensagem que traz esperança e mudança de coração. O autor lembra que o problema central do homem é o pecado, e isso o faz reagir de forma pecaminosa diante das situações, tornando-o rebelde, insensato e incapaz de fazer aquilo que Deus ordenou. Por isso, ressalta Tripp, a melhor notícia do reino não é a isenção de problemas, mas é aquela que mostra que o Redentor veio resgatar os perdidos e produzir mudança em seus comportamentos.

O segundo capítulo mostra como Deus transforma vidas à medida que as pessoas levam Sua Palavra aos outros, mostrando a importância do ministério informal e pessoal e do manuseio das Escrituras dentro deles. De acordo com o autor, um ministério da Palavra tem que confrontar o individualismo e egoísmo, buscando refletir uma vida centrada e definida por Deus, e visualizar a história de uma forma mais ampla, dentro da perspectiva da redenção, contendo três temas básicos: soberania, graça e glória.

No capítulo 03, Paul Tripp expõe, a luz de Gn 1 e 3, a dependência que todo homem tem do seu Criador, e sua natureza original de ser um adorador. Para ele, todos os seres humanos adoram, a questão é o que e quem eles servem. O autor ressalta a importância que o aconselhamento tem no dia a dia do homem, mostrando suas raízes em três princípios: o homem necessita da Verdade; ouve-se conselhos ruins todo o tempo, e o poder do pecado foi quebrado, mas a presença enganosa dele permanece. Tripp ressalta que, como as pessoas

precisam de ajuda, o ministério pessoal dever ser centrado em Deus, mostrando que a sabedoria é fruto da adoração e recebida de joelhos (p. 82).

Paul Tripp vai explicar no quarto capítulo o fator central que esta por trás das atitudes de cada indivíduo: o coração. Mostrando que as ocasiões e circunstâncias apenas revelam aquilo que está dentro do coração, o autor afirma que a transformação permanente começa no interior do indivíduo, e não nos fatores externos, por isso, o coração é o alvo do ministério pessoal. É exposto que, como o pecado é um roubo da adoração que pertence a Deus, aquilo que os homens adoram determina suas reações diante das circunstâncias (tanto boas quanto ruins), diante disso, mudanças meramente comportamentais não resolvem o problema.

O capítulo 05 traz a luta que contorna o coração, expondo, através de Tg 4.1-10, que os conflitos e contendas partem dos desejos do coração. Tais desejos lutam pelo controle do coração, e aquilo que o controla é o que influenciará a vida e comportamento do homem. Para Tripp, a batalha mais profunda está entre o desejo por qualquer coisa na criação e o desejo por Deus. Lembra que, por Deus ser zeloso, sua graça é a arma mais poderosa na guerra pelo coração. O autor revela como o problema dos pecadores é transformar um desejo em exigência (eu preciso), que logo vira uma necessidade (eu quero) e, fatalmente, produz expectativa (você deveria), levando ao desapontamento (você não fez!). O desapontamento, portanto, conduz a certo tipo de castigo (Porque você não fez, eu vou...). Diante disso, a limpeza do coração deve começar verticalmente (com Deus), através de um reverente arrependimento humilde diante do Senhor, e só depois vem à reconciliação com as pessoas, pois quando se ignora a causalidade vertical, a mudança é temporária e superficial.

O autor trata, no sexto capítulo, como refletir a Cristo nas atitudes. Mostrando como a encarnação não constitui apenas em um evento, mas um plano e chamado, Tripp afirma que o ministério pessoal deve focar no Redentor e na sua graça e verdade, oferecendo uma visão de mundo onde Deus é o centro. Como embaixadores, os cristãos devem zelar pela mensagem, métodos e caráter do Rei, onde quatro aspectos devem estar sempre presentes: amar, conhecer, falar e fazer (tratados no restante do livro).

Nos capítulos sete e oito, Paul Tripp dispõe acerca de um dos aspectos citados no capítulo anterior: amar. Explicando nosso chamado para refletir o amor de Cristo, afirma-se que os relacionamentos são projetados para glorificar a Deus, e que o alvo mais profundo de Deus não é mudança emocional, e sim transformação pessoal. Para o autor, amar alguém de forma que promova a obra transformadora de Deus nos corações envolve entrar no mundo da pessoa (focalizando o indivíduo no meio do problema), encarnar o amor de Cristo (testificando o poder da Sua Graça transformadora), identificar-se com o sofrimento (direcionando as pessoas para Cristo) e alinhar-se ao plano (focando a Graça de Deus que conduz a mudança).

No nono e décimo capítulo é explicado o aspecto conhecer, que envolve o aprofundamento do relacionamento dentro do ministério pessoal. Tripp mostra a importância de serem feitas boas perguntas, principalmente as abertas, de não tirar conclusões precipitadas e de esclarecer os termos e as dúvidas. Com a finalidade de entender tudo o que se passa e encontrar um sentido bíblico, o autor fornece ferramentas para organizar as informações colhidas (situação, respostas, pensamentos e motivações) e os sentimentos envolvidos.

Os capítulos 11 e 12 abordam o tema falar, onde o alvo é falar a verdade em amor. Paul Tripp orienta, a partir de diversos textos bíblicos, como é o modelo bíblico de repreensão. Mostrando a importância que tem a confrontação, e como ela está relacionada aos dois Grandes Mandamentos, ele revela a responsabilidade de cada cristão diante do pecado, mostrando que todos, tanto o conselheiro como o aconselhado, devem estar dispostos a confrontar seus próprios corações. Para o autor, o Evangelho é a base da confrontação, com a perspectiva da justificação e santificação em vista. É apresentado um modelo de 4 passos: consideração (o que a pessoa precisa enxergar); confissão (aquilo que precisa admitir e confessar); compromisso (é a fase do revestir-se do arrependimento), e a mudança (aplicação do discernimento e compromisso à sua vida).

Nos dois últimos capítulos o autor explica no que consiste o fazer, colocando a mudança como um aspecto essencial na vida de cada cristão, que a cada dia deve almejar a santidade, vivendo o agora com o então em vista. O fazer consiste em aplicar na vida diária os conhecimentos e compromissos adquiridos. Tripp ressalta quatro importantes objetivos no ministério pessoal: ¹ estabelecer um plano (as mudanças que precisam ser feitas e como fazer); ² esclarecer as responsabilidades (entre obedecer e confiar em Deus); ³ infundir a identidade em Cristo (refletindo como pessoas adotadas na família de Deus), e proporcionar a prestação de contas, que envolve em dar direção, auxílio e encorajamento.

No final do último capítulo (14), Paul Tripp faz uma breve conclusão e resumo da obra, que tem o objetivo de instruir cristãos a viverem suas vidas direcionadas pela Palavra de Deus e a serem os embaixadores do Rei nos seus relacionamentos. Para o autor, o livro trata sobre 8 princípios que envolvem tais embaixadores: 1) Necessidade e dependência de Deus; 2) O chamado para serem instrumentos; 3) A raiz do comportamento está no coração; 4) Devem ser representantes do Senhor; 5) Encarnarem o amor de Cristo; 6) Conhecer intimamente as pessoas; 7) Falar a verdade em amor, e 8) Ajudar as pessoas a fazerem o Cristo chamou para fazer. Tripp afirma que, basicamente, é um simples chamado para uma amizade bíblica, Ame as pessoas. Conheça-as. Fale a verdade para elas. Ajude-as a fazer o que Deus chamou para fazer. (p. 361).

Com exposições bíblicas profundas, gráficos e métodos para serem usados no aconselhamento, casos reais e uma larga experiência no ministério pessoal, Paul Tripp ensina sobre a difícil realidade do pecado e da passividade de vários cristãos. Ele mostra como desenvolver uma verdadeira amizade bíblica, como dizer a verdade e confrontar com amor, como fazer boas perguntas, fugindo das suposições, e investir nos relacionamentos encarnando o amor e a graça de Deus. Afirma que todo relacionamento, primariamente, não deve ter interesses pessoais, mas sim um objetivo maior, que é refletir o Redentor.

O autor mostra como a Bíblia, suficiente e eficaz no aconselhamento, trata os problemas e a realidade do pecado. Não sendo um livro de auto-ajuda, Tripp mostra como o cristão deve olhar para a Palavra de Deus enxergando toda a História da Redenção, desejando ser parte dela e, a cada dia, um instrumento nas mãos dAquele que está comandando tudo, mostrando que vale a pena fazer parte da obra mais importante, duradoura e bonita que já foi feita a redenção (p. 361). Também lembra que prazer será, quando a voz de Deus penetrar os sons da nossa adoração com estas maravilhosas e misteriosas palavras: Muito bem, servos bons e fieis! (p. 361).

Conforme foi abordado, a obra é altamente indicada para todos os cristãos que desejam servir mais fielmente ao seu Senhor e serem instrumentos nas mãos dEle, e não somente para aqueles que almejam o pastorado (para estes, entretanto, ela é obrigatória). Isto é evidente porque, conforme exposto por Tripp, o ministério pessoal é desenvolvido diariamente por todos os cristãos, seja com a família, no ambiente de trabalho, na igreja, com amigos e etc. O autor mostra como todas as pessoas são adoradoras, e como o cristão deve, primeiramente olhando para si próprio, ajudar o próximo a adorar somente Aquele que é digno de toda a honra, toda glória e todo louvor: Jesus, o Redentor!

Soli Deo Gloria

Ben Robin says

Tripp presents a compelling, biblical vision for Christian ministry - each member of the local body being used by God to change each other more and more into the image of their Redeemer. Every church member should read this book.

Here are just a few quotes from the book's Preface which summarize the main point well:

* "Many of us would be relieved if God had placed our sanctification in the hands of trained and paid professionals, but that simply is not the biblical model. God's plan is that through the faithful ministry of every part, the whole body will grow to full maturity in Christ. The leaders of his church have been gifted, positioned, and appointed to train and mobilize the people of God for this "every person, everyday" ministry lifestyle."

* "The paradigm is simple: when God calls you to himself, he also calls you to be a servant, an instrument in his redeeming hands. All of his children are called into ministry, and each of them needs the daily intervention this ministry provides."

* "That is what this book is about: how God uses people, who are themselves in need of change, as instruments of the same kind of change in others. This book's goal is not just that people's lives would be

changed as they give help and receive it. The goal is to help change the church's very culture."

* "We could never hire enough paid staff to meet the ministry needs of the average local church."

Kayla says

Very useful and encouraging, but verbose.

Natalie Vellacott says

This book is about Biblical counseling and explains the process for helping people to see themselves and their issues as God sees them in the light of Scripture. I can see how it can be useful and the author obviously has a wealth of personal experience in this area which he is now using to instruct others through his writing. It is a helpful resource.

The author rightly explains that the root of all problem behaviour is sin in the heart. However, he doesn't allow for medical/neurological problems which may contribute to wrongful thinking and behaviour. These can be deeply ingrained and the approach of the author in places is too simplistic/overlooks reality.

For a Christian, balance is needed to ensure we do not place too much emphasis on secular psychology and its solutions, but also where there are medical issues these need to be recognised and treated properly and not just explained away as sin in the heart.

The bottom line is that God can change anyone and deal with any of these issues but how God chooses to work in the life of a person may be different in each case.

Lynn Joshua says

I highly recommend it. The author, Paul David Tripp, has a humble attitude, realizing that we are all broken vessels and we need each other for our sanctification. He gets to the root of our human problem by asserting that we are all worshipers - if not of God then of something in His place. We can see how personal trouble and relational disorders come from wrongly-directed worship.

Tripp definitely keeps God at the center of his attempts to help others in need, and does not add to the message of Christ but teaches us rather to apply more of Christ as the only true and lasting solution to life's struggles.

Anita says

I am actually re-reading this book and am learning just as much this time through as I did the first time through. Any believer, counselor or not, who is personally involved with other believers would benefit from

what this book has to say. Paul Tripp repeatedly drives home the theme that we are called to be involved in each other's lives for the glory of God. I especially appreciate the humble attitude Tripp uses when giving examples from his life. It makes him seem so much more real, and makes me believe that I too can be an instrument used by the Redeemer in the life of those around me.

As a counselor, I think this is my favorite book because it helps me focus on making those all important connections with counselees. Often I will reread appropriate sections of the book before I meet with a counselee for the first time. It is more than just a guide book, however. It is a genuine appeal to make the counseling encounter a personal one that is Christ centered, not counselor centered. After all, as Tripp says, we are not what this person needs, God is.

Lindsey says

Many people call this a counseling book and I get that from the examples that are used throughout, but really this is a book about how to change the culture of the church (starting with yourself) to reflect a community of believers who help each other change through informal ministry, a "covenantal model" rather than the typical "bandaid Scripture verses method." There are many practical suggestions and good illustrations in this book to work through this process. . . . "This is not just an aspect of the formal ministry of the local church, but a lifestyle to which God has called each of."

Troy Solava says

This is a very helpful book for a local church. Tripp establishes practical and simple steps for Christians to apply. He hopes to instill a vision of not just pastors but members helping other members see their identity in Christ in the midst of suffering and struggles.

Bill says

A 5 star book on applying the gospel to everyday ministry to individuals. Paul Tripp combines a thoroughly gospel-centred approach (many of the main points are made via extended exegesis of biblical passages) with the strengths of a 'personal counselling' approach. Probably the most practical / real life book about the gospel that I've ever read, and certainly the most biblical, gospel-centred book on counselling I ever read. I'll re-read this one a few more times in the next few years! 1. Love people, 2. Really get to know people, 3. Speak the truth in love and 4. Help them do something about it.

Ivan says

This is a fantastic book!

Often times illustrations or stories in a book detract from the overall quality in the book; they are usually comprised of fluff, intended only to add pages to the book. Thankfully, Tripp's book does not do that. Every illustration powerfully or clearly brought a point or truth home. His illustrations and stories obviously stem from many years of his own personal sanctification journey and also his own ministry to others.

Tripp throughout the book emphasizes the role of 'homework' in the task of coming alongside the counseling process in a powerful and transformative way. I very much appreciated this practical insight of assigning 'homework' to the counselees. Too often people are under the impression that their meetings with the counselors are the most significant times in their attempts at life and mind renewal.

That, of course, is true in a sense as the counselor uniquely comes alongside the counselee with the searchlight of Scripture and begins to ask the right sort of questions that expose sinful thoughts, attitudes, and such. But the real battle continues (often times in full force) once the counselee leaves their meetings. Throughout the week that individual is confronting his or her struggles at a constant rate.

The astute counselor, then, strategically assigns homework that best suits the counselee given their unique contexts. It puts the responsibility on the lap of the counselee, ensuring that they diligently own the work to which they have already professed commitment to.

Additionally, 'homework' provides a wonderful opportunity for follow-up conversation with the counselor. In other words, the sanctification process is not operating in a vacuum; in real and tangible ways it is occurring within the daily life of the counselee. The homework only serves as an aid and accountability to that end.

Time and again as I read through this book I was convicted with how much I can be selfish in ministering to others. On any given day I can serve others as long as it does not interfere with my hobbies or cross into my comfort zone. It is painful to write those words, but they are true. This book has impressed upon me the reality that personal ministry is exactly that: personal. As Tripp states, "We offer people a living, loving presence that puts real flesh and blood on the presence of the Lord" (131). We are indeed the instruments in the Redeemer's hands, called to incarnate the presence of Christ in an honest and powerful manner.

Another key insight I gleaned from this reading was the fact that as counselors we are simply in the task of showing fellow sinners what is already taking place in their own hearts. We are not called to be those who stand over people, positioning ourselves as sanctification gurus; we instead are sinners called to minister to fellow sinners as we apply the Bible into the various and often messy matters in their lives.

As I read Tripp's book, I could not help but pick up on the pastoral tone with which he communicates. There's an evident love for the Word of God and for people as one reads, which is instructive for me as I seek to minister to others.

I must strive to serve others out of the abundance of my own communion with God as he shapes and transforms my life into the image of Christ.

Chad Warner says

Fantastic resource for biblical counseling, providing both principles and practices. It brings Scriptural principles to the problems of life, showing how to bring about personal change. There are plenty of specific examples showing how to apply the concepts. It's written for every Christian, not only pastors and other formal counselors.

Tripp says biblical counseling (AKA biblical personal ministry) is, in a nutshell, "speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into ... Christ" (Eph 4:15). The focus isn't on external behavior ("fruit"), but on the internal heart change ("root") which drives external behavior.

Tripp gives this summary of biblical counseling: "Love people. Know them. Speak truth into their lives. Help them do what God has called them to do." Tripp says the most basic question in personal ministry is "for whose glory are you living?" He says Col 3:12-17 describes what we're called to do in personal ministry.

Tripp makes it clear that biblical counseling isn't only the domain of pastors and other formal counselors. He says,

This book is first of all a call to live a daily ministry lifestyle rooted in God's Word. ... Second, this book is rooted in the belief that God has called and positioned all of his children to live as his ambassadors.

He also says,

If you are alive on this planet, you are a counselor! You are interpreting life, and sharing those interpretations with others. The issue is not who is counseling. All of us are. The core issue is whether that counseling is rooted in the revelation of the Creator.

Notes

The Best of News: A Reason to Get Up in the Morning

Our only hope is a Redeemer. "We need more than love and encouragement, information and insight. We need rescue."

In the Hands of the Redeemer

"God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things in the lives of others."

"God transforms people's lives as people bring his Word to others."

If you want God's full perspective on a particular subject, you cannot limit yourself to the Bible passages that specifically focus on it. ... If I handle Scripture topically, I will miss the overarching themes at the heart of everything else God wants to say to me.

3 grand themes of redemption: God's sovereignty, grace, glory.

We're to "rest in [God's] sovereignty, rather than establishing our own; and to submit to his glory rather than seeking our own."

Do We Really Need Help?

"My self-perception is as accurate as a carnival mirror. If I am going to see myself clearly, I need you to hold the mirror of God's Word in front of me." See Heb 3:12-13; Matt 7:3-5.

We need loving courage of honesty; to love others more than ourselves and with humble, patient love help them see what they need to. We also need thankful humility of approachability; to forsake defensiveness and be ready to receive help.

The Heart Is the Target

"Change that ignores the heart will seldom transform the life. For a while, it may seem like the real thing, but it will prove temporary and cosmetic." See Luke 6:53-45; Matt 23:25-26.

People and situations don't determine our behavior; they cause our behavior to reveal our hearts. Lasting change must come from changing thoughts and desires of heart ("fruit change is the result of root change"). We pray for God to change our hearts and use us to produce change in hearts of others.

Sin always involves loving, worshipping, serving something other than God.

The deepest issues of the human struggle are not issues of pain and suffering, but the issue of worship, because what rules our hearts will control the way we respond to both suffering and blessing.

Everyone seeks some kind of treasure. Your treasure controls your heart, which controls your behavior (Matt 6:19-24).

Understanding Your Heart Struggle

People and situations don't force us to be angry. Anger comes from your heart (Jas 4:1-10; Luke 6:45).

You get angry at someone when they stand between you and a desire.

Jas 4:1-10 isn't about evil desires but inordinate desires (those that may be legitimate, but inappropriately rule your heart).

Following the Wonderful Counselor

We experience anger and conflict because we think of our lives as our own, and we're more committed to our own kingdoms than to God's.

4 Elements of Biblical Personal Ministry

1. Love: build strong relationships with person
2. Know: know person deeply, at heart level (beliefs, goals, values, desires)
3. Speak: speak God's truth in love to help person see their life clearly
4. Do: help person act on God's truths (apply to life)

Building Relationships by Entering Their World

The church is not a theological classroom. It is a conversion, confession, repentance, reconciliation, forgiveness and sanctification center, where flawed people place their faith in Christ, gather to know and love him better, and learn to love others as he designed.

We must be willing to make personal sacrifices out of love for others, as Christ was.

To transition from casual relationship to life-changing relationship, focus not on the problem itself, but on the person's experience of their situation/problem (fear, anger, guilt, anxiety, hopelessness, loneliness, envy, etc.).

Recognizing entry gates (opportunities to converse)

1. Emotional words ("I'm angry")
2. Interpretive words ("This shouldn't happen")
3. Self talk ("I'm a failure")
4. God talk ("How could God let this happen?")

Offer love that's "specific and personal, not aimless and platitudinous." Let them know:

- You've heard their struggle
- God's there and understands their struggle
- You'll stand with them

Entry gate questions

- What are you struggling with most right now?

- What are you feeling?
- How do you see God right now?

Building Relationships by Identifying with Suffering

God is sovereign over all, even suffering (Ex 4:11; 1 Sam 2:2-7; Dan 4:34-35; Prov 16:9; Ps 60:3; Isa 45:7; Lam 3:28; Amos 3:6; Acts 4:27-28; Eph 1:11).

Suffering doesn't hinder our redemption; God uses it in His redemptive purposes (Rom 8:17; 2 Cor 1:3-6; Phil 2:5-9; Jas 1:2-8; 5:10-11; 1 Peter).

Getting to Know People

To avoid assumptions

- Ask person to define their terms
- Ask them to clarify what they mean with concrete, real-life examples of terms they've used
- Ask them to explain why they responded as they did in the examples they gave

Asking good questions

- Always ask open-ended questions that require them to examine themselves.
- Ask combination of survey and focused questions. Survey questions are about life broadly (themes, patterns). Focus questions dive deep to uncover roots and causes.
- Ask different kinds of questions (what, how, why, how often, where, when).
- Ask progressive line of questions, filling gaps in your knowledge as you go.

Discovering Where Change Is Needed

Personal ministry is not about always knowing what to say. It is not about fixing everything in sight that is broken. Personal ministry is about connecting people with Christ so that they are able to think as he would have them think, desire what he says is best, and do what he calls me to do even if their circumstances never get 'fixed.'

"Biblical personal ministry is more about perspective, identity, and calling than about fixing what is broken."

How to organize info

- Situation (what is/was going)
- Responses (what person does in response to situation)
- Thoughts (what person thinks about situation)
- Motives (what person wants out of situation)

The Goals of Speaking the Truth in Love

"True love is neither idle nor timid. It is other-centered and active."

God's intolerance of sin doesn't cause Him to move away from us; He moves towards us in redemptive love. We must do same for sinning neighbors.

2 realities of gospel

- Comfort. Justification (Rom 8:1-11). Grace of acceptance with God. Hope.
- Call. Sanctification (Rom 8:12-17). Grace of conformity to Christ. Obligation.

The Process of Speaking the Truth in Love

Whose agenda drives your confrontation? Are you trying to get people to do what pleases you, or what pleases God?

4 steps of confrontation

1. Consideration. What does the person need to see (about self, God, others, life, truth, change) that they don't see? How can you help them see it? 5 questions:

- What was going on?
- What were you thinking and feeling as it was going on?
- What did you do in response?
- Why did you do it? What did you want to accomplish?
- What was the result?

2. Confession. Lead person to humbly, specifically confess sin and ask for forgiveness from God and people affected by their sin.

3. Commitment. 1st step of "put on" phase of repentance. What new ways of living and thinking is this person called to?

4. Change. How should these new commitments be applied to daily living?

Most basic questions in personal ministry: "for whose glory are you living?"

Biblical confrontation is interactive, conversational (Luke 7:36-50; 14:1-14; 2 Sam 12:1-7).

Tell stories, ask and answer questions, guide person's thinking, enter conversation, use metaphors, wait for self-confronting responses.

Communicate general principles of Scripture in concretely applicable ways so person has clear sense of conviction and calling.

Only move from interaction/conversation to declaration/confrontation if person refuses to listen and consider (Matt 18:15-20; 23:13-39; Amos 6).

Establishing Agenda and Clarifying Responsibility

4 objectives of "Do" element of personal ministry

1. Establish personal ministry agenda
2. Clarify responsibilities
3. Instill identity in Christ
4. Provide accountability

Objective 1: Establish personal ministry agenda

1. What does Bible say about info that has been gathered?
2. What are God's goals for change for this person in this situation?
3. What are some biblical methods for accomplishing God's goals of change?

Objective 2: Clarifying responsibility

- Responsibility (obey): inner circle of things God has called person to do that can't be passed on to anyone else.
- Concern (trust): outer circle of things that concern a person but are beyond their ability, so aren't their responsibility. These must be entrusted to God.

Instilling Identity with Christ and Providing Accountability

Objective 3: Instill identity in Christ

Remind person of their new identity in Christ, to stimulate hope, courage, faith (Rom 6:15-17; 1 John 3:1-3; 2 Pet 1:3-9; Phil 2:1-12).

Christian life isn't just about what you'll get at end of your wait (Heaven), but who you'll become as you wait (a sanctified Christian).

Objective 4: Provide accountability

Provide loving structure, guidance, encouragement, warning to person committed to change. Don't try to do work of Holy Spirit, be person's conscience, force person to obey, or chase person who is running away.

Appendix 3: Strategies for Data Gathering

3 Strategies in Data Gathering (2 Cor 10:3-5)

1. Locate strongholds. Where does person fail to see what God wants them to see? What effect does that have on their dealings with self, others, God, circumstances?
2. Demolish pretensions (false beliefs that appear true).
3. Take every thought captive. Help person thinking biblically about life.

How to locate strongholds

- Listen for issues that make person angry or defensive. Help them become aware of those issues and what person is protecting.
- Look for times that person is closed and self-protective. Rephrase question to uncover heart.
- Look for instances when person blames others. Ask, "Are you really saying that ...?"
- Listen for when person has set up logical defense of their view. Urge person to inspect entire life biblically. Ask questions to help them do this.

How to demolish pretensions

- Uncover evidence of an inaccurate view of self. Ask person to journal about each situation (see 4 steps of confrontation above for journal questions).
- Uncover functional distortions in person view of God. Reframe their assumptions with biblical ones.

Assignment based on 1 Cor 10:13

1. Declaration: "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man." Question: "Where have you been tempted to think that your situation is unique and that you have been singled out for particular suffering?"
2. Declaration: "God is faithful." Question: "Where have you tended to believe that God has been unfaithful to his promises to you?"
3. Declaration: "He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear." Question: "Where have you thought that you have been given more than you can handle or that the extreme pressures of the situation have caused you to sin?"
4. Declaration: "He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." Question: "Where have you tended to feel trapped, with no reasonable way to deal with your situation?"

Uncover distortions in way person thinks about their situation. Listen for interpretations, evaluations, purposes and goals, doctrine or theology, emotions.

How to take every thought captive to Christ

Help person live in thankful obedience to Christ.

Appendix 5: Homework and Four Phases of Counseling

4 Phases of Counseling

1. Welcome. Goal: build relationship of understanding with counselee while building counselee's hope in God.
2. Understand. Goal: gain firsthand knowledge and refocus attention on what matters.
3. Confront and comfort. Goal: help counselee see self biblically and embrace God's promises.
4. Action. Goal: assist counselee to apply truths learned about God, self, and others to their situation, instituting new biblical habits.

Instructional studies

1. What does Scripture say about heart? (Prov 4:23; Luke 6:43-45; Jas 4:1-5)
 2. What is idolatry? (Ezek 14:1-6; Rom 1:18-31; 1 Cor 10:1-14; Eph 5:3-7)
 3. What is counselee's identity in Christ? (Rom 6:1-14; Eph; 2 Pet 1:3-9)
 4. Who is God and what is he doing? (Ps 34; 46; Isa 40; Rom 8)
 5. How should you understand trials and suffering? (Rom 5:1-5; Jas 1:1-8; 1 Pet)
 6. How should you deal with being sinned against? (Matt 5; 18:15-35; Rom 12:9-21)
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