

Biblical Solutions for Life Issues

Topic 41 – Foundational Review

Randy Thompson
Valley Bible Church
www.valleybible.net

Introduction

There are many people throughout the world (Christian and non-Christian) who care about hurting people and wish to bring care and relief from those difficulties. Some people are hurting in the purely physical realm from things like the external difficulties of life (poverty, hunger, etc.) or physical maladies. Some people are hurting in ways that affect their behavior, emotions, or thinking. Only believers have the resources to bring lasting, God-honoring care to hurting people.

God gives believers the resources necessary to address every life issue in a way that honors Him. The Scriptures are clear that all believers (those who have exercised the gift of true saving faith) are **commanded** and **capable** to use the Scriptures in the power of the Holy Spirit to make disciples; to address their own and others' life issues and sin. The purpose of these studies is to equip each of us so that through the sufficiency of Christ and the Scriptures we can mature, grow in our ability to apply the Scriptures to our own life issues and sin, and also bring Biblical care to one another. Let's review where we have come thus far.

Comparing the World with God's Ideas

It is important to understand the difference between what the "world" says and what God says if we are to address our own life issues and bring lasting change to help others.

When we speak of "world" we mean the current world system that belongs to Satan. It is a system of deception and wickedness that leaves God out and is opposed to Him (James 1:13-14; 2 Cor 11:3; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Cor 4:4; John 16:11; 1 John 2:15-17; James 3:15). Satan's aim is to make the values of this godless system seem attractive; appealing to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life to entice us to sin. So, we should not be surprised that what the "world" thinks of help for hurting people and what God thinks are different. The "world" has one idea and God in His Word has given us different one.

There are three questions regarding mankind for which the "world" provides answers: "Who is man?", "What is wrong with him?", and "How do we fix him?" The Bible has very different answers to these questions than the "world".

Who is man?

"World" – Man is an evolved animal born morally neutral (or good); governed by instincts.

Bible – Man is a created being in the image of God for the purpose of glorifying God.

What is wrong with man?

"World" – Environmental factors and experiences (family, religion, trauma, etc.) have influenced man to cause problems. Man is not at fault, he is not responsible.

Bible – Man is sinner by nature and choice; he is responsible for his own sin and responses to experiences.

How do you fix man?

"World" – Man is fixed by medication designed to attack behavior and/or re-education and changing of emotions and thinking by self-actualization, improving self-worth, eliminating self-defeating outlooks on life, etc.

Bible – Man requires freedom from the penalty and power of sin through salvation in Jesus Christ; then growth (progressive sanctification) through the Holy Spirit and Word of God.

❖ **Do you accept the "world's" viewpoint or the Bible's?**

Presuppositions

As believers enter into addressing their own difficult life issues and sin and caring for others who struggle in these areas, there are foundational presuppositions that we must understand.

1. The Bible is the inspired Word of God. This is **THE** basic presupposition! The Scriptures are God's complete moral will for us.

¹⁴You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, ¹⁵and that from childhood you have known **the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.** ¹⁶All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. 2 Tim 3:14-17

❖ What do you think about the Bible?

2. The Scriptures are authoritative and fully sufficient for all matters of faith and conduct. Only the Bible is fully sufficient to meet all the spiritual needs of God's people.

⁸“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD.

⁹“For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts. ¹⁰“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; ¹¹So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; **It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.** Isa 55:8-11

¹²For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Heb 4:12

¹³For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted *it* not *as* the word of men, but *for* what it really is, the word of God, **which also performs its work in you who believe.** 1 Thess 2:13

❖ How high is your view of Scripture?

3. Only Christ can set people free from the penalty and power of sin (Eph 2:1-10; John 3:16; Rom 1:16-17; 2 Cor 5:17; Rom 6:15-23; Phil 1:6).

❖ Have you been set free from the penalty and power of sin?

4. All true believers (someone who has exercised the gift of true saving faith) have all the recourses now (through the indwelling Holy Spirit and powerful Word of God) to walk in a manner that glorifies God (Eph 1:3-4; 2 Pet 1:3-4).

❖ Are you empowered with the resources God has given you to honor Him?

5. Every believer is capable and commanded to make disciples (Matt 28:19-20). Spirit-filled believers teach and admonish (encouraging, advising, and warning of the consequences of sin) one another (Col 3:16). Spirit-filled believers are “able to admonish” other believers (Rom 15:13-14). Spirit-filled believers are called to restore other sinning believers (Gal 6:1-2).

❖ Are you empowered to make disciples?

Theology Review

In addition to the basic truths above, we have covered several other theological truths that inform our thinking regarding addressing difficult life issues and sin in our own lives and in the lives of others.

God's Attributes

Our understanding of God and what we think about Him affects us deeply. Believers must cultivate a deep understanding of who God is and what He has done for us in Christ. When we understand God for who He has revealed Himself to be in His Word, all other affections fall away and we are moved to deep love for our creator; we are driven to our knees in worship; and it cultivates a heart motive to obey, please, honor, and glorify Him.

❖ **How high is your view of God?**

Sin

Every person is born with a sin nature (original sin) that we inherit from Adam (Rom 5:12). It is the corruption of our whole nature and is that which inclines us to sin. The result of the sin nature is “total depravity”, where the corruption of sin extends to every aspect of our being (Rom 1:18-3:20) including intellect (2 Cor 4:4), conscience (1 Tim 4:2), will (Rom 1:28), and heart (Eph 4:18). The result of sin is that we are lost, separated from God, totally incapable of moving toward Him on our own; without hope in this life and destined for hell in the next.

❖ **How accurate is your view of yourself?**

True Saving Faith

The Scriptures are clear that true saving faith is faith in the Lord of all. Saving faith is not mere intellectual assent to facts concerning Biblical truth or the gospel. True saving faith involves repentance (Heb 6:1), following Jesus (John 10:27-28), self-denial (Luke 9:23-26), forsaking all (Luke 14:15-33), confessing Jesus as Lord (Rom 10:8-10), and a heart attitude to obey Jesus (John 3:36).

Those that have been made new in Christ (2 Cor 5:17) are such because they have true saving faith which is a living faith; a faith that works; a faith that demonstrates itself true; a faith that is progressing in sanctification.

❖ **How accurate is your view of true saving faith?**

God's Work of Salvation

God's work in salvation is amazing. He does a supernatural work in the true believer. He regenerates, converts, justifies, adopts, indwells, spiritually baptizes, seals, bestows spiritual gifts, and sanctifies. The true believer has been changed (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 2:20) and will therefore bring about fruits in their life in keeping with repentance (1 Pet 1:8-9; John 14:14, 23; 1 John 2:3-6). This is a forever-change and one that has practical implications for our life. God's work continues throughout the life of a true believer (Phil 1:6).

❖ **How thankful are you for all the blessings you have received in Christ?**

Filling of the Spirit

The usual, expected position of the believer is to be filled with (or controlled by) the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18-6:9). The believer who is bowed only before God and not other masters (of sin) is filled with the Spirit. When a believer is submitted to God and his Word, the indwelling Holy Spirit produces Christ-like heart motives, attitudes, words, reactions, and relationships. One of the results of Spirit filling is progressive sanctification, being progressively transformed into Christ's image (2 Cor 3:18). The outside will be moving to match-up with the inside exhibiting progressively more Christ-like character.

The Scriptures play an important role, in conjunction with the Spirit, in changing us. In fact, being filled with the Spirit and allowing the Word to richly dwell in our hearts are the same spiritual reality (compare Eph 5:18-6:9 and Col 3:16-4:1). The Spirit applies the Word to the believer's heart. The Spirit is powerful. God's Word is powerful. Therefore, the believer in the most dire, seemingly hopeless circumstances can be encouraged, comforted, and changed as the Spirit applies the Word to his/her heart.

❖ **Are you consistently walking in the Spirit?**

Important Truths in Addressing Difficult Life Issues and Sin

1. Regardless of circumstances, the believer's highest goal must be to glorify God.

To glorify God is to show His character in our motives, thoughts, words, and deeds. We glorify God when we live in a way that those around us can see God's character in us (Ex 33:17-23); when we display the life of Christ living through us (Gal 2:20).

³¹Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever **you do, do all to the glory of God.** 1 Cor 10:31

²⁰I have been crucified with Christ; and **it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me;** and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. Gal 2:20

For the believer, our desire to glorify God must be our greatest desire, our highest purpose, more important than anything.

❖ **What is your most important and over-riding purpose?**

2. Regardless of the circumstances, the believer must strive to walk in the Spirit ("above the line").

¹⁶But I say, **walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.** ... ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Gal 5:16, 22-23

Living a consistently God glorifying life is possible only through Spirit-filling. The Christian life is not lived in the believer's own strength. It is a life lived filled with the Spirit as the life of Christ flows through us.

When a believer is submitted to God (Eph 5:18-6:9) and His Word (Col 3:16-4:1), the indwelling Holy Spirit fills (or controls) them and produces Christ-like character, heart motives, attitudes, words, and reactions. The believer in a right relationship with God will be filled with the Spirit. This is the usual, expected state of a believer. Being filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18) is also described as "letting the word of Christ richly dwell within you" (Col 3:16), "abiding in Christ" (John 15:1-11), "setting apart Christ as Lord in your heart" (1 Pet 3:15), "living by faith in the Son of God" (Gal 2:20), and "presenting your body a living and holy sacrifice" (Rom 12:1-2).

As we bow before God in complete submission, we will be filled with the Spirit and will exhibit the fruits of the Spirit. If we find ourselves sinning and therefore bowed before a master other than the Lord, then we must repent and bow again before the Lord. As we repent and once again bow before the Lord as master, we will be filled with the Spirit and the life of Christ will flow through us. We will have the power to live a God-glorifying life. We will then exhibit the fruits of the Spirit.

God's Word is the tool that God's Spirit uses to produce God honoring change in God's child. Therefore, we must commit to be obedient to God's Word.

❖ **Are you consistently walking in the Spirit?**

3. Regardless of the circumstances, the believer must be actively involved in a local body.

²³Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; ²⁴and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near. Heb 10:23-25

Believers are united in Christ and connected to one another. The body figure illustrates the diverse-unity and interdependence that is present in the church. The body is made up of unique individuals who are united by the indwelling Holy Spirit. The many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another.

⁴For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, ⁵so **we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.** Rom 12:4-5

²⁷**Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.** 1 Cor 12:27

God has designed the church in such a way so that care can be brought to believers. The church is the major way that God brings love, edification, encouragement, admonition, comfort, etc. to believers. See topic 9 for a listing and explanation of the "one-anothers".

Being a member of Christ's body comes with responsibilities toward Him and the other members. Our motivation for striving to excel at relationships in our life is the incredible mercy and grace we have been shown. We once walked in those things for which the wrath of God will come. We have been chosen by God, separated from sin, and beloved by Him. Therefore, we should put on those qualities that build unity in the body.

¹²So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; ¹³bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. ¹⁴Beyond all these things *put on* love, which is the perfect bond of unity. ¹⁵Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Col 3:12-15

In the midst of difficult life issues, believers should continue to use their gifts to serve others in the body (1 Pet 4:10). This takes the focus off their difficulty and onto others, seeing others as more important than themselves (Phil 2:3-4). The exception would be those that are walking in sin. In which case, repentance is needed.

⁷The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober *spirit* for the purpose of prayer. ⁸Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. ⁹Be hospitable to one another without complaint. ¹⁰**As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.** ¹¹Whoever speaks, *is to do so* as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves *is to do so* as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1 Pet 4:7-11

³Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Phil 2:3-4

- ❖ **What are some ways a member of Valley Bible Church could be "actively" involved?**
- ❖ **Are you actively involved?**

4. Follow biblical methods of turning from sin.

Biblical methods of turning from sin always involve yielding to the Holy Spirit and submission to the Word of God.

From 2 Timothy 3:16-17

¹⁶All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for **teaching**, for **reproof**, for **correction**, for **training in righteousness**; ¹⁷so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. 2 Tim 3:16-17

“Teaching” refers to the content of what is taught rather than the process of teaching. In this context it refers to the entire body of theological truth found in all the Scripture. This is truth brought to bear on the believer who is struggling with sin. Remember that only a believer has the resources to accept the things of God.

¹⁴But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. ¹⁵But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. ¹⁶For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he will instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ. 1 Cor 2:14-16

“Reproof” means bringing to light; telling someone when they are out-of-bounds. It is from the same root word that means to convict. Scripture in conjunction with the work of the Holy Spirit brings about conviction of sin (John 16:8).

“Correction” means straightening up again; a restoration of something to its original and proper condition. God’s powerful Word applied to the heart of the believer by the Holy Spirit brings conviction of sin and then repentance – restoring the father-child relationship between the believer and their heavenly Father.

“Training” means habit-forming behavior moving toward maturity. This is applying the Word to the repentant heart to accomplish lasting change.

❖ **Are you taking in the Word of God consistently/constantly?**

From Ephesians 4:20-24

²⁰But you did not learn Christ in this way, ²¹if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, ²²that, in reference to your former manner of life, you **lay aside the old self**, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, ²³and that you **be renewed in the spirit of your mind**, ²⁴and **put on the new self**, which in *the likeness of God* has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. Eph 4:20-24

Paul spends the first 3 chapters of Ephesians detailing the blessings of salvation. Then in chapter 4, because of that salvation, believers are to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called”. Do not be like you were before, be something different. This process of change or sanctification (changing into Christ-likeness) is described as: 1) put off, 2) renew, and 3) put on.

“Lay aside” (“put off” in the ESV) means to cease doing what you were previously accustomed to doing; stop doing it; throw it off like filthy, foul smelling clothes; be done with it. It is a metaphor like having your clothes soaked with sewage and stripping them off and throwing them away and never getting them back. Like repentance from sin – we strip the sin off and never get it back.

❖ **Do you through off sin with the intent to never pick it up again?**

“Be renewed in the spirit of your mind” – our minds are made new as we fill it with the Word of God. It is not about covering up sin with something that smells good. It is about being transformed so that the sin is no longer a part of you. God’s Word is the tool that God’s Spirit uses to produce God honoring change in God’s child. Similarly in Romans:

²And do not be conformed to this world, but be **transformed** by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. Rom 12:2

Where is your focus?

¹Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²**fixing our eyes on Jesus**, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Heb 12:1-2

¹Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, **keep seeking the things above, where Christ is**, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. ³For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. Col 3:1-3

❖ **Are you spending time in God’s Word?**

❖ **Where do you set your eyes/mind?**

“Put on the new self” – Paul continues his clothing metaphor. The idea is "sinking into a garment". It is like sinking into a new coat when it is freezing outside. This is making a choice to obey, to do righteousness, to replace the sin that you “put off” with obedience.

❖ **Is your purpose to glorify God through obedience?**

Concluding Thoughts

Regardless of the issue – difficult times, temptation to sin, specific sins, etc., the four truths above are critical for the believer to walk in a way that honors God. The Scriptures address specific issues also (like forgiveness, pride, trials and suffering, decision making in non-moral areas, sexual immorality, laziness, anger, finances, marriage, and parenting), but these truths lay the foundation.

Real Life Scenarios

Yourself: You are going through a difficult time (financial, medical, relational, etc.). What are some things you could do right away that ensures your focus is on honoring God?

Someone Else #1: Your friend is going through a difficult time (financial, medical, relational, etc.). In thinking about bringing Biblical care to your hurting friend, what is the first thing you need to know? What is the next thing you might share with him/her?

Biblical Solutions for Life Issues

Topic 41 – Foundational Review

Read 1 Corinthians 10:31.

Ask God to search your heart and show you how your life demonstrates what you view as the most important thing. What is the thing you want most?

If the thing you want most is not to glorify God, what should you do?

Read Galatians 5:16-23.

What characteristics are most evident in your life?

What deeds of the flesh do you need to put off?

Does your life show that you are consistently walking in the Spirit?

Read Hebrews 10:23-25 and 1 Peter 4:10.

Are you actively involved in a body of believers or are you a casual attendee?

Read Hebrews 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; and Psalm 119:9-11.

What can God's Word do powerfully in your heart?

Are you treasuring God's Word in your heart?

What does/would treasuring God's Word look like?

What differences would be evident in your life if you were treasuring God's Word in your heart (specific thoughts and deeds)?

Read Ephesians 1:3-4.

List out as many spiritual blessings as you can think of.