

Middle District Missionary Baptist Association

2022 Elizabeth Williams-Young Institute
Woman's Missionary Institute

Dr. Reginald Wells, Moderator



God's Power to Help Hurting People

Presenter
Mrs. Evelyn S. Johnson



Bedazzled on the outside and dying on the inside...this is a lot of people's story...be honest with yourself and God. He is still a healer!!!



God's Power to Help Hurting People

EDITOR
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Introduction

Everyday thousands of hurting people reach out to churches throughout the country. In the African American community, the Black church has played a special role in this respect. In some communities, the Black church may be the only institution of hope still standing. Therefore, it is the purpose of this book to provide the types of insights into hurting people that will cause people in local churches (Black churches in particular) to be able to minister to hurting people more effectively.

We will also explore what affect the Covid 19 pandemic has had on the ability of the church to help hurting people.

How does the God help hurting people? The Study book includes the answers in 12 chapters. It addresses issues such as loneliness, guilt, fear, anxiety, grief and anger. It features various chapters chapter tells the story of a different biblical character and demonstrates God's power to overcome these particular challenges.

Course Outline

Monday:

GOD'S POWER OVER:

1. Guilt
2. Insecurity
3. Low Self-Esteem
4. Grief

Tuesday:

GOD'S POWER OVER:

5. Powerlessness
6. Anxiety
7. Fear
8. Abandonment

Wednesday:

GOD'S POWER OVER:

9. Frustration
10. Depression
11. Anger
12. Loneliness

GOD'S POWER OVER GUILT

Scripture Reference: John 4:5-7, 9-19, 25-26, 28-29

What is Guilt?



Definition of Guilt

A feeling of having done wrong or failed in an obligation; self reproach

1. A painful sensation excited by a consciousness of guilt, or of having done something which injures reputation
2. The cause or reason of shame; that which brings reproach, and degrades a person in the estimation of others. (Webster's Dictionary)



Types of Guilt

1. The most common one is “natural” guilt or “real guilt;” guilt for something that you did or didn’t do. This could be for emotionally, or physically hurting someone, lying or going against your morals. **True guilt is a God-given warning signal that we are violating God’s moral law.**
1. Guilt for something you didn’t do but want to. This is just like the first one except you hadn’t done the act yet, but you were thinking of doing so.
2. Guilt for something you thought you did. This can be worse than the first one because you are unsure if you had done the act or not. (the best way to overcome this is to make sure that the act never happened.)
3. Free-floating Guilt, guilt caused by thinking that you are not a good person; that you hadn’t done enough or feeling like a failure or that you let other people down.
4. False guilt-Feeling guilty over something that you have no control. **False guilt arises when we or another human being judges our actions, ideas, or feelings as wrong, even if there is nothing sinful about them.**

Resource Reviewed “The Effects of Guilt.”
The Leadership Advisor, Oct. 2013

Can Guilt Be A Good Thing?



Question:

How do you recognize when someone is hurting from guilt?

Case Study
(Study Book, page 25)

Bernice

Scripture Reference: John 4:5-7, 9-19, 25-26, 28-29

Discussion

Case Study
(Study Book, page 25)

Bernice

Scripture Reference: John 4:5-7, 9-19, 25-26, 28-29

HELPING PEOPLE WHO FEEL GUILTY

Guidelines

- LISTEN AND CLARIFY THE INDIVIDUAL'S FEELINGS
- CALLING ON THE HOLY SPIRIT IN PRAYER
- INTRODUCING THE INDIVIDUAL TO JESUS CHRIST
- HELP THE INDIVIDUAL DEAL WITH TRUE MOTIVES
- HELP THE INDIVIDUAL TO LEARN HOW TO FORGIVE AND EXPERIENCE FORGIVENESS
- HELP THE INDIVIDUAL TO RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF FAITH
- BE TRUTHFUL
- RECOGNIZE WHEN YOU A COUNSELOR NEED TO REFER THE INDIVIDUAL TO OTHER AGENCIES OUTSIDE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH



GOD'S POWER OVER INSECURITY

**Scripture Reference:
I Samuel 9:1-2; 18:6-12**

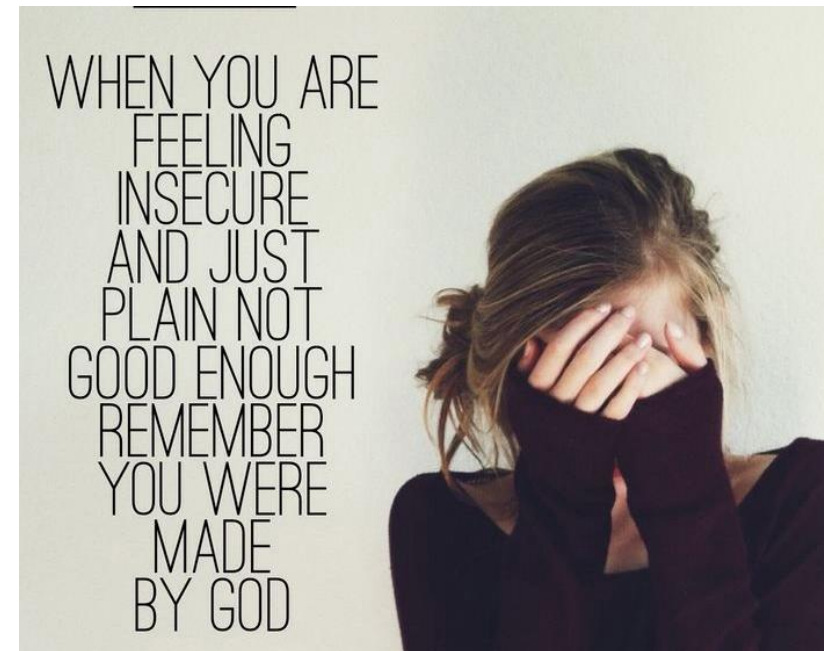
What is Insecurity?

- Insecurity is a feeling of never “measuring up.”
- It is the feeling that a person is not as good as other people.



Common Signs of Insecurity

1. A tendency to rely on outward appearance to determine personal worth of oneself and others
2. An oversensitivity to the thoughts and opinions of others
3. An intense inner need for acceptance
4. Frequent emotional “roller coasters”
5. A drive to be in control of every life circumstance



Discussion

**Case Study (book, page 41)
Mr. & Mrs. Kennedy**

**Scriptural Discussion
I Samuel 9:1-2; 18:6-12**

In combating insecurity, it has been suggested that the insecure person:

- 1. Develop a new attitude toward failure**
- 2. Accept God's love rather than the ideas of representatives of the evil world system**
- 3. Study Scripture**
- 4. Pray**
- 5. Use Scripture as a basis for attacking Satan's lies**

*You are good enough,
smart enough,
beautiful enough,
strong enough.
Believe it and **STOP**
letting insecurity
run your life.*

- Thomas Davis

GOD'S POWER OVER LOW-SELF ESTEEM

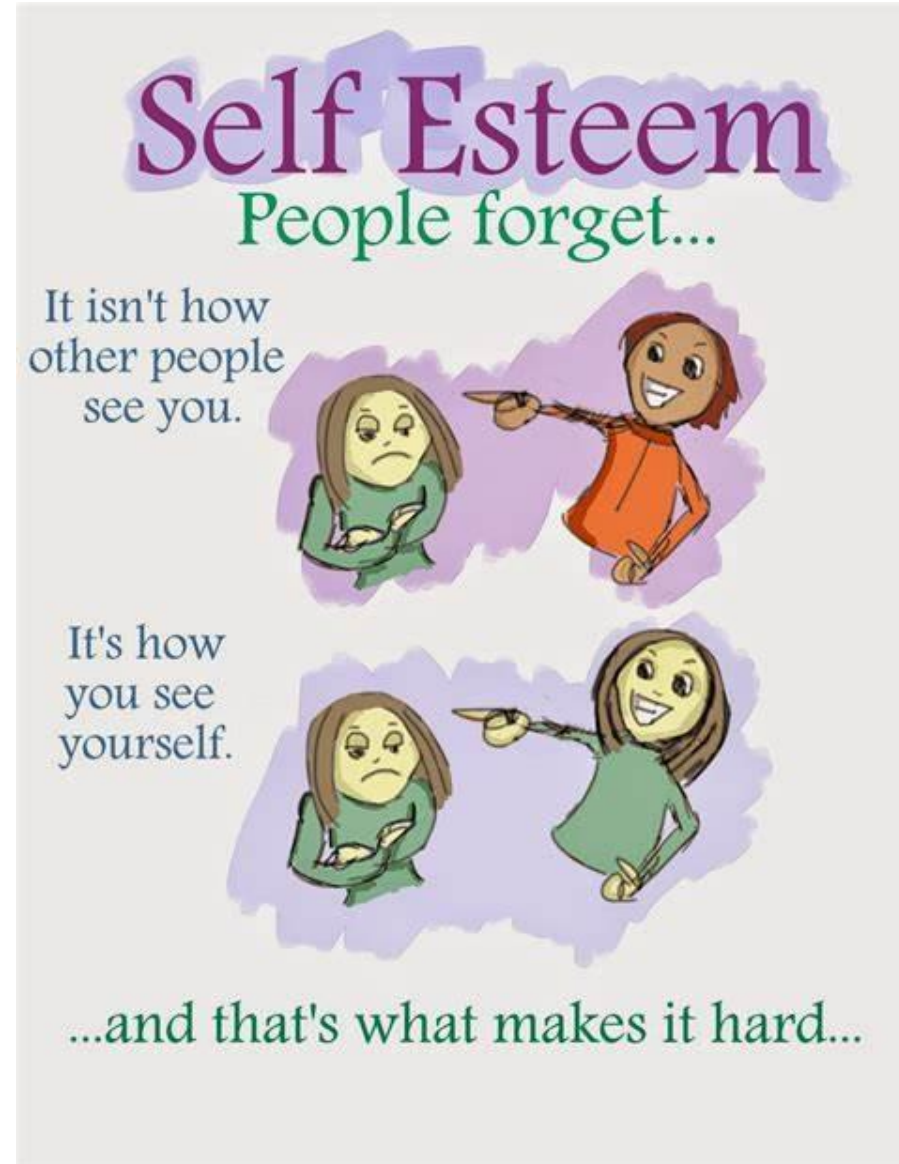
Scripture Reference: Judges 6:11-16

What is Low-Self Esteem?

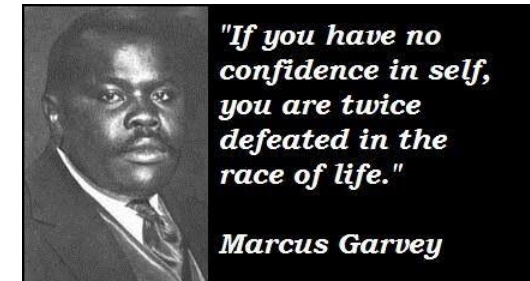
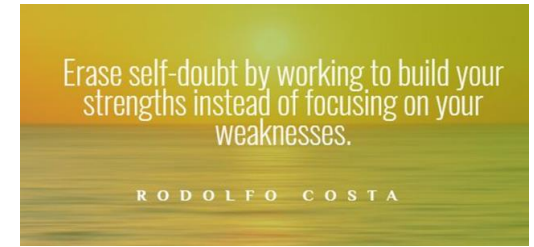


Definition of Low Self-Esteem

Low self-esteem is characterized by a lack of confidence and feeling badly about oneself.



- Despite outward appearances of confidence and success, almost everyone confronts issues of low self-esteem.
- Poor self-esteem often stems from youthful experiences. It is the cumulative product of what you were told while growing up, feedback from those around you, life experiences and the unconditional love and acceptance you got – or didn't get – from your parents, teachers, relatives and peers.
- Positive and negative reactions from others and your beliefs, perceptions, conclusions, criticisms and predictions all influence your self-esteem.



Question:

How do you recognize when some one is suffering from low self-esteem?

Case Study (book, page 56)

Racism

Scriptural Discussion

Judges 6:11-16

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

Discuss the following questions.

1. What was the basis for Gideon's self-esteem?
2. What role did the society in which he found himself play in triggering this low self-esteem?
3. What role did Gideon's own thoughts play in his low self-esteem?
4. Contrast Gideon's view of himself and the Lord's view of him.
5. What would be the source of a changed self-image for Gideon?

Guidelines for helping a person suffering from low self-esteem

In helping someone develop a better self-image, counselors must consider whether the person has accepted Jesus Christ as his/her Savior. By leading the person to Christ, the counselor opens a new resource for the person.

Counselors should encourage persons dealing with low self-esteem to:

1. Establish a relationship with God

Your relationship with God determines where you will spend the whole of eternity.

Your relationship with God powers you up for daily living

Your relationship with God will last for all of eternity

Christ said, "Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be" (see Matthew 6:21).

2. Engage in positive self-reflection

3. Develop an affirmative action plan

Design it with affirmations of positive sayings and scriptures

Set goals and objectives based on God's word and promises.

4. View adversity as a blessing in disguise

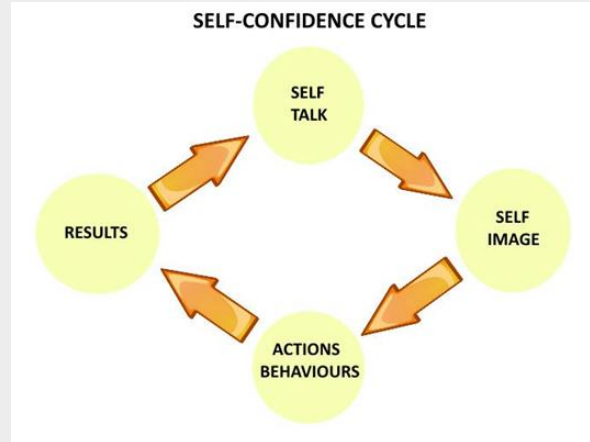
Read and meditate on Romans 8:28: And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

5. Dream

Don't be afraid to dream. Dreams can inspire us. They give us hope.

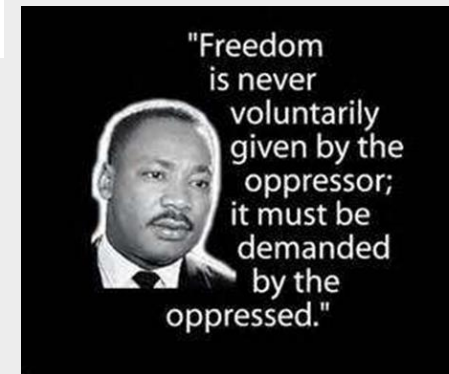
Guidelines Continued

6. Be optimistic and positive
Engage in self-talk



7. Ignore peer pressure

Practice saying no
Learn how to talk to others about being pressured
Develop Confidence
Avoid comparing yourself with others
Develop a “real” set of friends



8. Train the children

Set a positive example for the children
Allow the children to live out their God’s plan according to their abilities.
Set boundaries of acceptable behavior for each age
Don’t be afraid to communicate with your child



GOD'S POWER OVER GRIEF

**SCRIPTURE REFERENCE:
Job 1:1-3,13-22; 2:7;
3:1-2, 11-13; 6:2-3**



What is Grief?

Grief is essentially our response to loss in life. It is a normal reaction to significant loss.

How do you recognize when someone is hurting as a result of grief?

Types of losses that produce grief

1. Relationship—Divorce, loss of job, death of a loved one, Isolation(Covid 19 has cause many to grieve the loss of connection to friends, family, jobs, socialization)
2. Material—loss of objects with sentimental value, loss of home, loss of car, loss of a beloved animal (Many hoarders fears the loss of their items and this is part of what makes it hard for them to part with them.)
3. Psychological—
4. Functional—loss of a bodily function, eyes, limbs,
5. Authority/Responsibility---demotion on the job, loss of one's social status, loss of one's business, role changes
6. Systemic----changes in your family system, leaving institutions that you have spent a long time in (ie, prison, mental hospital, foster care, changes in leadership in your church or changing churches.)

Discussion

Case Study (book, page 70)
Keith

Scriptural Reference
Job 1:1-3, 13-22; 2:7; 3:1-2; 11-13; 6:2-3

7 Stages of Grief

(Modified Kubler-Ross Model)

Shock*

- Initial paralysis at hearing the bad news.

Denial

- Trying to avoid the inevitable.

Anger

- Frustrated outpouring of bottled-up emotion.

Bargaining

- Seeking in vain for a way out.

Depression

- Final realization of the inevitable.

Testing*

- Seeking realistic solutions.

Acceptance

- Finally finding the way forward.

*This model is extended slightly from the original Kubler-Ross model, which does not explicitly include the Shock and Testing stages. These stages however are often useful to understand and to facilitate change.

Guidelines to Help People who are grieving

The counselor must “partner” the person through the grieving process and help them to:

1. Learn to trust again
2. Achieve Autonomy
3. Accept a moment of responsibility for coping
4. Put away false gods associated with loss
5. Help the person become mainstreamed again

In the final analysis, we are bonded to one another by the human spirit and strengthened by the source of all power-God. Therefore, at all times, we are in a three-way connection.

Any support or help offered to those in pain, is offered through us from God. No one can heal another, but as we open ourselves up to God's power, healing and renewal become ours.

GOD'S POWER OVER POWERLESSNESS

Scripture Reference: John 18:29-30, 33-34, 38; 19:1, 4, 7-11;
Matthew 27:19-20

What is Powerlessness?



Powerlessness is an emotion that is connected to a person's perception of other people and a person's perception of circumstances.

The person who feels powerless sees others as having power over him or her in some way. Others are seen by the person as having power over the person's opinions, actions, and even emotions. In the case where others are seen as superior, the person who feels powerless relates to others as though he is indebted to them and these are debts he will never be able to pay.

Discussion

**Case Study (book, page 92
Mrs. Adams**

Scriptural Reference:

**John 18:29-30, 33-34, 38; 19:1, 4, 7-11;
Matthew 27:19-20**

The most frequent sources of powerlessness are perceptions of people, agencies, and situations. The counselor can help people who feel manipulated and overwhelmed by teaching them to:

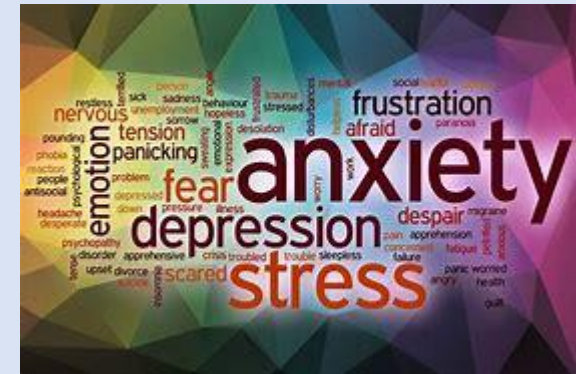
1. Sort through their problems to locate the source
2. Learn to see the "enemy" in a different way ("leveling")
3. Accept the reality of personal unmet needs and unmet needs of the intimidating person
4. See oneself in a different way (by accepting God's riches, gifts and talents)
5. Deal with others on an entirely different, more equalitarian basis.

The counselor can help people who feel overwhelmed by circumstances by alerting them to the fact that God is for us, God has a hedge of protection around us, and bad situations are not necessarily punishments from God. Counselors can also help such people to identify the parameters of the problem, set goals, and establish realistic timelines for solving each individual problem involved in the overall problem.

GOD'S POWER OVER ANXIETY

Scriptural Reference: Genesis 12:11-12; 13:7-8; 15:2-3; 16:1-4; 18:23-25

What is Anxiety?



Anxiety is a state of uneasiness and distress about future uncertainties. Other words for it are apprehension and worry.

When *a* person is experiencing an extreme form of anxiety, they are usually worried about future events that cannot be avoided. Then they become preoccupied with these events for a long time after the events have taken place.

Common causes

Anxiety is not always related to an underlying condition. It may be caused by:

- Stress that can result from work, school, personal relationship
- Emotional trauma
- Financial concerns
- Stress caused by a chronic or serious medical condition
- A major event or performance
- Side effect of certain medications
- Alcohol consumption, drugs such as cocaine
- Lack of oxygen



Discussion

**Case Study (Book, Page111
Mrs. Melton**

Scriptural Reference

Genesis 12:11-12; 13:7-8; 15:2-3; 16:1-4; 18:23-25

Counselors can remind anxiety-ridden people of these spiritual truths in order to help them reduce their anxiety.

- God is with us in stressful situations;
- God will be faithful to us in all situations;
- There is no limit to God's power;
- God's grace is sufficient for our weaknesses;
- We must wait on God;
- God comes on time;
- Anxiety can lead to victory.



When to Refer the Anxious Person to a Professional Agency

While sensitive and trained laypersons and pastors can do a high percentage of the counseling within the church, they can't do it all! Some people have problems that require professional help. In determining when a person requires professional help, consider these factors:

- 1. Intensity of their feelings.** How strongly is the counselee experiencing anxiety (or grief, anger, jealousy, guilt, tension, etc.)? Is it overwhelming the person and thus prohibiting him or her from functioning in a normal way? Is it a concern the person is struggling with while still being able to continue functioning?
- 2. Depth of the disturbance.** Is the person's behavior within the realm of normalcy, or is it becoming clearly abnormal? Has the problem arisen recently, or is it a long-term pattern?
- 3. The person's sense of reality.** A psychosis is a clear break with reality. The counselor should ask if the person has the ability to communicate and hear accurately.
- 4. The nature of the behavior.** Is the person's behavior producing pain or stress for him/herself or others to the point where it cannot be tolerated?

If the counselee has serious problems with any of these four factors, the person should be referred to professional counseling or therapy. If the above four factors are not involved, then a minister or layperson with some training would probably be able to help that person.

Remember, the medical community refers people frequently. Just because a doctor cannot see you does not mean the doctor is not a good physician. It just means your disease is not in the area of his or her expertise. The same is true in the counseling area. No counselor can deal with every person or every problem. As a counselor, be honest with yourself and recognize your strengths and limitations. It is in the best interests of the people God has called you to serve.

GOD'S POWER OVER FEAR

What is Fear?



Fear is a disabling negative emotion.



A distressing emotion aroused by impending danger, evil, pain, etc. whether the threat is real or imagined.

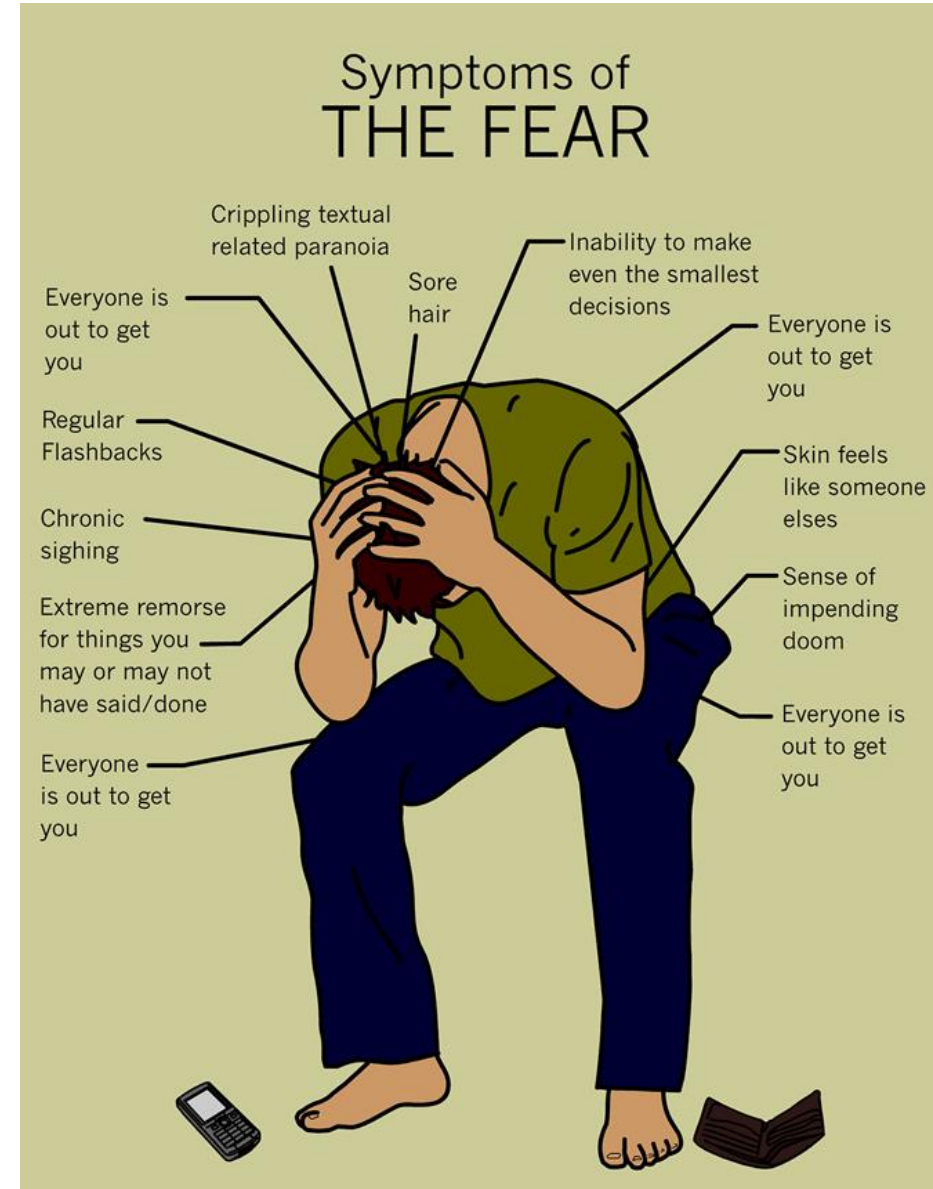
Fear is a phenomenon of which there are two components, biological and emotional. When we are afraid, our bodies get ready to protect us by fighting, running, or hiding. One type arouses a biological defense against a perceived physical danger. Biologically-based fear is a normal feeling. It is a physical state of tension in the presence of a perceived or suspected danger to the body. This type of fear involves the total physical, biological, sociological, psychological, mental, and spiritual self.

Native biological fear is fear of death. This type of fear is native to everyone. It is there in order to preserve the life of the human being. Sudden fear of death can invade one's total being and is there to ready a person to take action directed toward eliminating the source of the fear.

The other is not as clearly so, but on the surface is primarily based on an emotionally perceived danger. Emotionally-based fears, on the other hand, are either directly or indirectly related to this basic fear of death. For example, Joseph's fear, upon meeting his brothers again, was directly related to the fear of death (Genesis 42:18). In his mind, his brothers' rejection of him was at one time directly paired with the threat of death, as they pushed him into a ditch and considered killing him (37:19-24). Certainly, he would not reveal himself to them too quickly when they returned to Egypt many years later, begging for food.

Fear has many symptoms

- Nervousness
 - Anxiety
- Depression
 - Shyness



Discussion

Case Study (book, page 125)

Mrs. Allen and Shirley

**Scripture Reference: Genesis 37:3-5, 23-24, 26-28; 42:3,
6-7, 14, 16-18**

GOD'S POWER OVER ABANDONMENT

Scripture Reference: Matt 26:14-16, 36, 40, 55-56, 69-70; 27:24, 45-46, 59-60; 28:1, 5-6

What is abandonment?

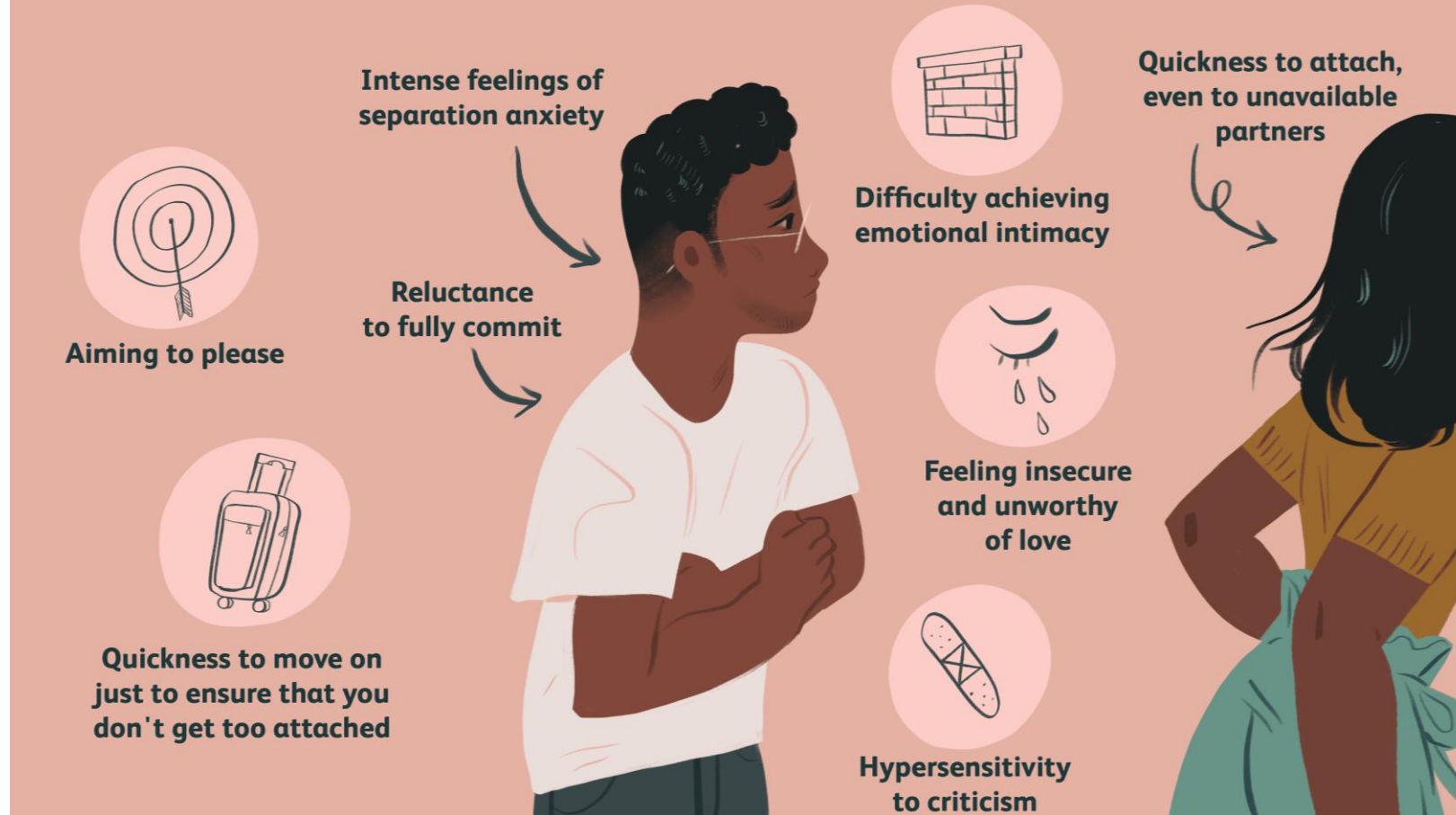


Abandonment is a feeling that is experienced by a variety of people in different situations. Feelings of abandonment can lead to counterproductive and self-destructive activities.

The feeling of abandonment has become common in America today-in the Black community, in particular. Sometimes a feeling of abandonment occurs when a parent or loved one dies or abandons his/her responsibility for his/her child. In other cases, people feel abandoned when any significant people in their lives leave or cease to operate on their behalf. Feelings of abandonment are not always directly tied to another person's intent to abandon. They may come as a response to a natural, unavoidable event of some kind.

Some of the most common situations leading to feelings of abandonment are divorce, broken love affairs, and the death of a parent, sibling, friend, mentor or doctor. Feelings of abandonment can also occur within a parent when a child leaves home for kindergarten, college, or marriage.

Signs of a Fear of Abandonment



Discussion

Case Study (book, page 144)
Adam

How do you think Adam is feeling?

How do you think his siblings are feeling?

What steps would you take to begin trying to help Adam and his siblings?

What about their mother?

Do you think that she maybe feel abandoned as well?

Scripture Reference: Matt 26:14-16, 36, 40, 55-56, 69-70; 27:24, 45-46, 59-60; 28:1, 5-6

Discuss the following questions related to the Scripture reference.

1. At what points during Jesus' trial and crucifixion did He experience abandonment?
2. Was He really abandoned by His heavenly Father? Explain.
3. To what extent was "the system" in which Jesus lived responsible for people abandoning one another?
4. Are there any parallels between the type of "world system" in which Jesus found Himself and the type of "world system" in which people find themselves today?
5. Are Black people today abandoning one another as a result of their reaction to today's "world system"?

How to Help People Who Feel Abandoned

Empathize_ Being empathetic means feeling with the other person. It means placing oneself in the other person's shoes, looking at life as the person sees it, and feeling that person's pain. Jesus, as the Great Counselor, was able to do this. Throughout His ministry, Jesus displayed empathy over and over again, as He walked among the hurting people of Galilee.

Listen. It is important to be attentive and supportive when the counselee comes for counseling. Being attentive and supportive involves being a good listener. It is important to allow counselees to talk through their situations, providing the supportive and affirming statements they need as they struggle with emotions related to feeling abandoned. We must be good listeners if we are going to gain the information about the person that we need to help them work through feelings of denial, guilt, and anger. Counselees must learn to talk about their feelings, whether they consider the feelings good or bad.

Clarify. The counselor must help the counselee clarify his/her emotions, and alter thought patterns that cause the counselee to have false guilt or to feel unworthy. It is important for counselees to develop more accurate and positive conceptions of themselves. Counselees must be encouraged to examine their strengths and weaknesses, and to achieve balance in the ways they see themselves and others.

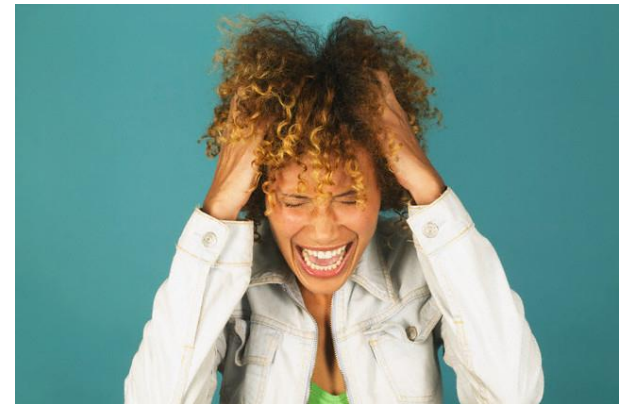
Teach new skills. Counselees must learn ways of coping with the fact that a given person is no longer in their lives, for whatever reason. They must learn to avoid falsely blaming themselves and/or others, and instead to develop objectives and strategies that will help them achieve more satisfying lives. People who are feeling abandoned must learn to capitalize on their strengths, minimize their weaknesses, and pursue meaningful goals

Recognize when to refer the person for professional help

GOD'S POWER OVER FRUSTRATION

Scripture Reference: Jonah 1:1-10, 15, 17; 2:1-2, 4, 9-10; 3:1-5, 10

What is Frustration?



Frustration is a feeling people experience when they are upset or annoyed. It's a normal reaction when dealing with situations outside of your control.

Frustration is a temporary emotion. However, uncontrolled frustration can lead to issues with anger.

Many circumstances can trigger frustration

1. **Poor communication.** Often, we fail to communicate in a way that other people understand. Have you ever found yourself saying, "You're not listening to me?"
2. **Different experiences.** We all see the world through our own unique lens. From the way we were raised to the economic hardship our families face to traumatic experiences, we've all experienced life in a different way than those around us.
3. **Lack of progress.** Humans are ambitious. We want to grow, change, and evolve.
4. **Unfulfilled human relationships.** These are the frustrations every one feels from time to time. Often these unfulfilling relationships develop because a person is not happy with him/herself. Because the person is unhappy with him/herself, s/he does not believe that s/he can be happy with anyone else. People who are frustrated in human relationships often complain that something is missing in their lives.
5. **Unachieved goals.** A person can seek to fulfill a basic human goal but can find that the goal seems elusive. This type of frustration results from such problems as not being able to locate employment to support one's family.
6. **Frustration from trying to avoid God.** When faced with some of the situations outlined above, many Christians, in a desperate attempt to solve the problems they face, are tempted to try solutions that are not sanctioned by God. Many even leave the church, running from God, attempting to solve their problems without Him. Some have once heard the voice of the Lord taking them in one direction, but initially they are not attracted to that direction, lacking faith in God's ability to provide.

Other frustrations result from the racial, economic, and political oppression, which impact on the Black community and affect nearly every African American to some extent or another.

Spiritual Principles for helping the person deal with Frustration

There are a number of basic guidelines that a counselor can use in helping people who are frustrated. Frustration, to a large extent is a spiritual problem or dilemma, particularly for the Christian. Therefore, at the most fundamental level, it must be addressed from a spiritual vantage point. Spiritually speaking, frustrated counselees need to learn to appreciate themselves as God has created them. The counselee also needs a deeper faith in God. The counselee needs to be encouraged to hold on to his/her Christian beliefs and she/he needs to learn to rejoice in the midst of difficult circumstances.

1. **Learning to appreciate oneself as God's creation**—when people become frustrated, they often blame themselves for not achieving certain goals. It was also mentioned that this may lead to intense emotional feelings such as uncontrollable anger, hatred, insecurity, and unwarranted aggressiveness. The frustrated person, looking at the thwarted goal and undesirable behaviors which his/her frustration provokes, often begins to reject him/her self. In helping a counselee who is suffering from this problem, it is important for the counselor to help the person separate him/herself from the situation that is causing the frustration
2. **Developing deeper faith in God**--There is a cure for frustration. It is not a new cure. It has been around as long as the disease. It is not an expensive cure. It doesn't really cost a cent. It is available to any one who asks for it. The name of the cure is faith. That is what Matthew 17 is about: faith. Faith can move mountains. Faith can right relationships. Faith can transform individuals and reform institutions.
3. **Holding on to one's faith**--When frustration grips a person's life, rational thinking sometimes departs. When a person is overcome by the reality of what appears to present endless dangers, she/he often forgets the ever-presence of God. Frustration can be disarming and paralyzing. Frustration can control a person. Frustration can destroy a person. This is why it is so important for the counselor to encourage the person over and over, to hold on to his/her Christian faith, and not abandon it for non-Christian solutions to problems.
4. **Rejoicing in the midst of difficult circumstances**--This type of rejoicing is not dictated by feeling, but, will give a person a feeling. It is not based on sentimentality, but it can make a person sentimental. This type of rejoicing is different from what a person does at a football game or at a graduation or carnival. It is different because it is not predicated on any present external circumstances. but is the result of a historical, theological occurrence. It is the result of internal spiritual activity.
5. **Getting a "fresh touch" from God**--God wants to give the frustrated person a fresh touch. From the beginning of time, the touch of the hand has had power. We touch in greeting, in parting, in loving, in scolding, in fighting, in teaching, in healing, in building, in comforting, and in rejoicing. In every significant act of life, we touch. The touch of the hand has power and import. If your religion doesn't make you feel good, then something is still missing in your life, and you need a fresh touch from God. A fresh touch from the Lord is another cure for frustration.

Discussion

Case Study (book, page 162
Jacqueline

**Scripture Reference: Jonah 1:1-10, 15, 17; 2:1-2, 4, 9-10;
3:1-5, 10**

Discussion Questions

1. What is Jonah frustrated about?
2. Who are some of the people who contributed to Jonah's frustration?
3. What is Jonah's basic problem?
4. What does the "dark belly of the whale" symbolize?
5. How did Jonah manage to get where God wanted him to be?

10 Ways to deal with frustration

- 1. Meditate**
- 2. Get some fresh air**
- 3. Exercise**
- 4. Practice nonviolent communication**
- 5. Focus on positive visualization**
- 6. Change the tone of your thoughts**
- 7. Look for solutions, not problems**
- 8. This too shall pass**
- 9. Distract yourself**
- 10. Add a journal entry about it**

GOD'S POWER OVER DEPRESSION

Scripture Reference Psalm 41:1-11

What is Depression?



Depression is a serious medical condition in which a person feels very sad, hopeless, and unimportant and often is unable to live in a normal way. (Meridian Dictionary)

Depression is **a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest.** Also called major depressive disorder or clinical depression, it affects how you feel, think and behave and can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems. (Mayo Clinic)

Depression is an illness that takes a great deal of time and energy out of a person's life. The effects of the illness become more intensive as the depression deepens. The more depressed the person becomes, the more withdrawn she/he becomes. The more withdrawn she/he becomes, the more difficult it is for others to communicate with the person. As the person gets deeper into depression, they become more unhappy and more inefficient. Eventually, the person can lose the desire to face reality altogether.

A 2021 study published in *Lancet Psychiatry* found associations between loneliness and depressive symptoms in a group of adults 50 years old and older.

Research also suggests that loneliness and depression may feed off of and perpetuate each other.

Types of depression.

There are different types of depression.

1. Exogenous or reactive depression comes as a reaction to a traumatic event in a person's life. The event may be real or imaginary. People sometimes think something has been said or done to harm them which is not factual, and they brood themselves into depression.
2. Endogenous depression is believed to arise within the person. The inability to attain certain goals may touch off this feeling. It is also very prevalent among the elderly.
3. Psychotic depression. Persons with psychotic depression may have alternating levels of anxiety but they are not usually self-destructive.
4. Chronic depression is of lengthy duration, while acute depression lasts for shorter periods with differing levels of intensity.

Signs of depression

Hopelessness is a sign of depression. Other signs are: lack of self-esteem, guilt, shame, insomnia, loss of interest in sex, loss of interest in other activities, a lack of ability to enjoy normal pleasurable activities, and a constant desire to be alone.

People often try to hide these symptoms to avoid being thought of as mentally ill. Sometimes the depressed hide their illness behind physical problems and emotions such as anger, aggression, and lashing out at friends and family members. They complain about physical illnesses such as: headaches, stomach pains, and fatigue. They may become prone to accidents. Sometimes they hurt themselves rather than others. In some cases, they may engage in excessive drinking, gambling, and sexual promiscuity. Frequent temper outbursts and arguments are some of the effects of depression.

As a depressed person goes deeper into depression, the threat of suicide is a reality. Therefore, the person must be watched. The person may attempt suicide by taking too many drugs or by drinking along with the drugs, even when the drug is a prescriptive medication. One sign of suicidal tendencies is when the person begins to take reckless chances that can result in a fatal accident. In some cases, the depressed person may resort to living on the streets.

Situation that can trigger depression

Loneliness. People who are left alone, without human contact for long periods of time, can become depressed. That is because people are social beings and require other human contact.

Parent/child conflicts. There are a variety of parent/child conflicts which lead to depression. Conflicts between parents and children can be triggered by the birth of a new brother or sister. Older siblings in this situation can become depressed when all love and affection are given to the new infant. Many depressed young people, facing this or other conflicts with parents, run away from home and live on the streets.

Loss of a loved one. The loss of a spouse, child, or parent can trigger depression. The loss of one's spouse can be like losing a part of oneself.

Rape. One reaction to rape can be depression. Many kinds of rape are happening today. Males rape females and males as well as children. Females join some males in raping other women. Groups rape a person. Older teens rape younger teens. Rape is a cause of depression, which is often very long lasting; sometimes even into the marriage of the abused.

Domestic violence. Domestic violence often results in depression. It is growing at an alarming rate. Spousal, child, and parental abuse are serious problems for many people today. The most difficult part of the problem is the fear of the family secret being exposed to the public.

Homelessness. The growing problem of homelessness often triggers depression. People who live on the streets become depressed and lose hope of rejoining the normal life of our society. Sometimes they form their own groups and resist help from mainstream agencies. Frequently, they may not accept the fact that they need help in lifting themselves to their former status.

Extreme fatigue. Extreme fatigue can trigger depression. People with stressful jobs and long working days without breaks or vacations often suffer depression.

Guidelines for the Counselor

Counseling the depressed person can require varying lengths of time commitments. In some cases, helping the depressed person may require more than one or two counseling sessions. It may take time for the person to sort through the feelings that are at the core of the problem and develop the strategies needed to overcome the depression.

Recognize personal limitations. The first step in helping a depressed person is for the counselor, friend, or minister to deal with him/herself. One must first be honest and recognize personal limitations. The counselee will require much from the counselor. It is essential that the counselor recognize when to recommend professional help, and when short-term counseling by a lay counselor may suffice.

Maintain professionalism. Professionalism must always be maintained in counseling the depressed. Depressed people are very emotionally dependent and sometimes misunderstand acts of kindness for deeper feelings than intended. The counselor must not let feelings of empathy for the counselee overrule good judgment. The counselor must never allow the counselee to become too emotionally attached or dependent.

Maintain confidentiality. All counselors should be strongly ethical and confidential. The depressed person needs more than many other counselees. One betrayal of a small bit of information can throw the person into deeper depression and mistrust of people in general.

Exhibit morality. The counselor must be warm, gentle, patient, and intensely desirous of helping people. The counselor might not be connected to any religious body but must be a moral and wise person. A counselee will hardly respect a counselor who says one thing and does another. The depressed person needs to see the counselor in a very positive manner because s/he needs someone who can exemplify a healthy lifestyle.

Be patient. The counselor may use one or more approaches with the counselee but in each case, caution must be used. Do not be too forceful in getting the counselee to talk or reveal more than he or she is willing to reveal. Do not probe or question if the person is hesitant about an item that seems important to you as counselor. It will probably come out later in behavior, if not verbally. The counselor must be patient for the information that brings out the whole problem.

Helping the individual explore the Problem

Encourage the counselee to talk. Help the counselee to talk about his/her feelings and thereby relate at least some of the problem.

Allow expressions of emotion. Do not be embarrassed by the show of emotions by the depressed person. Instead, quietly wait for the person to become composed. The counselor should allow the counselee to be free in emotional expression.

Help the counselee to clarify the problem. Once the counselee feels safe within the counseling environment, it is appropriate to begin exploring the nature and scope of the problem. First, help the counselee to think through the problem. This will require remembering as much as possible of what the counselee is saying as his or her thought processes are being explored.

During this clarification phase, ask questions about the causes of the feelings and when the feelings began. Ask him or her to describe what was actually happening when s/he began to have the depressed feelings. Help the counselee to identify such feelings as guilt, anger, vengeance, and violence. Ask such questions as whether the counselee feels that s/he can go on living. Watch for suicidal words and phrases such as "Life is no longer worth it," or "People would be better off without me around to make problems." When these thoughts are expressed, ask why the counselee has such negative thoughts and low self-esteem. Help them to evaluate each feeling in a positive manner. Then ask whether there is a need to forgive others or to forgive him/herself.

Solving the Problem

Develop realistic expectations. During the problem-solving phase, the counselee should be encouraged not to expect too much of him/herself or of others. This is particularly true when the depressed person has set unrealistic goals and is depressed about being unable to attain them.

Seek the Lord's help. During the problem-solving phase, presenting alternative models for dealing with depression is helpful. Scripture contains such models and is often useful in providing such support. (Psalm 51 and Psalm 23)

Develop strategies and identify resources. The counselor will find that a variety of situations can trigger depression. Accordingly, the counselor will need to use different resources with different counselees, depending upon the types of situations that triggered the depression.

Discussion

**Case Study (book, page 184)
Brother Hampton**

Questions to consider

How would you begin to help Brother Hampton?

How will you determine when it is time to refer Brother Hampton to a professional agency?

Does Brother Hampton's wife have role in this?

Is it possible that she is having her own hurt"

Scripture Reference: Psalm 41:1-11

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

Discuss the following questions.

1. At what points in Psalm 42 does David express depression?
2. Why does he seem to be so depressed?
3. How does this Psalm compare with Psalm 23?
4. How is it that the same person can write Psalm 23 and Psalm 42?

GOD'S POWER OVER ANGER

Scripture Reference: 2 Samuel 13:1, 10-12, 14, 19-20, 22, 28-29, 37

What is Anger?



Anger is an advanced stage of frustration. It is a feeling of being out of control and unable to cope. It is a deep-seated feeling of not being able to control others and/or one's environment. It is the feeling of not being able to set limits, of being victimized and/or in a state of rage.

There are many situations in families that are causing anger in children today. Among these are **incest and lack of supervision by responsible adults**, which results in children being forced to assume adult responsibilities before they are mature enough to handle them. The outcome is often the type of **"acting out"** that surfaces in gang violence, teenage pregnancy, and various forms of juvenile delinquency.

The Role of Black professionals.

It is not always possible for children who need help to receive it through the traditional helping agencies. For one reason or another, services that are offered by professional community agencies do not always reach the children who need it. In other cases, the services provided by community agencies are for some reason inadequate. For example, while the public schools mean well, still thousands of Black children are dropping out and many who graduate are not receiving skills necessary to enter mainstream employment.

By volunteering through churches and other agencies, Black professionals can help to meet needs that are not otherwise being met. By volunteering to tutor children, head a youth group (such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, etc.). or participate in career education activities and health clinics, Black professionals can provide young people with much of the essential information that is not provided in their natural environments.

Black professionals can also help with networking. They can put children in touch with people who may be able to give them part time jobs and internships, and who may be able to connect them with the information needed to go to college and pursue careers.

The Role of the Black church.

The Black church has always been the hub of the Black community. It therefore has the potential to make a major impact on what is happening with children and teenagers in the Black community. However, recently the church has not taken on its full responsibility of leadership in this area.

Unfortunately, a large percentage of church members, out of habit and family tradition, still confine most of their involvement with the church to Sunday morning worship service. Any involvement other than worship is usually limited to ushering and/or singing in the choir. Today there is a need for much more church and community involvement than this.

One way of becoming more actively involved would be for the church to form liaisons with community agencies who are servicing youth. In this way, the meager resources of the community agencies can be stretched and strengthened, and vice versa. Much of what has been mentioned in this chapter can be implemented through youth programming at the local church level.

Discussion

Case Study (Book, page204)

Kirshawn

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION: 2 Samuel 13:1, 10-12, 14, 19-20, 22, 28-29, 37.

Discussion Questions

1. How did Amnon's sin affect Absalom?
2. How did Amnon's sin affect Tamar?
3. What type of family environment might have led to Amnon's sin?
4. Why was Absalom "acting out" the way he did?
5. Where is anger in this story?

Wherever the angry child is encountered, it is important for the counselor to try to provide some of the elements that have been missing from the child's environment. These include:

1. Allow for self-discovery--Often the disorganized environments from which many angry children come, have caused them to be out of touch with themselves. They do not know who they are, and are usually not aware of the talents and gifts that the Lord has given them. Therefore, it is important for the counselor and directors of youth activities to design activities that lead to self-awareness.
2. Provide structure--One of the elements missing from the life of children from disorganized environments, is structure. Part of the frustration they feel is associated with lacking a structure in which they can develop into healthy adults. Most such children are not accustomed to a schedule or regularity of any type, other than that which they may encounter in school when they attend. Through the church and through activities sponsored by community groups, such children can experience structure and regularity.
3. Allow for meaningful relationships with adults--Often angry, neglected children have rarely, if ever, held meaningful conversations with adults. Often adults in such a child's environment believe that a child is to be "seen and not heard." Frequently the communication they have had with adults is one-way, taking the form of orders, directions concerning work to do, or reprimands (usually curses) when work is not done correctly. For the most part, such children have not been taken seriously by the adults around them and have usually been ignored. Therefore, the most important truth that the counselor can communicate to such children is that their feelings and ideas are important, and that it is all right for them to talk. The counselor needs to communicate to the child that every person God made is important and unique (Ephesians 2:10). Every person has gifts, and every person is important to the Lord. God's love for children needs to be communicated to such a child.
4. Clarify values--It may be that, through interactions with the counselor, and with a more positive environment of the church or community organization, such a child may come into contact with alternative values and lifestyles for the first time. These children will need the opportunity to adopt values and lifestyles that are different from those taken by the child's parents. In order to take such an important and difficult step, the child needs the opportunity to clarify his/her values. Learning to think independently from one's parents is very difficult, particularly for a child. It is even more difficult for such children to learn to think independently of most of the adults in their current world.
5. Practice decision making--In order to act consistently with new values that the child may develop (at the church or at the community center) the child may need to make strategic decisions. The counselor can develop an environment that prepares the child for decision making in general, and enables the child to make the strategic decisions that will change his/her life.
To prepare the child for decision making, the counselor, youth leader, or Sunday School teacher may develop activities that allow the child to make decisions affecting the outcomes of certain group activities.

GOD'S POWER OVER LONELINESS

Scripture Reference: 1 Kings 19:1-15, 18

What is Loneliness



Loneliness is a state of living in a solitary mode or place. It is the experience of being confined, to the extent that meaningful relationships with other human beings are impossible, or at best inadequate. People experience loneliness when they are isolated from other persons. Loneliness is the prelude to depression, and to more serious mental problems.

Loneliness can be felt even when surrounded by other people

DO NOT CONFUSE BEING ALONE WITH BEING LONELY. Being alone is human and natural. Many situations and experience can place you in a position of being alone.

Signs and symptoms of loneliness

Anger and Irritability

Self-Criticism

Feelings of Hopelessness

Loss of Interest in Relationships and Life in General

Changes in Weight and Appearance

Changes in Sleeping Habits

Fatigue

Unexplained Aches And Pains

Strategies for dealing with loneliness are:

- 1. recognizing and understanding feelings of loneliness**
- 2. establishing a relationship with Christ**
- 3. becoming more aware of the presence of God**
- 4. reaching out and helping others**
- 5. considering marriage**
- 6. being grateful**
- 7. using time productively and creatively**

Discussion

Case Study (Book, page 220)

Carmen

Scripture Reference: **1 Kings 19:1-15, 18**

Discuss the following questions.

1. Why was Elijah feeling a sense of loss? (19:3-4)
2. What evidence is there that Elijah was cut off from communication with others? (19:4)
3. What evidence is there that he had lost enthusiasm for life?(19:4)
4. What evidence is there that he was bored? (I 9:4)
5. Did he pity himself? Explain. (19:4, 10, 14)
6. What role did fear, anger, and self-consciousness play?(19:3-4,13-14)

Thank you for allowing me to share with you this week to discuss God's Power to Help Hurting People. It has been a blessing for me, and I hope that you heard something this week that will not only bless your life but strengthen your relationship with God and enable you to help others who are hurting and need someone to help guide them into a relationship with God.