

# CALLED TO SERVE

SERVANT LEADERSHIP JESUS STYLE

LORRAINE MINOR

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**Servant Leadership Jesus Style**

**By Lorraine Minor**

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Printed by Diggypod, Tecumseh, MI 49286

Second Printing

Cover by FIVERR

RescueMissionBooks.com

ISBN: 978-0-9968312-0-8

## Preface

Primarily written as a textbook for Servant Leadership Training Institute, a ministry of City Union Mission in Kansas City, Missouri, this book is designed to encourage and train any person desiring to serve those who are needing to find a way up and out of difficult times. This material is especially directed to those in Rescue Ministry or other ministries serving the poor and homeless, and those who are recovering from life-destroying addictions.

Isaiah 58:10-11(NIV)

“If you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry  
and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,  
then your light will rise in the darkness,  
and your night will become like the noonday.  
The LORD will guide you always;  
He will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land  
and will strengthen your frame.  
You will be like a well-watered garden,  
like a spring whose waters never fail.”



## Acknowledgements

Writing means there is an ongoing need for encouragement, over and over again. The birth of this book came through conversations with Delores Burger and Jami Kay, who insisted that I could do this, and would regularly confirm their faith in this project every time we connected. Other friends, including Laura Luce, Linda Munger, and Julie Wenger, always asked me, in every conversation, how the book was going. With such encouragement, one had to keep going! I am very indebted to Tim Taussig for his wonderful volunteer editing.

This book is the compilation of five years of classes of the Servant Leadership Training Institute (sLi) meeting weekly at City Union Mission in Kansas City. The last four years have also included students from many locations, joining the class via teleconferencing. I salute the many students who have participated in influencing the contents of this book. You are very special people:

Alice, Amanda, Andrea, Anna, Audrey, Barry, Ben, Bill, Bob, Brian<sup>1</sup>, Brian<sup>2</sup>, Charles, Chris, Christopher, Cindy, Cortez, Cory, Daniel, Danny, David, Don, DW, Dwayne, Dwight, Earl, Ed, Eugene, Felicia, Frank, Gerald, Gladys, Grace, Greg, Jackie, Jared, Jeff, Jess, Jessie, Jim, Jimmy, Joe, John, Johnny, Jonathan, Jordan, Josh, Joshua, Joyce, Julie, Kathy, Keith, Ken, Kenny, Kevin, Kim, Larry, Latonia, Laura, Laurie, Lawrence, Lillian, Linda, LJ, Lonzell, LoriAnne, Lottie, Louie, Lovey, Mark, Marshall, Mathew, Matt, Michael, Mike, Mira, Neil, Nick, Norman, Ottie, Peter, Randel, Ray, Rebecca, Rick, Robin, Ron, Ruth, Sam, Sandy, Sara, Scott, Sharon, Shawn, Sheryl, Stan, Susan, Tom, Torrey, Travis, Tyler, Tyson, and Valerie.

Much thanks to Allen Queen and David Smith at Springfield, David Busick and Johnny Allen at Warsaw, Rob Swiers at Fargo, Keith Fournier at Billings, Jeff Gilfillan and Ben Barsenault at Winnipeg, and Jim Cole at Akron, who have made it possible for students to attend the sLi.



## Introduction

Welcome to a book not meant to have all the answers, but humbly offered to assist the reader in contemplating daily opportunities for ministry to those who have profound needs. If you can join me in the self-awareness of “one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread,” you will gain from pursuing these pages. This book is about understanding the challenge the Lord has given us in daily ministry to the poor and the homeless who come to our doors.

Fundamental to the premise of this book is the belief that we can always improve and that our God is worthy of our best. Training is crucial for all who would seek continued progress in quality ministry. I can save myself a lot of time by learning from those who have tried and often had to have a do-over. On the other hand, successful is the one who discovers he or she can grow from every encounter.

This book is the compilation of 30 years of wandering in the wilderness of ministry, seeing God continue to provide faithfully in the midst of daily challenges. Then came 5 years of interacting with young believers and new staff called to the same ministry, testing the reality of the topics week by week, applying the principles. Students from 5 states and Canada, enrolled in the sLi, have discussed these chapters, one a week, honing in on what is most important as we are called to serve.



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**Part I**

**Personal**

**Preparation for**

**Ministry**



## Chapter 1

# The Purpose and Characteristics of Rescue Missions

### Why We Do What We Do

We who work at Rescue Missions long-term, come and stay because we are committed to doing what we are doing. We see reason and purpose in the daily reality. We understand that we are part of God's larger plan to care for the least of these. We know about Jesus' job description in Isaiah 61:1 and repeated in Luke 4:18-19:

“HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED.”

Knowing our heritage, and understanding the purpose of the organization where we are employed, enhances our own sense of purpose and direction. Understanding what makes Rescue Missions unique helps to keep us focused on the work at hand.

### A Look at the Past

We recognize the Glasgow City Mission in Scotland as the first city mission, founded in January 1826 by David Nasmith.

Nasmith then founded the Dublin City Mission and then the London City Mission, known to be the oldest mission in England. In 1830, he came to the USA for the purpose of setting up missions.

The oldest Rescue Mission in existence in the USA is the Jerry McAuley Water Street Mission, founded in 1872. It is now the New York City Mission on Water Street in New York City. Wall Street

banker Alfrederick Smith Hatch donated the building, and the mission initially was named the Helping Hand For Men. Other missions preceding this are not still in operation today because they either became churches or closed for lack of funds.

The term “Rescue Mission” probably had its origin in Syracuse New York when H. B. Gibband opened a mission called the “Rescue Mission.” He had worked with centers of information, called Rescue Bands, connected with the Underground Railroad assisting fugitive slaves. To him, the word “rescue” symbolized the sinner fleeing from wrath and from bondage, seeking freedom, pursued by the tempter.

Wikipedia records our objective is “to not keep our clients dependent on handouts but to give them skills and the Christian environment to release them from their poverty, addiction or problems.”

Steve Burger said it distinctly: “We are a movement that is going to change America IF we listen to the call of God and we stay with our primary focus that God changes lives. If we are not afraid to tell anyone, anywhere, anytime. And if we keep on marching we’ll do exactly what was done at the turn of the last century.” David Nasmith, the founder of our movement, said, “What they said was impossible, I knew to be possible.” - Rescue Magazine, August 1998

### **What’s in a Name?**

You will notice from the history above that European missions tended to use the word “**City**” in the name. City Mission became the name that indicated the urban thrust. Early in the history in the States, the word “**Union**” was incorporated because there was a great effort to be representing the unity of many denominations working together to meet the needs of the poor. The word “**Rescue**” came into greater use in the last century to emphasize

the thrust, and many missions incorporated “**Gospel**” in their name to differentiate themselves from secular ministries. Although the huge majority of missions are all individually autonomous, when you see one of these four words in the name, you are more likely to know they are of the same purpose.

## **Purpose**

What sets us apart from other social service agencies is very connected with our stated purpose. Some staff come to the mission believing they are part of a movement of alleviating poverty. Others come to alleviate hunger. Some have heard that there is an effort to eliminate homelessness. If you will look at your mission’s mission statement, you hopefully will see something quite different. There is nothing wrong with wanting to alleviate poverty or eliminate hunger. There are well-meaning people who are dedicated to that goal. But just like there is nothing wrong with caring for abandoned pets at an animal shelter, that is just not the purpose of Rescue Missions.

If we give ourselves to addressing surface issues without dealing with the core problem, we will have little lasting effect. Rescue Missions are about changed lives. Jesus consistently redirected people to the real reason He was meeting their physical need, and it always dealt with the more lasting change.

The Parable of the Sower indicates that there is more needed than sowing the seed, but all the watering in the world won’t work on seedless ground. There are ministries that only preach and disciple, without being involved in addressing physical needs. This might work with other populations, but not the ones we serve.

Our identity is very connected with knowing our purpose. That is true for me individually and corporately. As a representative of the Almighty One, I am the bearer of good news along with good

things. Rescue Missions attempt to not “get the cart before the horse.” There are many methods of distributing good things, just as there are many ways of sharing good news. The methods are not as important as the commitment to do both, in a God-focused way.

### The **R – E – S – C – U – E** Model

**Release** clients from hurtful lifestyles

**Educate** clients in God’s Word, GED, and job skills

**Serve** our clients, with changed lives as the objective

**Cultivate** clients’ devotion to the Lord

**Utilize** all available resources to restore broken people

**Empower** clients to serve God and others

- Malcolm Lee, Rescue Magazine, May 2000, page 18

## Chapter 2

# Servant Leadership Jesus Style

The business community believes they coined the phrase “servant leadership,” but we have evidence of the practice 2000 years ago! The purpose of this chapter is to look at how Jesus did ministry and figure out how to replicate His methods.

Luke 22:25-27 (NIV) Jesus said to them, ‘The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as One who serves.’”

Matthew 20:28 (NIV) “Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”

John 13:3-5 (NIV) “Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under His power, and that He had come from God and was returning to God; so He got up from the meal, took off His outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around His waist. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash His disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around Him.”

Philippians 2:5-8 (NIV) “In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus, Who, being in very nature God did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage; rather,

He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!”

Jesus was very committed to His prayer life (Luke 5:16). As our example, He strongly maintained His daily relationship with the Father. He was heard saying that He could do nothing on His own initiative (John 5:30), and on several occasions insisted that the disciples understood that they, too, could do nothing on their own (John 15:5). Understanding the role of a servant also means understanding from where you get your authority and empowerment. To commit ourselves to servant leadership, we need to know very specifically what our Master wants us doing and saying, and be willing to follow regardless of our personal desires.

Jesus frequently practiced patience, having to say the same things over and over (Matthew 15:15-16). He overcame the humanness of impatiently expecting others to get it the first time. Numerous times, it is recorded, “Again I say unto you...” There were times when He became firm with His hearers when they repeatedly did not retain information, but even in those times, He patiently sought to bring them along. However, Jesus graciously confronted when appropriate (Matthew 20:20-28).

Jesus was great at communication. He often said, “I have told you everything” (Mark 13:23). A servant does not hold back information that belongs to another. Nor did He give out information that was not His to give. A great example for us!

A servant leader Jesus-style would not be time driven. You will not find passages where Jesus said to get back to Him tomorrow. There were times when He refused to meet requests but the reason was not a time issue.

Perhaps one of the most challenging practices we see in Jesus-style leadership is His practice of accepting people where they were, but caring enough not to leave them there. He could applaud a person and at the same time raise them to a higher standard (Luke 10:17-21). Notice, in this specific case, He applauded and rejoiced with them over their success before challenging them for their growth.

Jesus was first a leader. The word “servant” in the phrase “servant leadership” is an adjective, showing how to do leadership. A servant methodology is one where the person knows to whom they report, whom they serve, and how to be respectful to both.

Repeatedly, Jesus made it very clear that His priority was to serve God. Because of that priority, He came to serve man. We would save ourselves a lot of detour if we could maintain the same focus. We serve God when we serve His people. I need not experience the fatigue of serving without recognition or appreciation if I understand that the One I am serving sees all and knows all.

Jesus did not find it necessary to do the popular thing (John 6:26). He knew who He was; He did not have to prove His identity or His purpose. As we follow Him, we do not need to promote ourselves. Our motivation is to be total love for others, not self-promotion.

Jesus understood the need for modeling. He was the living example of what He wanted His followers to be and do. “As the Father has sent me, I also send you” (John 20:21).

Leaders have power. Jesus had ultimate power. How did He use His? Did He use His right to be bossy? We are given authority and influence in order to empower others, not to eliminate their God-given role as a choice-maker. Jesus gave His disciples room to fail for the sake of learning. In Rescue Mission work, we have the opportunity to lead rather than push or pull. Leading means giving the person the opportunity to follow. The key word here is “opportunity.” Jesus did not always see His followers taking the

opportunities He was giving them. When Peter stepped outside the boat to walk to Him even when Jesus knew he would not be successful on his own, Jesus took the opportunity to make an eternal point with Peter by first letting him fail.

We sometimes in Rescue get to a point where we think we know the best for the person we are serving, so we want to cut to the chase and speed up the process by just straightening the person out with our wisdom. Servant leadership Jesus-style allows the person to arrive at the point of healthiness in his or her own timing. We sit around and marvel that the disciples did not figure out the truth about the Messiah earlier. Jesus, who knew He had a short time with them, still patiently let them come to the point of change on their own.

Jesus sought feedback. “Who do men say that I am?” Asking the right questions helps those being served to sharpen their perspective. Feedback, of course, also should be coming from the One in authority over us.

Please note that Jesus was not afraid of getting dirty (foot washing), working hard as needed (preparing and serving breakfast to hungry men who had been up all night), spending hours praying for His disciples, lots of times losing sleep to do so. He taught by example. He delegated, even when He knew He could do it better and would probably have to redo the efforts of the disciples. He was comfortable with asking questions to make His disciples think, even when He knew the answers and could have just preached at them. He explained Himself when necessary, and showed compassion on those who needed time to get His points.

Do not suppose that you can excuse yourself by blaming your dominant, controlling personality! Look at Paul, a man definitely trained in the power and control thinking of his day before the Lord got hold of him. That would be the same Paul who said, “Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ” (Corinthians 11:1).

**Following Jesus' commands is essential.**

**Following His example is effective.**

Servant leadership Jesus-style means, as a servant, I am submissive to the purpose for which I have been called, and as a leader, I am entrusted with the care of those I am called to lead. My Leader meets my needs, giving me the freedom to focus on the needs of those I lead.

To look at Jesus as my Mentor in ministry is a tremendous privilege. One could not hope for better direction. He, the all-wise One, knows best. Following in the footsteps of Jesus is humbling and satisfying.

Remember, the commendation we all want to receive from Jesus in the hereafter: "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21,23).

**If I am to be a servant leader:**

I will not expect honor and praise to myself but will encourage praise to my Master.

I will be patient with those who do not seem to get it on the first instruction.

I will risk being disliked for the sake of truth or another's safety.

I will set a good example even when it takes time and effort on my part.

I will not expect others to minister to me but will be grateful when that happens.

I will commend others for important characteristics like evidence of faith.

I will model gratitude.

I will accept the potential cost of servanthood without self-pity.

I will be quick to meet needs as a way of pointing people to my loving Master.

### Chapter 3

## Christian Worldview

Do you sometimes wonder why you cannot get through to your clients? They seem to be on a different planet. You think you are speaking the same language. The issue is deeper. Depending on how long you have been a Christian, you may not remember how your worldview has changed. We have found truth that replaced the secular theology of our past. Our clients may not have yet had that privilege. Our worldview affects everything about us.

Worldview includes a set of beliefs on which you base your actions, attitudes, and even emotions. This belief system is established bit-by-bit starting at a very early age. Your stronger beliefs are stored as convictions, whereas your surface beliefs can be greatly affected by what is going on around you. There is value in discovering your clients' worldview to understand the root of their beliefs and behaviors. Their worldview affects their behavior, how they relate to others, how they respond to rules.

“A worldview is a set of presuppositions and beliefs that someone uses to interpret and form opinions about his humanity, purpose in life, duties in the world, responsibilities to family, interpretation of truth, social issues, etc. A Christian should view all these things, and more, guided by the light that is shed upon them by the Bible.” - Matt Slick

A nationwide survey conducted by The Barna Group in 2009 explored how many adults have what might be considered a

“biblical worldview.” A “biblical worldview” was defined as believing that absolute moral truth exists; the Bible is totally accurate in all of the principles it teaches; Satan is considered to be a real being or force, not merely symbolic; a person cannot earn their way into Heaven by trying to be good or do good works; Jesus Christ lived a sinless life on earth; and God is the all-knowing, all-powerful creator of the world who still rules the universe today. In the research, anyone who held all of those beliefs was said to have a “biblical worldview.” Only 9% of Americans believed all these and only 19% of those who labeled themselves as “born again” agreed to all.

“A worldview is like a set of lenses which taint our vision or alter the way we perceive the world around us. Our worldview is formed by our education, our upbringing, the culture we live in, the books we read, the media and movies we absorb, etc. For many people their worldview is simply something they have absorbed by osmosis from their surrounding cultural influences. They have never thought strategically about what they believe and wouldn’t be able to give a rational defense of their beliefs to others.” – Israel Wayne  
<http://www.christianworldview.net/>

When Jesus was praying to the Father in John 17, He maintained that His disciples were not of the world (v.16), and immediately added, “Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth” (v.17). His truth keeps us from thinking like the world. Our worldview needs to replicate God’s worldview.

## **How Does Your Belief System Affect Your Potential Ministry?**

You build your belief system by facts (evidence), tradition, association, authority, and relationship. When your beliefs do not line up with the truth of Scripture, your ministry may produce rotten apples. Here are some questions to consider as you evaluate the accuracy of your own worldview. Who is God? What has He done in history? What does He continue to do today? Are humans inherently good or evil? Do humans have choices, or is everything a matter of fate?

Although research shows that most of a person's worldview is set by age 13, we are all examples of how this is not necessarily true. We have a responsibility to present truth to those God sends to us. One of the great ways is through discipling by Scripture discussion. "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2(NIV)).

Our own testimony shared at select points can have an effect. Most of us have gone through life not recognizing how the media and a secularized view of history, law, politics, science, God, and man, has affected our thinking. Combine sharing how truth has changed your thinking with the study of Colossians 2:8, "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ."

As you are analyzing your worldview, consider how it affects your definition of compassion, of grace, servant leadership, authority, and rights. What you believe affects how you respond to God and to others. As Christians, we have the advantage of knowing the source of truth, but as humans, we have the inclination to massage that truth to fit our traditions, associations, experiences, etc. This becomes especially crucial when we are in a position to influence others. Ministry means I must be very aware that my own belief

system will influence how I relate to others. Let this chapter lead you to prayer as you seek to be a bearer of truth.

Here are some false belief systems that people in ministry hold on to:

- Some people will never change, so I don't need to waste time talking with them.
- God does not love people who do not obey Him.
- My beliefs are biblical; it is just my actions that are messed up.

My beliefs are the basis for my convictions, which in turn are the basis for my actions.

### **Impact on Clients**

The second goal of this study is to recognize how the belief system of the clients you work with may be blocking them from salvation and/or growth. I need to be able to meet people where they are and walk with them through the process of truth-seeking.

Here are some examples of worldview beliefs you may be encountering in your clients that will affect the impact of your ministry:

- "You only have one life; you better get all the gusto you can." (And you are trying to teach the life skill of money management.)
- "I need to protect myself. No one else is going to." (Do you wonder why they have difficulty trusting God?)
- "The world revolves around me." (Where did their entitlement thinking come from?)
- "My value is based on how much stuff I have." (Guess there is no need for God?)
- "Decisions about what is good or bad should be left up to each person." (Who made you to be telling me what to do?)
- "My motto is 'Question Authority.'"

- “I am responsible for myself and no one else.” (A little hard to promote accountability.)
- “Truth depends on how you see things.”
- “God loves only good people.”

Knowing where belief systems originate, and the difference between surface beliefs and convictions, you have the opportunity to disciple your clients. Helping them have an accurate set of beliefs will impact their success in life.

Consider the following specific beliefs that your clients may be holding:

- The Bible says that God helps those who help themselves.
- I have done too many bad things for Jesus to accept me.
- You have to earn your way to heaven. The more good you do, the better your chances.
- God sits on His throne and does not know I exist.
- I am a victim of my circumstances.
- Respect is something you have to earn.
- When you become a Christian, you can't enjoy life anymore.
- The Bible says God wants everyone to be rich.
- If you live right, there will be no problems.

Truth sets people free. The only way to combat false belief systems is with the truth of Scripture. I must not assume that those I am talking with know the truth; I have the opportunity to spread truth.

Some of my personal beliefs that have affected the ministry God has called me to include:

- Romans 8:1, “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”
- There is no such thing as a mistake if I learn from it. (Examples of God's sovereignty in biblical characters.)

- God changes the desires of my heart to line up with His when I delight in Him (Psalms 37:4).
- Although God's love is unconditional, promises usually come with mandates (e.g., 2 Chronicles 7:14; 1 John 1:9; John 3:16).
- I have been given only one right (John 1:12). I have privileges and responsibilities but no other rights.
- My time, talents, and energy, come from the Lord and belong to Him, and He can choose to use them any way He wishes (Romans 14:8; Matthew 25:14-30; 1 Corinthians 6:20; 1 Chronicles 29:14).
- God desires relationship with me more than service (Micah 6:8; Hosea 6:6).
- Thankfulness is a cure for most things that trouble me (Philippians 4:6).

**For more study on this topic, check out writings by Del Tackett on Christian Worldview. I highly recommend The Truth Project, a video series for your staff and for your clients.**

## Chapter 4

# Looking at Poverty from God's Perspective

We know that we are committed in Rescue Ministry to addressing the needs of the poor. So, what is our definition of poverty? If you define poverty, or the state of being poor, the same way that the majority of your North American neighbors do, you diminish your ministry. If poverty is limited to a lack of material resources, then all we need to do is to provide shelter, food, and clothing, and we will meet the needs of the poor.

Apparently, poverty in God's eyes is far different. In Revelation 3:17, Jesus tells a bunch of well-off folks that they are miserably impoverished. Jesus often talked about the advantage of being materially impoverished while also identifying real needs that He desired to fill.

Look at some of the ways the people coming through our doors seeking help are actually poor:

Poverty of support – We know one of the major causes of homelessness is the breakdown of the family. When you have no support system, either through your extended family or through a church, you are impoverished.

Poverty of the soul – People are created with deep longings that distinguish humans from other animal life. We have a deep longing to be loved, really loved, for who we are and not who we must become. We have a longing to be significant, to have worth. When these longings

are not met, there is deep poverty that cannot be satisfied with some substitute that is less than the real thing.

Poverty of values – an empty life, with no standards, no beliefs, leading to many other forms of poverty.

The list is actually much more extensive...poverty of perspective, of safety, of skills, of morals, of self-respect, of addiction, of contentment, and on and on. We would do well to study those who have come our way, to observe their real condition before just feeling okay to give them the presenting surface needs.

The real question is what we do with these observations. How would you reach out to someone who has an evident poverty of beliefs and convictions? We in Rescue understand that Truth sets people free, and without truth, a person remains in bondage. We have an obligation to address this poverty.

Take a strong look at how you meet needs. A person comes in to sign up for a bed for the night. As the person at the front desk, you have only a minute as you take his information and move to the next person. During that minute can you feed the need in front of you by giving respect, value, love, compassion, and acceptance by the way you look at the person and respond verbally? Looking a person squarely in the eye and calling him or her by name and even title, adds to their sense of being.

More and more research is connecting the life style of poverty with the lack of relationship. Bryant Myers, in his book *Walking with The Poor*, describes poverty as “the result of relationships that do not work, that are not just, that are not for life, that are not harmonious or enjoyable” (p.86).

Brian Filkert, in his book When Helping Hurts, refers to a “loss of meaning, purpose, and hope.” He specifies four areas to address. “The crucial thing is to help people to understand their identity as image bearers, to love their neighbors as themselves, to be stewards over God’s creation, and to bring glory to God in all things” (Filkert p.145). Filkert makes a compelling case that poverty is the result of brokenness in four key relationships: with God, with self, with others, and with the rest of creation. If one of my goals is to address poverty, and if I agree with this definition, then I will need to do far more than meet the crisis need of the individual seeking help.

<b><u>Relational Brokenness</u></b>	<b><u>Relational Poverty</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Relationship with God</li><li>• Relationship with self</li><li>• Relationship with others</li><li>• Relationship with creation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Poverty of spiritual intimacy</li><li>• Poverty of being</li><li>• Poverty of community</li><li>• Poverty of stewardship</li></ul>

We know we must be addressing the Poverty of spiritual intimacy (relationship with God). But we also must address the Poverty of being (my devaluing of who I am in Him), Poverty of community (my need to fill a role in the lives of others), and Poverty of stewardship (my willingness to care for God’s creation). Relational poverty is a reflection of relational brokenness and needs to be addressed if we are hoping to see people come to abundant living.

What you envision as the need, and what you determine to be your goal, will affect the direction you take and ultimately the impact you have.

1 Samuel 2:8

“He raises the poor from the dust. He lifts the needy from the ash heap.”

Proverbs 14:21

“Happy is he who is gracious to the poor.”

Proverbs 28:27

“He who gives to the poor will never want.”

Proverbs 29:7

“The righteous is concerned for the rights of the poor.”

Former Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren Burger’s mother read in the newspaper that he had a “poor” beginning. That upset her. “He had a humble beginning,” she would say. She and seven children walked to church every Sunday, many times in mended clothes. She felt they were rich in the things that really mattered.

## Chapter 5

# Enhancing Your Personal Time with God

First things first. Discover the many reasons why a person in ministry needs a personal, private, individual, regular time with the Lord. Recently I asked the current students in the sLi why a person in ministry needed a personal time with God. Here is a compilation of their excellent responses:

Personal time with God is the source of strength for the day, wisdom for having any sort of effect on others, victory in the battle with the flesh, and the only way to know the Gospel. It brings the growing realization of the need for God, recognizing His power and might. It is a definite way to learn the patience of waiting on God, the freedom of forgiveness, and the opportunity of influence on others. It is the best way to get direction and correction. Personal time with God is about change. It is about refreshment, closeness, and relationship with the Almighty. It not only is a way to hear from God, but also to honor Him, and most of all to know Him, and His thoughts. We are given the privilege to sit with the God of the universe who has adopted us into His family and desires time with us.

Next, we need to agree to some basic truths for the person in ministry regarding their personal devotional time. For starters, it is personal. For the person who feels the calling to help others find a growing relationship with the Lord, it is too easy to take everything that comes in that private time with the Lord as something to share with others for their benefit. The person in ministry needs to have

a deep understanding that God first wants a personal relationship, much more than looking for the conduit to bless others through you. You are special to Him. He could accomplish what He wants to accomplish in the lives of others without you being the messenger...and has been doing it for centuries before you came along. Nevertheless, He also wants to bless you with the opportunity to have impact on others when you are ready to represent Him.

A truth about humans is that planning keeps a person in focus. One of the painful detours many have taken is to not have a plan for the time, before the time arrives. To wake up in the morning and not know where you are meeting your Friend is an invitation to miss out. The plan might change from reading the next chapter to following a center reference study of a specific word in a specific verse; but you start with a sense of direction if you are determined to be present with your Friend.

Another basic truth is that God created us in His own image. One of His characteristics is His amazing creativity. As we exemplify that characteristic ourselves, does it not make sense to seek variations in our time with Him? What happens if you do the same thing day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, in building a relationship with another person? A little variety keeps things fresh. Even though I may have a plan of how I participate in my devotional time for the next week, month, or year, there is wonderful room for some Holy Spirit driven tangents He may instigate.

Intimacy with God requires some amount of uninterrupted solitude with your Bible and Him. Quantity is not as important as quality. Reading a chapter a day without time to reflect on what He is saying to you personally in that passage leaves you with just a reading exercise. He talks to you through the Word and you talk to Him through prayer. A time of personal devotion is not a race; it is a



cultivated and enjoyed relationship. If your time is interrupted with a thought or a worry about your day, feel free to make a quick note of it to get back to later. This allows you to be back fully involved with what He is saying to you.

God made us for relationship. Relationship with Him for starters. Then that relationship with Him flows over into relationship with others. Be intentional to share with someone every day what you got from your personal time with the Lord. This not only secures the thought in your own mind but also encourages others to look for gems themselves.

Many quiet times are abolished because of believing lies. Have you heard any of these? I will do it later when I am not bothered by the reality of the day. I need my sleep. The time has been so dry lately, I just need to stop trying for a while. I overslept. Oops, I forgot. I cannot find my Bible. There is too much to do today. I am on vacation. You might call these excuses but notice that excuses usually start with believing a lie. A satisfying devotional life is one that is not a duty but a choice. When you cannot keep an appointment with another person, you don't throw away the relationship. You just agree on another time to get together. That works with God too. He is available and He will help you be available also.

Here are some creative ways to get variety in your time with Him:

Personalize Scripture.

Memorize and meditate on one Scripture.

Read a different translation.

Praise from A to Z. (Jesus, you are amazing, beautiful...)

Reread notes from Sunday's sermon with the Scripture covered.

Research a question you have been contemplating (why did God call David His friend?).

Take a week to look at the way Jesus did devotional time.

Take some time to prepare a study for yourself for the next morning on verses about being thirsty.

Read someone else's devotional and accompanying Scripture.

Write your own devotional and send it to someone.

Take a month to read a parable a day.

Read one passage a day in a number of translations.

Utilize a commentary.

Memorize Philippians 3:10 and meditate on it.

Ask God for some ideas!

Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission, used to rise early, before others in the room, light his candle, then pray and study.

He said, "Give God time to reveal Himself. Give yourself time to be silent before Him, waiting to receive through the Spirit the assurance of His presence with you, His power working in you.

Take time to read His word as in His presence, that you may know what He asks of you and what He promises you." Blackwood, *The Growing Minister, His Opportunities and Obstacles*, Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1960, pp. 42, 43.

## Chapter 6

# Dealing with Personal Fears

Those of us who have had the privilege of being in ministry for a while know that one of the most effective weapons used against new staff is some form of fear. We also know that working long-term in Rescue Ministry is a process of developing a trust in God, His provisions and His guidance. We all know that “Perfect Love casts out fear” (1 John 4:18). Learning to rely on that perfect love is a process enhanced by the very nature of this ministry.

Remember how the evil one tried to present Jesus with the temptation of fear in the wilderness: fear of no provision, fear of loss of position, fear of lack of protection. This is the Jesus who set the example for us, the same Jesus who told His disciples, "Take courage! It is I. Do not be afraid" (Matthew 14:27). Many times, He shared with His disciples that He was the answer to any fear they could imagine (John 14:1; Matthew 17:7; 28:10; Revelation 2:10).

### **What Do Rescue Mission Workers Fear?**

Taking a personal ministry inventory from time to time is healthy. One of the questions to ask is, “What is my greatest fear going forward in ministry?” The following are some of the fears shared from both staff and sLi students, with responding considerations for each. Remember that God gave us the ability to fear, so we know there are some things He wants to do through our acknowledging these fears.

1. I fear not being a good example. This is a very useful fear that can drive you to continual study of the One who came and walked on this earth to provide us with a perfect example. The more I

study the life of Jesus, the more I am ready to maintain a good example before others. Another positive result of this fear is the humility that follows when I am convinced I cannot do this on my own. Sometimes more is accomplished in asking forgiveness for an inappropriate action than in living a life that seems unattainable to others.

2. I fear being misunderstood. Join the fellowship! Jesus was misunderstood over and over again. The importance of this fear, however, is to drive us to better and better communication. Never expect a client to understand something the first time. Important things need to be written down so the client can read them again when they are out of your presence, while at the same time providing proof that you said what you said. A good practice is to ask a client to confirm what you have said. You do this, not by asking them to “repeat what I just said,” but rather, “I want to always make sure I am speaking in a way that makes sense. Would you mind saying what I just said in a better way?”

3. I am concerned what to do when I do not have the resources to help a person in need. Truth is, you will never have all the resources you would like to have...this is not Heaven. But if we are going to be helpful to clients who have to learn to live with limited resources, perhaps the way we deal with inadequate resources in front of clients may be a great training tool. Remember that we are promised that we will have what we need. So logically, we can conclude that there will be some things we wish for that God must not consider needs. Are you able to teach clients to look for options when the easy answer is not readily available? This fear can give us energy to look for more answers. The phrase “look outside the box” is a good management phrase, but for this situation, perhaps, we need to look outside the mission and our own capabilities. We need not be providing a resource that is available through an agency in town if, when providing that resource, we make clients dependent on the mission rather than

learning to seek help from a wider range of options. One past SLI graduate took it on his own to research and develop a helpful list of where to turn in the city to find help for needs that the mission did not meet. Be creative and thank God for the motivation to find information that you can provide to staff and clients.

4. I fear not being able to earn participant trust. Recent research shows that only 33% of people currently trust other people. This is even more prevalent in Rescue Missions where people have been relationally abused for years. Much of a person's ability to gain trust from others is more about how much you yourself trust. If you are suspicious of other people, why should you expect their trust of you? The bottom line is, we need to stop trying to get people to trust us, and instead point them to the One whom they can always trust. I often say to a client, "I don't want you to trust me. I want you to trust the One who I serve. If I am not doing right by you, He will deal with you and me." Psalm 146:3 and 118:8-9 are good verses to share with clients. On the other hand, we as Christian workers need to do everything possible to be trustworthy as we represent Him.

5. I am concerned that I will not have answers to client questions.

We do not have answers in this life for some questions. We have only a foundation of truth on which to lay those unanswered



questions. Many of our clients have experienced severe loss, and wrestle with finding answers for their pain. Other questions do have valid doctrinal answers. If you do not have the answers to this latter group, you will find motivation to "study to show yourself approved" (2 Timothy 2:15 (KJV)). Remember that clients will use doctrinal questions to sidestep conversations that are moving too close to considering a relationship with Christ. The more uncomfortable a client gets with conversations about Jesus, the more diversion tactics appear. Often it is good to say something

like, “That is a very interesting question, and we will get time to discuss that in depth in the future, but right now let’s stay with...”

6. Perhaps the most difficult fear for those beginning a commitment to ministry is never stated...almost as if there is a fear of stating the fear. Many begin with the fear of not being able to succeed. For good reason, people are often discouraged from going into this ministry with admonitions of how difficult the work can be. This is usually an effort to help the person count the cost, a very biblical position according to Luke 14:28. Once again, this is a valuable fear, since it leads to the basic necessary understanding that unless the Lord does the work, it does not happen (Psalm 127:1). No one going into the ministry of Rescue on his or her own strength and ability will be able to go the distance (see chapter 35 on burnout for more on this).

For your encouragement, I recommend you read Isaiah 43 to relish a message God sent to His people.

Remember...do not be afraid of admitting fears. Fears keep us humble and can be great motivators. God allows us to be fearful to keep us aware of Who will be doing the work.

“Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.” Isaiah 41:10.

## Chapter 7

# Trusting God in Difficult Situations

There are several ways that all Rescue Mission workers could agree on the description of the work of Rescue. One of those frequently mentioned is that there are plenty of difficult situations that crop up on a regular basis. We won't be talking about how to curtail such experience, but we will look at how to get in a right place to minister. There are questions I need to have answered securely in my heart.

### What is my belief about God?

#### MY GOD IS GOOD!

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 "Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort and strengthen your hearts."

Nahum 1:7 (MSG) "God is good, a hiding place in tough times. He recognizes and welcomes anyone looking for help, no matter how desperate the trouble."

#### MY GOD IS ABLE!

2 Corinthians 9:8 (NIV) "And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work."

Ephesians 3:20 (MSG) "God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, His Spirit deeply and gently within us. Glory to God in the church! Glory to God in the Messiah, in Jesus!"

## MY GOD IS TRUSTWORTHY!

Hebrews 6:17-19 “In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil.”

### What is my perspective on pain?

I wrestled with this question for several years. After all, days are filled with seeing the pain in lives of clients. In fact, the journey to understanding in this challenging area came gradually and with personal cost. I began the journey as a counselor, given to the belief that...

Pain is to be avoided.

A little while into the ministry, I discovered that clients were choosing addictions over pain, so I came to the conclusion that...

Pain is inevitable.

As I continued in my quest to find answers, I had to come to the difficult truth that...

Pain is useful.

Perhaps the most difficult part of the journey was to finally arrive at the belief that, for many lives, including my own...

Pain is necessary.

Apostle Paul’s life was full of difficult situations. Thankfully, he wrote a lot about how to trust God in each of these. What was Paul’s approach?

2 Corinthians 1: 3-4 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”

2 Corinthians 1: 5-11 "For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ. But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which is effective in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; and our hope for you is firmly grounded, knowing that as you are sharers of our sufferings, so also you are sharers of our comfort.

"For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; who delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us, you also joining in helping us through your prayers, so that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed on us through the prayers of many."

### What is my understanding of earth-life?

Clients will often believe earth-life is all there is, and it stinks. We know it is a temporary assignment, a beautiful place created by God for providing opportunity to prepare for our future home. Jesus was willing to experience earth-life because He wanted to do God's will. Do I see the same opportunity? Is it a burden or a blessing? The answer probably depends on whether I accept what Jesus said:

John 16:33 "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." - Jesus

If you are bothered by earth-life, I suggest you check out Paul's view in 2 Corinthians 11:24-27 and Philippians 4:11-13. Once I

understand the purpose of earth-life, I am ready to endure whatever it takes.

### **What's Next?**

After making sure our beliefs are in order, we have to make sure we are getting a regular refresher dose of Hope every day. So where does Hope come from?

Romans 15:4 "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."

Psalm 62:5 (NIV) "Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from Him."

#### How do I lose it?

1 Timothy 4:10 "For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers."

Psalm 118:8 "It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man."

#### How do I regain it?

John 14:1, 27 "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful."

Psalm 27:13 "I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living."

Psalm 42:5 "Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him for the help of His presence."

#### How do I make it last?

Romans 8:25 "But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it."

## How Do I Encourage the Hurting?

### Avoid counterfeit encouragement/false hope.

Jeremiah 6:14, 8:11 “They have healed the brokenness of My people superficially, saying, ‘Peace, peace,’ but there is no peace.”

Jeremiah 14:13,14 “But, ‘Ah, Lord GOD!’ I said, ‘Look, the prophets are telling them, ‘You will not see the sword nor will you have famine, but I will give you lasting peace in this place.’ Then the LORD said to me, ‘The prophets are prophesying falsehood in My name. I have neither sent them nor commanded them nor spoken to them; they are prophesying to you a false vision, divination, futility and the deception of their own minds.’”

Ezekiel 13:10 “It is definitely because they have misled My people by saying, ‘Peace!’ when there is no peace. And when anyone builds a wall, behold, they plaster it over with whitewash.”

### Learn how to assist in grief work.

Isaiah 61:1-4 “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners; to proclaim the favorable year of the LORD and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to grant those who mourn in Zion, giving them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified. Then they will rebuild the ancient ruins, they will raise up the former devastations; and they will repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations.”

Learn to confront fear.

Proverbs 3:21-26 (NIV) “My son, do not let wisdom and understanding out of your sight, preserve sound judgment and discretion; they will be life for you, an ornament to grace your neck. Then you will go on your way in safety, and your foot will not stumble. When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. Have no fear of sudden disaster or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked, for the Lord will be at your side and will keep your foot from being snared.”

Speak truth.

Romans 15:4,13 “For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Hold on to real promises.

Hebrews 13:5-6 “Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, ‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,’ so that we confidently say, ‘The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?’”

2 Corinthians 4:7-11,14 “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal

flesh...Knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you.”

Psalm 34:4,6-7,18 “I sought the Lord, and He answered me, and delivered me from all my fears...This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them...The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”

### Focus on Jesus.

1 Peter 1:13 “Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

## **Summary**

Get in the right place to minister – beliefs, perspectives, and understandings.

Provide a better understanding of Hope.

Be willing to face hard reality.

Be ready for grief, fear.

Encourage by truth, focusing on realness.

You can do all things through Him who strengthens you...He works through you to accomplish His plan!

2 Corinthians 9:8

“And God is able to  
make all grace abound  
to you,

so that always having  
all sufficiency in  
everything,

you may have an  
abundance for every  
good deed.”

## Chapter 8

# Creating Margin and Boundaries, Reducing Self-Inflicted Stress

Rescue Mission Ministry provides plenty of stress without any additional contribution on my part. If I am to succeed in this ministry, I need to hone my ability to deal with stress. Although many pages could be written of the effects of stress on our lives, we will concentrate here on how we can handle the day-to-day activities to minimize the accumulation and pressure from what often times is a built-in occupational hazard.

### Margin

Any book that is easy to read has a good amount of what is called “white space,” providing visual breathing room for the eye. “White space” is a term used in sales, in brokerage deals, and in landscaping. It is used to provide for contingencies, or describes what is out of the mainstream. The only common denominator in any of its uses is that in every case it is considered a good thing. Dr. Richard Swenson has a number of great books on this topic, including *Margins*, *Overload Syndrome*, and *In Search of Balance*. You are probably the only one who will make margin in your life, and it has to be by intention and planning. Setting priorities of time spent on rest and relaxation will make you much more productive for the rest of the hours of your day. It is wrong to say this is impossible. Nevertheless, it is improbable, unless you determine to make it happen. I learned to make appointments with myself, blocking out the calendar in order to get my head back on straight.

## **Boundaries**

Boundaries means that I put limits on my availability, that I stick with the priorities that God gives me. Christian workers sometimes get caught in the pattern that they must keep doing and doing because God has called them to minister. The need for boundaries is the need to know my limitations and God's provision. I am not the only source the Lord has to do the work, and sometimes I can get in His way by trying to do what He has assigned to others.

There is a reason why God gave boundaries to humans. If He wanted me to work more, He could have made a 52-hour day instead of the 24. God has patiently worked to help me understand that He is the sufficient One, not me. Over and over, He has had to remind me that His work gets done in His strength. I am not the answer to people's needs...God is.

### **Putting Truth into Practice**

In Rescue Ministry, everything seems like an emergency in the lives of those we serve. For one reason, our clients have not learned the truth discussed in this chapter. When I have planned for margins and boundaries, and a "crisis" comes along, I have much ability to ride the waves. One sLI student, Grace, a shelter manager, learned early on to make margin in her life by working ahead when there was a calm in the storm so the work would be caught up when the next "emergency" knocked on the door. It is the same concept that good money managers use when they establish an emergency fund in their home.

Jesus utilized margins and boundaries during His earth-life. Mark 6:31, where Jesus asks His disciples to come away with Him to rest awhile, is a great example of knowing when to back away from the demands of people around you. Have you noticed when Jesus healed people, He frequently gave them something to do following the healing rather than do it for them?

Am I driven by a love of God or by guilt? Am I very aware of how much God has accepted me, or am I needing to go buy acceptance from others because of how much I can do for them? Do I get some kind of feeling of importance by being too busy?

Is my perspective the same as the Lord's? How will the issue causing the stress right now affect eternity? Or even six months from now? Will it be catastrophic if the problem is not solved today? Is there perhaps some value in the delay we are experiencing in taking care of this matter now? God is very big on peace. Am I willing to sell out on peace just to push a stress-induced situation?

Being stretched is a good thing. A rubber band would be useless if not stretched. But it is also of no value when it has been overextended and breaks. Some stress is relieved when I develop good time-management skills. Here are a few of the challenges to becoming a good manager of time and some solutions to try:

Lack of focus – Name every hour of the day, with the priority of the hour, giving direction. Remove clutter around me that distracts from the project or person at hand. Identify a tangent quickly and get back on track.

Interruptions – Some interruptions are God's instructions but many are created because of the lack of time management of the person coming to interrupt. I have the opportunity again to help that person with boundaries as I set the time frame for working on the issue.

Procrastination – Develop the skill of finishing something every day. The perfectionist continues to leave the file open on a project because they know they could improve it. The problem is that every time I start back on a project, I spend the initial warm up time before ever getting to the project. Break the assignment down into smaller units and finish them.

Values – What do you think of when you hear the word “excess?” And what about the word “simplify?” Much of our willingness to keep stress to a healthy level has to do with my values. What is important to me?

When do I know that I am too busy?

- When I do not have time to be with the Lord on a daily basis.
- When I can't remember what I am supposed to be doing this hour.
- When I leave work remembering the promises I made that are left unfulfilled.
- When the deadlines control my sleep patterns.
- When my output exceeds the input.
- When I do not have time for God to direct me because I am so busy doing what I surmise He wants me to do.
- When there is no joy in serving.

## Philippians 4:6-7

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

## Chapter 9

# Integrity and Morals

This book addresses many of the skills needed to work with the homeless and the addicted persons God brings through the door of Rescue Missions. Skill is important. More important is the lifestyle of those who will be representing Him.

Christ-followers are called to walk in the light. Those who represent Him to others are called to live blameless. What does this mean, and how on earth do we comply? The short answer is only in God's strength. Your salvation is based on His work. Your success in walking with Him is in His strength.

“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord,  
continue to live your lives in Him.”

Colossians 2:6(NIV)

Living blameless means I am being careful to be who I am in Christ. The inside is forgiven and clean, and the outside reflects that. Jesus did not affirm the hypocrites as His representatives. According to *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, when David uses the Hebrew word for “blameless” in Psalm 15:2, he means with “nothing in his outward activities or internal disposition that is odious to God.” It may be odious to some humans but not to God.

Working in the Mission, you will soon be accosted with someone accusing you of anything and everything, starting with “You say you are a Christian.” Scripture does not guarantee that everyone will speak the truth about you. In fact, Jesus warned you in Matthew 5:11 that people will falsely say all kinds of evil against you because

of Him. Our job is to make sure it is because of Him and not because of our own ungodly behavior or speech.

Philippians 2:14-15 “Do all things without grumbling or disputing; so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world.”

Many of the Scriptures that talk about blamelessness include an instruction as you see in the Philippians passage above.

Grumbling is frequently mentioned in the Scriptures as something that is obviously displeasing to the Lord. Our absence of grumbling makes us stand out as quite different from the people around us. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 10:8-11, puts grumbling in a list of sins such as sexual immorality, sins from our ancestors that we need to learn to abhor.

Warning: When your life starts to count for Christ, the enemy starts to try to derail you.

1 Peter 5:8 (NIV) “Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”

James 4:7 (NIV) “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

Paul warns us in 2 Corinthians 2:11 to be aware of the schemes of the devil. Each of us has weak points and he is cunning in what area he chooses to attack us. One of those major areas is sexual immorality. There are specific ways you can beat the enemy at his own game. Remember, he is a deceiver and will try to minimize the outcomes of missteps (check out Eve’s testimony).

## Purity in the Workplace

Prevention is much easier than recovery. You may have great intentions, but work with clients who have been used to being detractors in lives of those who reach out to help them. Here are specific ways you can prevent suggestive issues:

Never talk, counsel, or assist a client of the opposite gender in a closed room. Leave the door open. Refer the client to another staff person of the same gender, work in teams, or talk in open spaces where there are others in observable range. If you have cameras in your building, take the person to the location where the camera is picking up on the action.

I have recommended that single staff members who have responsibilities with persons of the opposite gender wear a wedding band. If you are questioned about it, you can make some reference to a reminder of your relationship with Christ.

Use discretion in your apparel. Women should be discreet in not exposing any area that could be seen as a temptation either to clients or to other staff. This includes plunging necklines and suggestive clothing. We are commanded in several places to not be a stumbling block. We also must understand that our clients have learned to measure people's values by their choice of clothing.

1 Thessalonians 4:1-2 and 7-8 "Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more...For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification."

Titus 2:11-15 (NIV) "For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God

and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good.”

Integrity and morals also include personal habits like honesty. The mission worker must maintain a blameless level of honesty. Your witness to clients will be destroyed if you do not refrain from all lying. Early on in my work in Rescue, I asked God to help me to stop all lying in my life. For me, this was more than telling falsehoods. I needed to stop misrepresenting, manipulating, or misleading. God, in His kindness, gave me the plan that if and when I violated the truth, I would have to go back to the person involved and confess. That was over 30 years and 3 lies ago. You see, when I had to confess once to my boss, once to my co-worker, and once to a client, the cure was in. The cost exceeded the benefit. Accountability is vital in maintaining integrity.

Those who hear us identifying ourselves with Jesus watch us closely. Our speech must reflect Him. 2 Timothy 3:3 puts gossip and slander in the same context as murder, and Ephesians 5:3-4 puts crude joking in context with all impurity.

I highly recommend you take a self-analysis of character traits at <http://character-in-action.com/character-trait-definitions/>.

The author, Elizabeth Hamilton, has been involved in Rescue Mission work and has a wonderful site at [www.character-in-action.com](http://www.character-in-action.com).

So what can we do to avoid pitfalls in our character?

- Ephesians 5:4 Substitute thanksgiving.
- Philippians 4:8 Guard what you think about.
- Psalm 119:11 Memorize and meditate on God’s word.

Hebrews 12:1 (NIV) “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.”

## Chapter 10

# My Attitude Stinks

*(God, I have a bad attitude, please help me.)*

We get to daily witness the ugliness of bad attitudes in others. But what do I do when the BA is in my own self? When my perspective on everything seems negative? When grumbling is the main mental activity?

The result of such a day is a loss of joy and a gain in discouragement, even depression. The negativity breeds more negativity and soon I see the effect on those around me.

What can I do to stop the spiral of yuckiness? The old fable is if you get up on the wrong side of the bed, go back and get up on the other side. If you have tried that, it may seem practical but usually doesn't work.

What is a "bad attitude?" How does it get started? What feeds it?

One way of diagnosing a bad attitude is to evaluate your current outlook. If everything is being measured in a perspective of self-comfort, there will be days of misery. If the perception is one of entitlement, then earnings seldom match desire. If I am giving myself freedom to practice a critical spirit, the lens with which I view everything will be dark and quite scratched. If I am busy with comparison, I can quickly work up a negative attitude.

"Stinking thinking" has many connotations but for the person with some measure of sobriety, it is defined as a bad attitude. The definition of a bad attitude includes thinking that is completely self-focused and frequently results in a "pretty pronounced pity party."

Here are some starting thoughts that indicate you are on the steep decline into a bad-attitude day:

- I am busting my rear to help these folks and they are sure not grateful for all I do for them.
- No one seems to notice how hard I am working.
- Why should I spend all my time on this when no one cares?
- Here I am, working harder than anyone else. He's always taking time off, so what about me?
- They aren't doing their share of the work and I'm left holding the bag.
- Why can't people drive faster? They must be talking on their cell and not paying attention.
- Talk about inconsiderate! Can't they see I am in a hurry?
- Why did it have to rain today? It's my only time to be outside.
- That person is wasting God's money buying that expensive toilet paper.
- Why should I work my tail off when these people get everything they need without working?
- I am sick and tired of all the griping going on.

Once the negative thoughts begin, the poison seeps into the interactions and activities of the day. No wonder the Scripture gives the Christian specific instruction in this matter:

Philippians 4:8 (NIV) "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things."

Philippians 2:14 -15 (The Message) "Do everything readily and cheerfully – no bickering, no second-guessing allowed! Go out into the world uncorrupted, a breath of fresh air in this squalid and polluted society. Provide people with a glimpse of good living and of the living God."

Ever walk into a room and notice an unpleasant odor? What do you normally do? You investigate to see where it is coming from, you identify the issue, you wrap it up in an appropriate way, and you do away with it, to either the washing machine or the trash container. Bad attitudes stink. Find out where it is coming from and clean it up or discard it. It will not get any better if you leave it lying around.

Attitudes are like viruses. They spread easily. I can affect others around me by the attitude I am displaying. After all, we are ambassadors for the Most High God. Others are watching us continually. Since I cannot hide a bad attitude for very long, if at all, then I need to find ways to change it. Once I have begun to exemplify Jesus to the clients in my attitudes, then I will have better opportunity to see success in helping them with attitudinal adjustments!

### **The Patience of Ministry**

Unfortunately, I will not be the only one in the workplace that is challenged with an occasional bad attitude. I need a plan on how not to catch negativity from the clients or other staff. My best encouragement is to be a person willing to pray for the other person when I see them in the struggle.

Encouragement to a fellow staff member can come, NOT from being preachy or accusatory, but offering understanding. Try something like, “Sounds like you are really struggling with...” Pause for their answer. Then follow, NOT with getting in the gutter with them, but offering some short response like, “I’m sorry you are facing that today. I will be asking God for your deliverance.”

God has been long-suffering with me, so I can afford some tolerance for those He is asking me to serve. We will spend a whole chapter (15) on understanding clients and their attitudes. Remember to apply stuff to yourself before you decide to try it on someone else!

Sow a thought, and you reap an act;  
Sow an act, and you reap a habit;  
Sow a habit, and you reap a character;  
Sow a character, and you reap a destiny.

- Anonymous (1881)

## Chapter 11

# Using Failure Productively

The way we view failure will determine how we will use it in our lives. If we couch failure in shame and discouragement, we will not gain from it. If we choose to see it as an opportunity to find better solutions, we will profit. Dealing with failure productively is dependent on our attitude toward change. If change is a way of life for us, then we will find value in failure.

One of the great internal values of failure is humility; mistakes keep me humble. Mistakes make me improve in patience with others as I see my own inadequacies. Mistakes help me to be more flexible as I come to see ways to improve what I am doing.

The way to change failures into productive results includes these steps:

- a) Admission
- b) Evaluation
- c) Gratitude

The roadblocks to seeing positive results from failures are just the opposite:

- Blame-shifting
- Ignoring
- Resentment

Admission means I am willing to humble myself to admit I am not the all-knowing, all-perfect One. This puts me in the position to be able to learn from the mistake. Remember, one of the tricks of the enemy is to try to make you think you are equal to your Creator...a sure-fire way to get you defocused and tripped up. That is perhaps the easiest and quickest way to learn humility!

One important way to help clients make failure productive is to help them realize that mistakes are inevitable. This gives opportunity then to talk about the difference between humans and their Creator.

As you see in your clients every day, shame and guilt are rivals to productivity. Much shame and guilt comes from not dealing with failures correctly. Refer to chapter 23 to review this topic as needed. For the most part, your clients are risk-takers, perhaps because in many ways they see themselves as having little to lose. Not so in the area of making mistakes. Protecting their own reputation and what little self-concept they have, they cannot afford admitting to mistakes. Consequently, many find it difficult to try something they have previously failed to accomplish. Some are reluctant to attempt change that seems challenging.

Albert Einstein, the noted genius, made mistakes. There are even books written detailing his mistakes!

*A person who never made a mistake  
never tried anything new. - Albert Einstein*

Perhaps one of the most famous people to demonstrate productive failure was Thomas Edison. He is noted for making over 1000 workable inventions. His attitude about failure is worth noting.

*If I find 10,000 ways something won't work, I haven't failed. I am not discouraged, because every wrong attempt discarded is another step forward. - attributed to Thomas Edison*

**“For though the righteous fall seven times, they rise again,  
but the wicked stumble when calamity strikes.”**

**Proverbs 24:16(NIV)**

Evaluation of the failure begins by looking at the eternal consequence of the mistake. I can see some mistakes as laughable. (This applies only to my own mistakes!) Happy are the people who can laugh at themselves! When the mistake is a repeated error that affects other people, it is time for action. Evaluation allows me to determine if I need to take responsibility and make changes.

One of the major reasons humans do not want to face failure and the consequent need to change is a resistance to accountability. Sometimes success over repeated failure includes involving someone who will be honest with you as an accountability partner. This person can also be valuable as a source of feedback for opportunity for change.

When is a mistake more properly labeled as sin? Not all mistakes are sin, and not all sin should be passed off simply as a mistake. God is the One who judges what is sin and He has a way of convicting us through the Holy Spirit. We address sin with repentance and a request for forgiveness. We address our mistakes as opportunities to improve. The Holy Spirit will be happy to tell you if you are mislabeling sin as a mistake.

Gratitude is that step that seals the deal. When I can come to the place to express gratitude for learning from my errors, I will have found the path to productivity.

**“The steps of a man are established by the LORD,  
And He delights in his way.  
When he falls, he will not be hurled headlong,  
Because the LORD is the One who holds his hand.”  
Psalm 37:23-24**

## The Learning-from-Mistakes Checklist

- Scott Berkun, *Making Things Happen*

Accepting responsibility makes learning possible.

Don't equate making mistakes with being a mistake.

You can't change mistakes, but you can choose how to respond to them.

Growth starts when you can see room for improvement.

Work to understand why it happened and what the factors were.

What information could have avoided the mistake?

What small mistakes, in sequence, contributed to the bigger mistake?

Are there alternatives you should have considered but did not?

What kinds of change are required to avoid making this mistake again? What kinds of change are difficult for you?

How do you think your behavior should/would change if you were in a similar situation again?

Work to understand the mistake until you can make fun of it (or not want to kill others that make fun).

Don't over-compensate: the next situation won't be the same as the last.

(Printed with permission)

## Chapter 12

# Turning Frustration into Godly Challenge

Rescue Mission ministry provides a regular opportunity for frustration! Those who wish to stay the course must figure out how to utilize frustration in a positive way. As humans, we have the ability to have expectations of people and places, and often those expectations, when not met, result in an opportunity for frustration.

One of the first ways I work through my frustrations is humbly remembering how frustrated God could be with me. Do you ever wonder what His expectations might be of you and the ministry He has given you? Our calling is not to do our own work, but His. He has the great advantage of seeing ahead and knowing what advantage might come from the disappointments of the day. His perspective seems always to be one of change and growth for His representatives. The starting point to conquer pitfalls of frustration is to see things from God's perspective. What might He want to be accomplishing in me, or others, as we deal with the frustration?

Consider Jesus and the times when He showed frustration. He desired more of those around Him. Sometimes He allowed His frustration to turn into righteous anger when He saw obvious rebellious sin (Mark 11:15). We will experience frustration and righteous anger when those we have been working with seem to take detours. Can we experience frustration and still love? Do we use our momentary frustration to address needed change?

At times, frustration can be born out of a wrong sense of the value of experiencing failure. If I am afraid of failure for myself, it is hard to let others fail for the benefit of their own growth. If I am frustrated because of my many failures, perhaps I should begin to

appreciate that failures merely send me in another direction that could lead to success. This might allow me then to also see others' failures as an opportunity for redirection.

Another source of frustration comes when I look to other things or people instead of God as the source of accomplishment. I am trying to do things in my own strength (Psalm 127:1a) or the strength of others (Psalm 20:7,8).

*“And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God” (2 Corinthians 3:4,5 (KJV)).*

Frustration can be an indication that I am moving into a prideful thought pattern. I might think I could do something better than the others around me. Although that may be true, I must be careful to allow others to learn their own way.

My frustration may often be linked to my own desire to be in control. Coming to terms with the fact that I cannot control other people or circumstances, allows me to move toward that faith-building lifestyle of dependence on God. It is hard to stay frustrated when we know that God is in control and is doing what is best for us.

One very difficult challenge is when a client you have been working with messes up. The temptation to make a client's failure my own is too often front and center. Steve Burger, well known for his years of working in Rescue Ministry and leading the International Union of Gospel Missions, shares this encouragement:

“When a client fails, we look at what we may not have done or what we feel we should have done. But we do not “wear it.” We will always make some mistakes. Remember, everything you do, you do unto Jesus. Take it to Him and leave it there. The sun always comes up tomorrow! Keep that in mind when everything is seemingly going wrong!” - Steve Burger

*One definition of frustration is  
“A feeling of disappointment or defeat at  
being unable to accomplish one's purpose.”*

When should I be frustrated? To whatever degree frustration causes discontent in my soul regarding lack of growth in me or in another, there can be motivation to correct the situation.

Hopefully, frustration leads me to action. Sometimes that action is prayer. What must not be the result is impulsive reaction. Am I looking at the desired outcome or just focusing on the obstacles?

Romans 8:25 “But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.”

2 Peter 1:6 (A list of qualities that we want but cannot achieve on our own...Let the Lord do this through you...in His way and in His time).

Galatians 6:9 “Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.”

- G** Give Everything to God.
- E** Earnestly Seek His Wisdom.
- T** Train Yourself to Apply His Wisdom.
  
- R** Recognize the Emotion in You.
- E** Evaluate the Emotion: Am I justified or is it a selfish emotion?
- A** Address It: Deal with Self, Others, or Things in a Godly Way.
- L** Leave It: Once the problem has been corrected, it is done. It does not need to be emotionally brought up anymore.

*- Cord Cochran*

**Part II**

**Serving the**

**Client**



Chapter 13

## Applying Grace with Truth and Justice with Mercy



If you read only one chapter of this book and you intend to minister in a Rescue Mission, please consider this the one to read and heed. We wrestle with the balance in ministry between tough and gentle. Is it enough to serve a man compassionately? Is it more important to preach to him than to show him respect? Is it okay to leave the justice and truth thing to someone else and just let me show tolerance? We know we have a responsibility to dispense food, shelter, and safety...meeting physical needs. Whose job is it to dispense grace, truth, love, compassion?

A truth-based ministry would look like...Jail? Legalism? No hope?  
Condemnation?

A grace-based ministry would look like...No accountability?  
No responsibility? No change?

How do we get a balance? I used to think it was just by making sure we had staff gifted in either mercy or justice working side by

side...but that can produce disunity, criticalness, disgust; all things that clients pick up on quickly.

Some staff are gifted in mercy, some in exhortation, but all are to speak the truth in love. All are not to lead people astray; all are themselves recipients of mercy and justice. Jesus took me where He found me (Grace) and cared enough not to leave me there (Truth).

Isaiah 30:18 (NIV) “Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you; therefore He will rise up to show you compassion. For the LORD is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for Him!”

Let’s get some definitions in place so we are all on the same page: Grace is what a person needs...to cover what they can’t do. Mercy is what a person needs...to cover what they have done.

Without truth and justice, there is no need for mercy and grace. Without mercy and grace, there is no impact for truth and justice.

Jesus is our example in all things. He not only had the balance in this area, He was FULL of grace and truth.

John 1:14 “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”

John 1:16-17 “For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.”

John 14:6 “Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life.’”

I am very indebted to Randy Alcorn for his willingness to teach all of us through his God-given wisdom and writings. Here are some excerpts from his book *The Grace and Truth Paradox, Responding with Christlike Balance*:

“Without truth, we lack courage to speak and convictions to speak about. Without grace, we lack compassion to meet people’s deepest needs” (p. 72).

“Unfortunately, many nonbelievers know only two kinds of Christians; those who speak the truth without grace and those who are very nice but never share the truth. What they need to see is a third type of Christian—one who, in a spirit of grace, loves them enough to tell them the truth” (p. 77).

“If we minimize grace, the world sees no hope for salvation. If we minimize truth, the world sees no need for salvation. To show the world Jesus, we must offer unabridged grace and truth, emphasizing both, apologizing for neither” (p. 87).

### **Achieving Balance**

Grace and truth are not only compatible, they are interdependent. If we practice one without the other, we will find ourselves having no long-lasting impact. Most people, when they arrive on the job at a Rescue Mission, come with a strong inclination toward one or the other. It has been my observation over the years that most experience a swing in their actions. Those who come believing that all the client needs is a little love and affirmation, come to realize their plan is not working. Those who come with a strong sense of justice begin to observe that they cannot get through to the client like some of the other staff who employ gentleness. When the pendulum stops swinging, the staff person must come to the realization that both are necessary.

### **The Questions that Plague Us**

- ❖ Whose job is it to dispense mercy, justice, grace, truth?

Proverbs 3:3-4 “Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good repute in the sight of God and man.”

❖ Where does accountability fit?

We are responsible to observe when someone is heading into sin but must watch the manner in which we go to them. “Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted” (Galatians 6:1).

Exhorting and comforting should work together in our approach with people. “Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing” (1Thessalonians 5:11).

Most translations of Proverbs 27:17 put sharpening in the context of friendship. “Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend” (KJV).

Accountability means there is more than one person in the equation. Are you willing to partner with your clients in accountability and help them see the value in this? “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (NIV)).

❖ Is there a place for tolerance?

The truth is, I need to hate sin, but grace means I need to love the sinner. Let’s reword that sentence. The truth is, I need to hate sin, *and* grace means I need to love the sinner. *Both* hating sin and loving the sinner are required. And be careful when you use the word “tolerance.” Tolerance means many different things to today’s world.

❖ How do we preserve the unity of the Spirit?

Please note that you are not being told to develop the unity but to preserve it. Letting God be in control of our responses to others will afford us a consistent atmosphere of unity. Appreciating each other’s gifts as we minister together allows us to utilize all that God

is providing in working with each individual client. Many come to the ministry of Rescue with different spiritual giftings. The most common are Mercy, Exhortation, Truth-telling, and Helps. The ministry is enhanced when God gives a variation of giftings within the staff and when we appreciate each other's involvement.

❖ Why do we have problems with this balance?

I know of only two reasons. The first is education. This is why I claim that this chapter is so important. Many have not thought through how Jesus was able to do what He was called to do while still maintaining the godly balance. He did it because He was FULL of both truth and grace and I must ask Him to help me model after Him in this matter each day. The second is commitment. This is what I am called to do. This is what I will do.

❖ What can we do to improve personally and corporately?

I suggest the answer is based in prayer. The Colossian church found the balance when they heard truth and understood God's grace.

Colossians 1:3-6(NIV) "We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people—the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace."

2 Corinthians 3:4-5

“Such confidence we  
have through Christ  
toward God.

Not that we are  
adequate in  
ourselves to consider  
anything as coming  
from ourselves,  
but our adequacy is  
from God.”

## Chapter 14

# Turning Everyday Happenings into Opportunities for the Gospel

*1 Thessalonians 2:4 "But just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts."*

Most Rescue Missions share the Gospel in chapel sessions. For many missions, this is perhaps the most ineffective way to present the Good News. People get inoculations to prevent catching something. Repeated preaching without relationship, for some clients who have heard it over and over, becomes an inoculation that prevents them from connecting with the Savior. Think about your own path to salvation. Was there more than a presentation from a pulpit that led you to the decision to give your life to the Lord? There are many opportunities in everyday life to awaken the client to truth. This is not to suggest that we discontinue chapel services but perhaps there are ways of improving the chapel service to be more effective.

Jesus had a way of meeting people where they were when they encountered Him. When He fed them, He talked about the Bread of Life. When He sought a drink of water, He connected it to Living Water.

Although the chapel service will last 30 minutes, your interaction with the client is much longer. How do you turn everyday conversations to an opportunity to share the good news? Your client is trapped in the here and now. How do you relate what is happening to what could happen? Conversations are happening all the time. Can you turn them to what will count for eternity? Here are some samples:

Client: "I got so lost today trying to find my way around town."

Staff: "Being lost is a frightful feeling. You feel so helpless. Some people will not choose to ask for directions, and sometimes you get wrong directions, which makes the situation even worse. I am glad you found your way back here and I am glad you are in a place where we will be talking about being lost in a much bigger way, being lost in knowing your way to the eternal home. Are you on your way to Heaven?"

Client: "I hate taking out the trash here at the shelter."

Staff: "Yes, trash is yucky. It reminds me of how much God has done in my life to remove the yuck. I am sure glad I do not have to carry that load around. No trash bag is big enough or strong enough for it. Have you taken your personal trash to God lately?"

Client: "I feel so all alone, like I am in a room apart from everything and everyone."

Staff: "Jesus was talking to some people one day who felt like that. He said to them, 'I am the door,' and then told them what blessings were awaiting them on the other side if they would go through The Door (John 10:9). Do you understand what He is offering you?"

Client is sitting mashing an empty used Styrofoam cup.

Staff: "I see you are really through with that Styrofoam cup! We never really care about the cup; we just want what is in it. It is only as valuable as its contents. Did you know the Bible talks about Styrofoam cups? In those days, the disposables were clay pots. The Bible says the treasure that is in us is what is valuable in God's eyes" (2 Corinthians 4:7).

Client: “When do we eat again?”

Staff: “Are you quoting Scripture now!?! In John 6:26-27, people wanted Jesus to feed them again, and He challenged them that they needed to be looking for the food that never spoils, that lasts for eternity. Do you know what He was talking about?”

Client: “My kids don’t love me – they treat me rotten.”

Staff: “I know Someone who can relate with you on that. He is right here and available for you to talk with. He has done everything for His kids, and sometimes they still act as if they are spitting in His face. Would you like to talk to Him?”

Client: “I am always watching out that someone is going to rip me off.”

Staff: “Wow! Did you know there is a verse in the Bible written directly for you? John 10:10 says that once you have what is most valuable, no one can take it away from you.”

Client: “I am so mad. I can’t go to church this morning. Look at the awful stain I have on this dress where Mary spilt coffee on me.”

Staff: “I am sure if you go today, you will hear about the greatest stain remover available. Jeremiah 2:22 describes how bad the stain is, and I Corinthians 6:11 says how the Lord has removed it.”

Client: “Why are you bossing me around like you think you’re in charge of me?”

Staff: “I am sorry I have given you that impression. You are definitely in charge of yourself. Sometimes I get overzealous in wanting to protect you from yourself. I want you to make the right choices to maintain your status here. That’s the way God works with me. He gives me choices but offers me protection against

moving in wrong directions. Let's talk about that later today if you want."

Client: "I am labeled as homeless and I do wish I had my own place. But since I've been here at the mission, it feels like home."

Staff: "I am glad. Jesus really knows how you feel. Scripture says He left His home (John 16:28; 1 John 4:9-10) to come to this earth-place. He became homeless to pay the price so we could have a home with Him forever in Heaven. Comparing the home Jesus left to the homelessness He experienced on earth, we know He certainly loved us. The Bible says there was a time when He did not have a place to lay His head, and He started out His earth-life in a barn."

*"THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE **GOSPEL** TO THE POOR."*

-Jesus (Luke 4:18)

Jesus knew His job description and He did it. Then He turned around and assigned us the job to keep doing it. How blessed we are to have daily opportunities.

*"Every job, every assignment is spiritual. You are an evangelist whether you are cleaning, answering the phone, or driving a truck. I had more personal ministry driving the mission truck than I had as the Executive Director."*

*- Steve Burger*

## Chapter 15

# Understanding the Client

Who is the person we are called to serve? How do we see that person? How do we describe or define that person? How do we think God sees them? How do we compare or contrast them with how we see ourselves? Your answers to these questions are key to your potential for future ministry.

We will begin the discussion with a definition of “homeless.” You may be surprised to learn of the variety of definitions of this word. The government has defined homeless as people without a permanent dwelling, or people without fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and includes living in a place “not meant for human habitation, in emergency shelter, in transitional housing, or are exiting an institution where they temporarily resided.” Previous definitions, no longer used, include “those who do not have an address,” “persons without a home,” or “displaced persons.” Although we have to have some knowledge of the legal definitions in order to help our clients access government assistance, the sense of homelessness goes much deeper in the minds and hearts of those we serve.

Our own understanding will affect how we advocate for our clients with donors and the general public. Some common descriptions would include:

- Those down on their luck
- Society’s broken people
- Persons lacking a support system
- People who have lost their home
- Victims
- Irresponsible, addicted people

- Persons who do not pay for their own housing
- Persons with no usual residence who move frequently
- Vagabonds
- People without a regular dwelling

Here is a collection of answers I have received from staff from various Rescue Missions when I asked them to give characteristics of the people they work with at their Mission. Please note how their approach to a client might differ depending on the label they might give them:

- Hopeless
- Beaten down
- Low social skills
- Frightened
- Defeated
- Lots of regrets
- Impulsive
- Rebellious
- Manipulative
- Untrained
- Helpless
- Addicted
- Unloved
- Low academic skill
- Victims of abuse
- Option blind
- Liars
- Self-protective
- Had poor role models
- Adaptive
- Survivors

How we see others affects how we respond to them. Consider these ways:

- People who need a relationship with Jesus
- People who need another opportunity
- People who need to see truth
- People who need healing
- People who need redirection

How do you develop an understanding of each client you are called to serve? When we clump everyone together with the same diagnosis, we are fooling ourselves and limiting our ministry. The only way we come to an understanding of our clients is to engage them in conversation, asking the right questions to find out the

how and the why of their current situation and their desire for change. It could be that most have some similar characteristics, like a sense of hopelessness or option-blindness, but there is a huge variety of experiences and abilities.

What can you do to maintain a right response to individuals? Remember, your source of strength to do your job comes from the Lord, so does it not make sense that your best response to each person could also come from the Lord? The source of grace, mercy, patience, and love, is the Lord. We just have to know where to get a fresh supply every day. Early in my time at the Mission, I learned to rely on Romans 15:13, "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

How do you keep from lumping everyone together and labeling them? What is going on when it seems that everyone has the same problem? We need to face the fact that we are human, and as we minister to others, we can get caught up in human deficiency. When, (not "if"), you begin to see everyone with the same issue, it is time to back off and take some time off. I once found myself getting engrossed in the study of what was labeled as "Borderline Personality," and soon I began to see everyone having this disorder! When we label people, we stop trying to understand them as unique creations. When you find yourself in the labeling mood, ask the Lord how He sees this person and take your direction from Him. After all, He has known this person a lot longer than you have!

How the staff views the clients makes a major difference in the effectiveness of what we can do. Here are some sample ways:

1. Clients are not to be trusted. They are masters at the art of deception and manipulation and are expected to be dishonest.
2. Clients are ignorant and somewhat slow to understand and grasp knowledge.

3. All clients are eager for someone to take care of them and do their work for them.
4. Clients are conniving and will usually be double-faced.

**OR**

5. Clients are people who have had a difficult time and need a break.
6. Clients have great ability that has not been tapped because of lack of mentoring.
7. Clients are God's creation and He may be specifically sending them to us for His purpose.
8. Clients are people who have not learned to utilize their choice-making for good.

How should I view clients in order to make the greatest impact on their lives?

I am not sure if you can ever know how your client feels unless you have experienced homelessness. It would certainly help if you could understand. There is wonderful, good news available to your client who is feeling hopeless and helpless. There are great verses in the Scriptures that address our sense of being "at home" with the Lord. By the way, Jesus would have been categorized as homeless, with no place to lay His head...what do you make of that?

One more consideration for pondering: you are in transitional living yourself...your home is in heaven. How does that affect your daily earthly life?

*"The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water,  
but a man of understanding will draw it out."*

Proverbs 20:5 (ESV)

## Chapter 16

# Respecting the Client

Why is a Rescue Mission different from other organizations that are helping the poor and homeless? One difference is the privilege we have of basic core beliefs that influence our approach to clients. For instance, we know the origin of human beings. We know that God, in His infinite wisdom, decided one day (the 6<sup>th</sup> day of creation) to add a creation that was special and unique. “Let Us make man in Our own image.” And so it was. Over 6000 years later (we don’t need to waste time debating how much over), we are challenged with how we treat this magnificent creation of the Almighty. When we meet the person coming to our door because he or she, or someone in their life, made a mess of the creation God designed, do we greet this person with more compassionate respect than we are prone to give the fallen robin struggling in our back yard to fly to safety?

When we sit with those individuals and recognize that they are living only partially what God wants in their lives, the only respectful position for God’s wondrous works is to give of ourselves to help them become all that God desires of their lives.

With these two basic tenets, respecting all humans because our Creator God made them, and because He spent Himself to give them an opportunity to live full and honoring lives in Him, we proceed to practice respectful behavior toward each one. To begin with, that looks like respecting their image-bearing attributes even when they are not respecting themselves. Many homeless clients have mislaid their function of healthy choice-making. Respect in

working with clients begins by protecting their choice-making responsibility. The more decisions I make for the client, the less choice-making the client exercises. Respect means I will point out options and discuss opportunities.

Respect also means I will point out responsibilities and consequences. As a partner working with the client to help that person achieve goals for which we can both be excited, I do not take over those responsibilities given to the individual by the Creator God.

Respect involves treating others as I desire to be treated. It is not difficult to figure out what feels like respectful behavior from a client. So why should it be hard to figure out what are respectful actions toward the client. Have you tried addressing clients by the title of Mr. or sticking out your hand to give them a handshake when you meet them?



Simple courtesies like being on time, keeping appointments, communication if cancellations are necessary, apology if commitments are not completed, keeping expectations realistic, speaking kind words in a business voice, not demeaning in words, voice, or actions, and recognizing the person's presence wherever the encounter...all are ways to show respect.

A major issue in respect is the understanding of the perspective of the other person. We have a responsibility to encourage each client to grow in respect of others. If they do not show respect to others, we cannot assume that they receive our respectful actions as respectful. A wonderful way to encourage a client to grow in respect is to ask what feels respectful to them. This gives the staff person some insight in how to be the healthiest partner with that client as well as talking points in how to encourage personal growth.

Would it surprise you to know that clients feel respect in different ways? I learned this totally by experience. I approached a client who had been telling everyone that I disliked her and I asked her why she thought that? Her answer changed my actions for the following decades. She felt disrespected because I did not speak to her in the hallways when we passed. You see, I was always in a hurry to solve the next problem and walked rapidly with my head to the ground so I did not get distracted or stumble. We might be amazed to find out how easy it is to show respect. I have since found it also useful to ask people if they felt respected by me, “Do you know I respect you?”

In Chapter 33, we discuss best practices for giving instructions. Expecting response and effort from a person without making sure they have the tools to complete the assignment is disrespectful. God never tells me to do something without giving me the necessary resources to do what He asks. To give instruction without knowing that the instruction is understandable, puts the client into an impossible position of being set up for failure. This wastes a lot of time and is intimidating. Such behavior on our part stinks of control issues.

Selling a client short by going for only a quick fix to large problems is also a disrespectful behavior. Getting a job or getting housing may be a bubblegum approach to fixing a badly-leaking pipe...when we can make the resources available to do the plumbing. What clients say they want may just not be all they need. Are we ready and able to try to challenge them to see the bigger picture? Do we, as staff, see the bigger picture?

Doing for a person what they can do for themselves is another demeaning action unless it is a compassionate gift of encouragement and labeled that way. Such over-care is also disrespectful by keeping the client, created in the image of God, dependent on another human being for basic assistance. For

instance, making out a goal sheet for a client because it is easier than assisting them to think through needed changes for the future makes a false statement that they cannot think for themselves.

Opportunities to respect the client permeate the entire practice of our calling. Every task includes some of these opportunities. For example, the reason that we insist that intake forms do not ask for more information than we are actually going to use is a matter of respect. Giving realistic requirements for job-hunting or house-searching is a matter of respect. Finding out health needs and making appropriate referrals is a matter of respect.

Respect begins with the inner thinking of the staff person. Listen to yourself about how you refer to clients. Working with a few difficult persons often can cause us to begin thinking negatively about all persons coming for assistance. We cannot afford to engage in such labeling. Seeing the person as God sees them will take us a long way in being able to assist them through respectful encounters.



“Show  
proper  
respect to  
everyone.”

1 Peter 2:17 (NIV)

## Chapter 17

# Creating a Motivational Atmosphere

We could have named this chapter “Promoting Change.” We could not have named it “Motivating People.” We cannot motivate other people. Motivation is from within. We work with many who are fresh out of motivation and we wish we could inspire them. What we can do and must do is create an atmosphere that encourages change.

We could use a number of techniques that would cause a person to make temporary changes. Anyone can change for a short time. Anyone can coerce or bully others into change as long as they are around. How do we best facilitate change for the long-term?

### **Other Needed Changes in Perspective**

Before you will become proficient at helping others become motivated to change, I suggest there are some other perspectives about change that we need to discuss.

You have clients who can't make up their mind if they want to change. Some of them go back and forth on major decisions until you are tempted to be exasperated. It's called being ambivalent. Ambivalence is normal - get used to it. It is not wrong. It is actually part of good decision-making. You do it all the time as you work though direction. You probably even talk to yourself as you are arguing your position. The problem comes if you cannot get past it. That is where the skill of providing a motivational atmosphere comes in.

A second perspective check we need to make is to investigate how you view resistance. Are you put off when someone resists your

advice or your instruction? Wait until you get to the chapter on compliance! Resistance can actually give us great insight. When you permit resistance to surface in the conversation, you begin to identify what the issues are that are influencing the problem, and you have a greater sense of what needs work. See chapter 24 for more on this.

### **What Is the Stuck Point?**

Every client is different and comes with a different background. The reason for a lack of motivation to change is also varied. You would help yourself if you spent some time determining if there are special situational pressures that have left this person unmotivated. Here are some possibilities:

- Fatigue – lack of physical energy
- No hope – lack of spiritual energy
- Grief – dealing with loss
- Control issues
- Recent experiences of defeat and the risk of failure
- Lack of education in option development
- Disorganization
- Barriers of shame and guilt

Each of these represents areas for which we are uniquely resourced to give assistance. We are privileged in ministry to have the wisdom of the ages in the Word of God. Some years back we established a morning class for clients entitled “Stuck Points,” and took one area a week to talk about how to identify the Stuck Point and what to do to get beyond it.



**Don't get caught in a Stuck Point!**

## Criteria for Change

For most people, the benefit of change must outweigh the consequences of no change. This is how I help a person get past ambivalence. I ask five questions in this order:

1. What is the change you are considering?
2. What are the benefits of not changing?
3. What are the benefits of changing?
4. What is the cost of changing?
5. What is the cost of not changing?

As I ask these questions, I do not give my own answers. I am letting the person talk themselves into making the change. If I begin to give my answers, then I am encouraging an argument with me. I want instead to lead people in their arguments with their own thinking. I have been most successful in these conversations when I have been comfortable with humor and absurdity. Somehow letting people laugh at their own answers helps them to move to thinking that is more serious.

Dr. Phil has popularized a great question to ask people when they are stuck in their faulty decision-making with the now-famous, "How's that working for you?" He broadened his question to, "Are you getting what you really want and need?"

## Creating the Atmosphere for Change

People are most likely to move toward change if they:

- ❖ See that their action gets them something they really want
- ❖ See that their inaction will bring them something they dread
- ❖ Find a source for replacing doubt with confidence
- ❖ Hurt enough to move away from procrastination and complacency
- ❖ Find a sense of purpose for their lives

## **What Role Do I Have?**

Since motivation is dependent on the intrinsic, how do we influence the person? Think about what motivates you. Think about what steals your motivation. In your own humanness, you get a picture of how the rest of the world lives. Your own testimony of motivation or lack thereof is often a helpful starting point with the client.

In looking at the issues raised above, seriously consider what you have in your biblical pouch that can give hope to clients dealing with their fear of change. Motivation is closely connected with hope, and you know the Good News of where a person finds hope. You also know that, for most of your clients, their hope bucket has been depleted because they have used up all the false hope the world provided.

## **One Method that Works Best**

Since lasting change begins from the inside out, we need to stop applying Band-Aids on the outside. Dale Carnegie quotes an old proverb, "A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still." We need to learn the skill of engaging and connecting. We start with a commitment to come alongside of the client, not pushing, pulling, or jerking, but being willing to walk alongside.

We need to help people talk themselves into changing. When people wrestle with a decision and come to their own conclusion, they are much more likely to retain this belief as a conviction and act on it. If they only give lip service to change because they believe that is what you want them to do, they will change only as long as you are around.

As we engage with clients, we must partner with them in their change process. Their feeling alone in the process promotes discouragement. Their feeling secondary in the process kills determination. Partnering means walking side-by-side. Clients must decide what the goal is, but I am able to help make that a

realistic and godly decision. Change is possible when clients experience acceptance, confidence, and self-responsibility. I have a role in facilitating all three.

For this to work, I don't argue or play guru. I seek to clarify where needed and reinforce where appropriate. I confront by asking questions. I offer new perspectives as choices and options.

There will be no motivation if there is no hope. Be strong on hope, making sure to base that hope in reality. You may have to lend clients your hope until they learn where to get their own fresh supply.

“May the God of hope fill you  
with all joy and peace  
as you trust in Him  
so that you may overflow with hope  
by the power of the Holy Spirit.”  
Romans 15:13 (NIV)

“And let us  
consider how  
we may spur  
one another on  
toward love and  
good deeds.”

Hebrews 10:24(NIV)

## Chapter 18

# Dealing with Difficult Clients

The starting point is to delete this terminology from our vocabulary! How do you define a difficult person? Most of us use this term to describe someone we find challenging. We all have plenty of experience “dealing” with those we call difficult. Let’s narrow the field a little for the sake of ministry. Here are some characteristics we often would label as difficult:



- Defensive
- Bent on making strife
- Insulting
- Uncooperative
- Agitated

Examine your typical analysis of a difficult client. Much of your success in reaching this person depends on how you see them. What box do you put them in?

Out to get me

Mental case

Scum of the earth

Impossible

How you view the person greatly affects how you will relate to that person. Are you really in need of suggestions of how to “deal” with them or do we need to figure out how to minister to them? What was Jesus’ training on this?

Matthew 5:43-48 (NKJV) “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, ‘Love your enemies, bless those who curse

you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.’ For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more *than others?*”

We could say that seems impossible, but we can easily see that Jesus practiced what He preached. Think of all the difficult people in His life!

Often it would seem that the difficult clients bother us because they distract us from getting the job done. So what do we think our “job” is? Sometimes their actions seem so disrespectful. And we have to admit that they seem to wear us out.

Rather than look at these folks as difficult, let’s discuss clients who are exhibiting a difficult attitude. Rather than labeling them in such a way that we excuse ourselves from reaching out, let’s look at difficult attitudes that can be addressed. Here are a few:

1. self-righteous
2. impatient
3. fault-finding
4. self-focused
5. cynical



Next we look at the possible conditions of the client who is exhibiting the difficult attitude. Compassion comes when we see his or her need and know we can do something about it. Many times the client:

- Feels threatened?
- Is disappointed?
- Has a good dose of entitlement thinking?
- Is immature in actions, thinking, communication skills?
- Has unrealistic expectations of self or others?

What can we do about any of these? How do we redirect folks to

give them a better chance of success? As we have concluded many times, you cannot teach what you do not model. I remember struggling one day to find a way to be thankful for a particularly difficult client. This person pestered me many times a day with little attention-getting questions. The conversation with the Lord ended up something like, “Thank you for providing another opportunity to acquire patience!”

Along with mentoring and providing a living example, some of the needs that we can address in the right setting, through counseling or life-skill classes, include:

- ❖ Spiritual bankruptcy
- ❖ No reality-thinking
- ❖ Lack of gratitude
- ❖ No confidence
- ❖ Lack of positive response to life's challenges
- ❖ No past modeling or mentoring, no training

### **Guidelines for Working with Difficult Clients**

1. Put problem-people in perspective. Don't take their speech and actions personally. Be ready to consider the cause for their current mixed-up thinking.
2. Learn to listen. Then be ready to respond in an assertive way. Don't expect the client to read your mind. “The one who has knowledge uses words with restraint, and whoever has understanding is even-tempered” (Proverbs 17:27(NIV)).
3. Sometimes you ignore outbursts: “Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you yourself will be just like him” (Proverbs 26:4(NIV)). However, sometimes you reprove to keep them from progressing in their foolishness: “Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes” (Proverbs 26:5 (NIV)).
4. Keep boundaries in a healthy way. “Do not make friends with a hot-tempered person, do not associate with one easily angered” (Proverbs 22:24(NIV)).

5. Let the client know when you're annoyed, upset or disappointed, but give this information in a dispassionate matter-of-fact way. You are training them that emotions are normal and can be expressed in a healthy way.
6. If you are more than irritated, go somewhere to cool off. Explain you are taking an adult time-out. You can't concentrate on constructive, creative alternatives while you're wrestling with anger. "The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and pay the penalty" (Proverbs 22:3 (NIV)).
7. Give and request frequent feedback. Don't stew over what a client may be thinking. Ask: "You seem really teed off, what's going on?"
8. Know the applicable policies. No matter how angry you may be with someone's behavior, don't say or do anything until you know you're on safe ground policy-wise.
9. Deal directly and discreetly. Choose face-to-face talks in private to discuss a client's attitude or behavior.
10. Always document. Keep a record of all communications to prevent lies or faulty recollections from taking over later. The next shift will be interacting with this person.
11. Be straightforward. The more you remain matter-of-fact, the less you encourage a client to play games.
12. Be gracious. Someone's rudeness doesn't give you the right to respond in kind.

Perhaps the best advice for this responsibility is Philippians 2:3 (NIV), "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves."

After all, we know Scripture makes the promise in Proverbs 16:7, "When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him."

## Engaging the Disengaged

One of the challenges of Rescue Ministry is how to keep working with disengaged clients. These clients seem to have no purpose, no sense of capability or personal responsibility, no energy and no ambition. Day after day, their behavior indicates no initiative, no



drive, and little to no interest in what is going on or in their own future.

They are just making it from week to week, always playing catch-up.

There seems to be a genuine effort to avoid. Overall, it seems they have checked out of life. They are disengaged.

We could perhaps define disengagement as a loss of function. There are potential medical, mental, and emotional reasons for what we may be observing in the disengaged client and we would need to address those appropriately. In this chapter we will talk about the client who does not have a medical or mental diagnosis and has caught our attention as the person who shows no desire to connect.

What causes disengagement? Here are at least three causes, all ones we can and must address:

### 1. Truth shortage

- Option blindness
- Believing lies
- Disconnected from the Power Source

### 2. Belief damage

- Mindset
- Training
- Impaired sense of worth

### 3. Shame buildup

- Inherited
- Unforgiven, unforgotten past
- Misplaced blame

How do we intervene? We must first discern the cause in order to determine the intervention. Each of the above causes would require different intervention. See chapters 3, 13, and 23 for ideas.

We have been given specific instruction in Scripture of how to respond to the variety of people God sends our way:

*“And we urge you, brothers and sisters,  
warn those who are idle and disruptive,  
encourage the disheartened,  
help the weak, be patient with everyone.”*  
1 Thessalonians 5:14 (NIV)

There is no room for shame-talk as we connect with clients. That means their internal talk, the conversation allowed around them, and especially words from your mouth. Shame-talk multiplies the negative thinking. There is great need for grace and truth talk. I make no assumptions and I do not judge. Perhaps the best plan is to review these Scriptures for your own encouragement and how you would exhort the client. Remember, truth sets people free.

#### **A scriptural discussion with a discouraged client:**

Do you know where we get hope according to the Bible? Romans 5:3-4

What is special about this kind of hope? Romans 5:5

What are some things you could be hoping for right now? Ephesians 1:18; Psalm 33:18-19

Real hope means we are eagerly doing what? Romans 8:25

What does God promise? Jeremiah 29:11

What should we be fixing our hope on? 1 Peter 1:13

## Chapter 20

# Use of Word Pictures in Ministry

What is a word picture? I found one definition you do not want to write down...here it is: "An analogical representation of a digital description of factual information." Gary Smalley believes it is "a communication tool that uses a story or object to activate simultaneously the emotions and intellect of a person. In so doing, it causes the person to experience our words, not just hear them." It is Ephesians 1:18(NIV) in reality. In that verse, Paul says, "I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you."

Word pictures are an opportunity to open the heart's eyes to truth that transforms. Jesus spoke in parables so that some would not understand, but many of the word pictures of the Scripture allow us to go deeper than the mere language. Scriptural examples include: sheep going astray, the sharpness of a two-edged sword, and a farmer waiting for the harvest.

What do you remember best from messages you have heard over the years? If "One picture is worth a thousand words," imagine what one word picture will do for you! Not only do word pictures deepen understanding, but they afford the opportunity to lock truth in our memories. Why do you suppose the 23rd Psalm is so frequently memorized?

Jesus utilized word pictures in both teaching His disciples and in speaking to the multitudes. Many people can understand spiritual truths when they are presented in visible ways.

Who can profit from word pictures? The person to whom they relate and for whom they fit will profit most. I thought I learned the art of word pictures so I could communicate more effectively with my husband. That's because Gary Smalley said they would get through to men! Well, they do, but they also get through even more powerfully to women.

Only once in my mission work did the use of word pictures backfire on me. Many years ago, I was teaching a Bible Class of women from the community that came to the mission every Tuesday morning. I was really giving my heart and soul to this teaching that morning, working on the tough concept that when we have hidden things from our past, clouding up our thinking, we need to get rid of them. I used the word picture of my messy attic, full of things from the past that were worthless and only took up time and space, things no one else could profit from, and things that invited squirrels to make nests. This attic slowed me down because it stole time away from the more important things in life. On and on I went. It was a great class! I closed in prayer believing I had really succeeded this day in getting my point across. Neva came up to me after class and said, "Thank you for that class. That's what my attic looks like too, and I'm going to go right home and clean it!" She got the picture but not the analogy. Chalk that one up, but I can tell you about some of the 550 times it has worked! Just use caution if the person you are sharing with is a strictly concrete thinker and cannot get below the surface of the conversation.

One thing you must have to make an effective word picture is knowledge of the interests of your audience. I talked with an oncologist friend of mine about the topic and he started telling me word pictures he uses with his patients. They were great word pictures. However, I will not share them here. They were designed for people fighting cancer. Find out what your audience can relate to and what they care about.

Some of the word pictures in Scripture have to be explained today because they are lost on our generation. We do not understand heaping coals of fire on someone's head. See Dennis Gibson, *Vitality Therapy* (p. 124).

Your word picture should be something the hearer already has an understanding of, and preferably has a great interest in, and then it needs to be about something that is a real need in the other person's life. If I am going to relate to a word picture, I have to know what the picture is and the desired impact must refer to some need of the hour.

I frequently used word pictures of relationships with children with clients because they understand that all too well. Do you love kids? Do you care about the kids that live next door? Do you care for your own kids in a different way than you do the neighborhood kids? So it is with God. He cares for everyone but He has a special care and responsibility for His own children.

Food is another common denominator. How could you use a balanced menu as a word picture? Do I just want dessert?

God says to love everyone. Sometimes that is so hard. Sometimes I feel defeated before I even start. Picture a faucet available outside your house. Such it is with God's love. I get my bucket full and I can afford to give it away because I know where to get more.

Why did Jesus have to come to this earth and go through all that stuff? A word picture can deepen your understanding. Have you ever been in an old house where the 110-volt and 220-volt outlets looked the same, and you stuck a 110-volt appliance into a 220-volt outlet and watched it sizzle in front of your eyes? Do you know the difference between AC and DC electrical current? You know there are big warning signs telling you to stay away from power stations. That is DC current. If you were to tap into DC current, real electricity, it would cook you. It has to have a transformer. The

electric current has to go through the transformer before it gets to you so you can receive it. There is a transformer in our lives too, between Almighty God and mortal man...the God-man Jesus, whose presence in the world made it possible for us to connect with God Almighty.

Many times one of the clients gets impatient with the time it takes to grow. Can you relate? Here is the way I handle that: How many years does it take to grow an oak tree? How long does it take to grow a squash plant? What do you want to be?

Try a car analogy. Picture a car going down the road of life and I am driving. When do I pull over, switch places with God, and leave the driving to Him? It will take much less energy to make the journey. He knows how to avoid the detours.

What is the meaning of the Scripture, "Work out your own salvation...God is at work in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure?" Try the concept of power steering...I keep my hands on the wheel, but who does the work?

Scripture is full of word pictures. The story of the seeds planted on the rocky soil can be used in many situations. Jesus talked in parables, a great form of word pictures.

Reframing is a useful picture for me. I have a picture on the wall of my office that is an old barn, and the frame is made of old barn wood. It is a delightful picture, but part of the delight is that it is in the right frame. Have you ever seen a picture that did not look good because it was in the wrong frame? Sometimes there are things in life that we just have to continue to endure but we can put them in a new frame. One client with a bad crack addiction told me that every spring she relapsed, for a number of years. Spring just seemed to do it to her. She would associate spring and warm weather with how and where she smoked crack. We had to take the beautiful picture of spring and reframe it. The old frame

was the frame of drug abuse. We had to put this picture in a frame that was becoming to it.

Ninety-five percent of people getting rid of alcohol and drug problems experience cravings. These are short-lived (ranging from 30 seconds to 3 minutes long) but with intense desire for the substance of choice. They diminish in intensity and frequency the longer you resist. Cravings scare the recovering person, and many times are thought to be proof that they will not make it. Not true. However, a word picture can help. Ever have a stray cat come to your screen door and scratch on it? What does it want? What do you do? If you feed the stray, it will come back. If you don't, it will eventually go away.

How do you instill an understanding of purpose in life, of personal value, and self-respect? Here are some sample word pictures:

If you were offered your choice of two brands of automobiles, a Toyota or a Chevrolet, which would you choose? Why? You trust one manufacturer over another. Who manufactured you? Whose label do you wear? God don't make no junk. You are His creation. He says everything He has made is good and not to be rejected.



Let's do this guessing game again. Suppose I gave you your choice of two gold chains. One is a thick one, obviously actual gold; the other is costume jewelry I picked up at the dollar store. Which one would you pick? The more expensive one, of course. Two things about you give you value. One is who manufactured you. The other is that you were expensive. How much did God pay for you?



The blood of Jesus. Now that is expensive!

Now suppose I bought a toaster and brought it home and tried to cook a pork chop in it? You would think I was nuts. A toaster was created to make toast. When we allow

ourselves to be used for something other than for what we were manufactured, it is a real waste. Sometimes here I use the word picture of a fish bowl. If I had a beautiful and valuable crystal bowl that my grandmother had given me and I used it for a fish bowl, would that be a waste? I also like the word picture of a reupholstered couch when I am encouraging worth and value to a new Christian. I am like an upholstered couch. The Lord took me after I had been used, abused, nearly destroyed, and made me new again; actually much better than new because He did more than a surface job.

Many clients have problems with stored shame. One of the word pictures I have used when working with these clients is to picture for them a big conference room like we have at the mission, and the “shame committee” comes in, led by Satan, and they sit down to discuss the condition of the client. Then Jesus walks into the room and dismisses the group because He reports that He has paid the entire bill of this client, and the client is no longer held responsible for the shameful situation.

One of the things the clients can relate to is the large dumpsters at the Mission. They know what it is like to take large bags of garbage out and “cast” them into the container. God invites me to “cast” my burdens on Him and He takes my shame garbage and destroys it, no matter how many bags I have collected.

I like the picture of the iceberg, where only 1/5 shows above the line, 4/5 is below. The analogy works when trying to show disciples that it is more than cleaning up the outside person. It also is a good picture to explain why growing Christians see more sin in their lives after they have begun to address early issues.

The law of gravity and the law of lift is a great word picture way to explain Romans 8:2, “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.” An eagle defies the law of gravity by spreading wings and allowing the law of lift to

overcome the pull of gravity. If I want to take advantage of the law of the Spirit to free me from the law of sin and death, I need to utilize the spread wings God has given me.

Struggles are a normal topic with our clients. The butterfly coming out of the cocoon goes through difficulty to break free and be who it is created to be. The potter working with clay is a great word picture from Isaiah 64:8.

Consider the discipleship lesson you can glean from Psalm 119:105, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." Getting lost is easier in the dark. Are we using our spiritual flashlight, and have we learned to use the full power of the light?

When you see a program person defocused because of a member of the opposite sex, use a word picture. Do you know how they used to get a mule to plow a field? A carrot was dangled in front of him! What carrot is dangling in front of you that leads you on? Are you a mule or a person?

How does a Christian deal with a difficult person in relationship? Picture two pieces of Velcro. If one piece has been melted, and has a smooth glassy surface, it just does not grab the other. Picture yourself as melted under the radiant warmth of God's love, becoming smooth and not "hookable."

Two books that have a number of useful word pictures are *Vitality Therapy* by Dennis Gibson, and *Marriage Builder*, by Larry Crabb. And there are lots more word pictures that apply to the ministry to clients in Rescue Ministry. Take some time to think of how you could use one of the following in a word picture with a client: Butterfly...Tree...Turtle...Taxi...Anchor...Eyeball...Cup of coffee...Ink spot...Light bulb...Jigsaw puzzle. God created you in His image and that includes having creativity. Use it!

“The unfolding  
of Your words  
gives light;  
It gives understanding  
to the simple.”

Psalm 119:130

## Chapter 21

# Addressing the Attitude of Entitlement Thinking

One of the top stressors in ministry is dealing with stinking thinking, both our own and that of the clients! And the attitude of entitlement is one of the top offenses. The definition of the term entitlement has evolved in the past decade with the current political climate, but this chapter deals with what now is the third listed meaning in the dictionary: “A belief that one is deserving of or entitled to certain privileges.” You can find more meanings that are picturesque on the internet, such as someone who thinks something is owed to them by life in general. Wikipedia gives a modified version: “In a casual sense, the term refers to a notion that one (or oneself) is deserving of some particular reward or benefit.” However you define it, we in Rescue Ministry deal with it daily.

Take a good look at who is most likely to participate in entitlement thinking. There are at least four types of people:

- There are those who have always had more than their surrounding neighbors...the most beautiful, the most talented, the most athletic. So the habit was established early in life.
- Some were born into a conversation of entitlement. Those who were raised by someone who had developed entitlement thinking from false premises of social welfare, hearing frequently what is considered by some to be class warfare statements of the sin of inequity.
- Christians who have focused on what they get from God more than what they owe to their Maker and their Redeemer, because they have heard more grace and mercy talk than stewardship and worship talk.

- Christians who go into ministry, with the thought of how great they are and how much they are doing for the Lord with the expectation that their works will be repaid in grandiose ways.

Each group tends to criticize the others. You might find it comforting to know that entitlement thinking is all over the place – not just in your workplace. Some comfort, right? But I have even heard some Rescue Mission staff express their entitlement of not having to deal with clients ‘entitlement thinking! There is a better way!

### **What’s Wrong with Entitlement Thinking?**

What is so wrong with entitlement thinking? For starters, Scripture promotes the concept of giving, not taking. Entitlement thinkers are basically takers, not givers. They are focused on “me,” not “others.” Some entitlement thinking promotes victim-thinking. The world owes me because I have been mistreated and somebody has to pay. This kind of thinking leads down a path of whining, blaming, complaining, angrily lashing out, accusing, and potentially acting out.

I set myself up to be unhappy when I entertain feelings of entitlement. If I get what I am after, then I may feel sheepish or, on the other extreme, move on toward more greed. If I do not get what I think I deserve, I am hurt, resentful, and even move toward thoughts of revenge. Any of this does not bring me to the joy God has for me, and I certainly have no understanding of the truth that “Godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment” (1Timothy 6:6).

### **Why is This Happening?**

There are varying thoughts on the origin of the strong dose of entitlement in our society today. Early childhood educators lauded the two-year-old demand for needs to be met, promoting this as the child's path to independence. Where did that get us? Or

labeling an adolescent's cry to have the best stuff to keep up with their peers as “just a stage?” Really? When did the practice of “demand” become appropriate behavior? Take a look at where we have come as a society in the topic of “rights.” We hear much talk on every front about protecting our rights. Have you thought lately about God's view of our “rights?” This is always a fascinating discussion in the Mission classrooms when I make the statement, “I have come to understand I do not have ‘rights’ but I do have many privileges that come with responsibilities.” This is initially greeted with unbelief and looks of incredulous apprehension. Of course, checking out Scripture, we find no proof that we are guaranteed anything in this life other than God's gift of grace to the humble. And in that guarantee, there is no talk of “my right,” but there is an obvious opportunity for gratitude. I shudder to think of anyone looking at the gifts of salvation and eternal life as other than an overwhelming privilege for which Jesus paid dearly.

It is in this same context that we look at the often-touted expression, “It's not fair!” Fairness is not extolled in the Scripture. God is a God of justice and if I got what was fair, it would be an extremely dismal future. I plead for mercy, not fairness. Jesus used parables to attempt to help the disciples to understand that such topics as who would sit on His right hand or His left was not a worthy discussion. I am really glad God hasn't given me what I deserve.

### **Root Cause?**

For our ministry purposes, it is far more important to discover the “root cause.” Only when you get to the root can you make a difference. Obviously, the root of all wrong is sin, but how does sin impact this kind of thinking? Idolatry is the worship of something other than God. How about “me” worship? What would that sound like? Scripture says not to compare ourselves. It is difficult to have entitlement thinking without comparisons of my lot with

others. And what does the Scripture say about gluttony and selfish ambition?

There is a definite confusion between needs and wants and between rights and privileges. We would be hard pressed to align these with any one of the areas identified in 1 John 2:16, “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.”

### **What Can We Do?**

So what can we do to address this? Before we take on the opportunity to make a difference in lives in this area, we have some personal work to do. Before I can deal with attitudes of entitlement from clients, I must first deal with it in my own mind and heart. Scripture shows us over and over that until we get our own mote removed, we cannot successfully help another in beam removal (Matthew 7:3-5).

Is there any precedent set in Scripture regarding entitlement thinking? Read Luke 17:7-10. I need to be very sure that I am doing ministry because the Boss has called me to do it. He, the loving Shepherd of my soul, has offered me this opportunity to represent Him before those He brings across my path. So He has the right to have expectations of me. This parable represents the work ethic of a servant of Jesus Christ...expectations take a back seat to assigned responsibilities.

The work ethic of the servant of Jesus Christ includes a large dose of humility (v.10) based on the great blessing we have already received. Responding to our Lord with the deep understanding of our unworthiness places us in position to be the empowered servant and protects us from entitlement thinking. When I see my own failings, I may be more compassionate with others.

Do you need help with having patience and compassion for the ugliness of this attitude? Have you considered that entitlement thinking may be a coping mechanism for dealing with shame? God has much better ways to deal with shame than the blame game. A

whole chapter is devoted to helping clients with shame issues. If attempting to lay guilt trips on you is the client's cover for the personal shame of his or her past wrongdoing, then is your response more appropriately compassion instead of irritation?

If I feel victimized, it is easy to move toward feeling justified to speak or act in ugliness. Victims are focused on self-protection, using up energy that could be focused on progress and positive change. Taking personal responsibility for actions and the future is a scary thing for those who have experienced success deficiency. Entitlement thinking is a quick fix.

Using entitlement talking points is another way of attempting manipulation. When you know a client is using their manipulation skill with you, again for the sake of the client's growth, you look for ways to refute. An example would be: "Perhaps you really believe what you are saying to me. But I know to agree with your request I would be selling you short of your potential. (pause) I want you to achieve on your own without the need of manipulation."

### **Why Bother?**

Why should we care? Why spend the energy to help a person move beyond this attitude? Hopefully, your motivation is not to make your own life easier, although we know ministry would be more pleasurable if we did not have to endure or confront this. But the client who does not move beyond entitlement is headed for more misery.

Entitlement thinking is pervasive. If I don't deal with it in one area of my life, I will experience it cropping into other areas. We all know this way of thinking is intrinsically connected with expectations, and expectations often are not grounded in reality. High expectations of people serving me, people helping me, including government, church, family, and even God, leads me to the habit of entitlement thinking that is easily transferred from one

area to another. So a huge challenge comes in how we react or respond to this attitude in our clients.

If I can help my clients to move away from entitlement thinking, they will then be more capable of assertiveness in standing up for themselves as responsible persons. Getting the product I paid for, or receiving the agreed payment for services, are part of living in a country where the rule of law is basic. Only when I am free of entitlement thinking can I best negotiate business contracts. Only when I am no longer mastered by the attitude of entitlement can I communicate in an effective, assertive way.

Responding to entitlement comments in a loving and firm way can sometimes promote better thought processes. When we receive such comments, rather than ignoring them because there seems to be no reason to try to intervene, maybe I could consider appealing to what little truth they have since they have developed some good survival skills. One such comment could be, “I want you to assume for a minute that no one is able financially to provide you what you believe you are owed. What would happen to you? ...and then what? ...It seems to me that your waiting around for aid to come from others may be slowing you down from getting your stable end-goal?”

Dr. Matt Starceвич, founder of the Center for Coaching and Mentoring, labels entitlement as “the antithesis of continuous improvement.” An entitlement belief system kills motivation to better oneself. Entitlement changes the person’s ability to be a team player on the job and affects job performance and ultimately job retention. Is this not important for our clients? Progress means focusing on God's blessings that are being received in the present rather than resenting the past or fearing the future.

### **Action Plan**

So, what can we do to impact change in this area? Since truth sets people free, we look again at how we can teach the truth. A major

antidote for an attitude of entitlement is the attitude of gratitude. The practice of thanksgiving promotes the attitude of gratitude. Do your clients understand that their experience as homeless people could be a great opportunity in life's pursuit of happiness? (See Chapter 4 for more on this). Are we helping our clients to realize the privilege of receiving God's provisions? How we deal with life experiences makes us either bitter or better. The difference is in developing the attitude of gratitude.

A study of the promises of God as well as a study of Christian stewardship has possibilities for overcoming entitlement thinking. When I understand my role as a steward rather than the owner, I am no longer majoring on rights but appreciating privileges and focusing on responsibilities.

Modeling is once again very important. Listen to yourself. Do you speak words of entitlement or words of gratitude? Taking anyone or anything for granted keeps me from fully appreciating that person or thing. Check it out. You "earn" your paycheck. That remuneration is a combination of a number of people giving of their finances. If you have gone without a paycheck, you tend to get over taking it for granted.

One of the ways you can help another person is to try to figure out where they are coming from and begin the conversation there. What is their frame of reference? The Apostle Paul did this in Athens. He was much more effective after he spoke from their vantage point rather than his own.

We help our clients by giving them opportunities to achieve small successes and then helping them remember those successes in a framework of value (e.g. Commending a chore well done and mentioning how that impacts the community).

One more word about dealing with your own expectations in ministry...If you struggle with thoughts of "why me?" or "Is this what I get for all my hours of serving this person?", then may I

suggest you return to Scripture and rediscover who gets the credit for anything accomplished on your watch. Check out Scriptures like 2 Corinthians 3:4-5; Romans 11:18; and Ephesians 3:7-8 to bring you back to truth. When I know God is the One who gets credit and I am the one who is blessed to be called into service of the Sovereign God, then I don't choose instant payback. Because a client makes a statement like "you owe it to me," does not make the statement true. You are blessed to know the truth and sometimes you get to share it with the one who is uninformed. I remember a time when I replied to a client, "Well, actually I do owe you something. Scripture says because of what I have received from God, I am to love you (Romans 13:8). What you are objecting to is the most loving thing I can do for you right now."

Helping clients develop a new attitude is a huge job. Don't do this on your own. Engage co-workers in developing a plan to address this. Together, find verbal responses that lovingly give clients training in developing alternative thought patterns.

Addressing this attitude, like many other challenges we face in Rescue, is part of a process of offering truth to replace the storehouse of lies. Progress in this area goes hand in hand with many other teaching moments as we model accountability, freedom, responsibility, stewardship, etc.

## Chapter 22

# When Helping Is Actually Hurtful

This is perhaps one of the biggest arguments in the Rescue Mission Ministry family and probably one of the larger areas of ambivalence within the staff. Rescue Missions often receive criticism from secular human service agencies for our practice of requiring some participation from those seeking help. The practice of “providing for” versus “providing with,” when seen as the answer to presented needs, is ultimately detrimental to the recipient’s growth and well-being. Little by little, our country is awakening to the shocking truth that unconditional financial relief does not alleviate poverty or homelessness.

Scripture says in many places and in many ways that we are to meet the needs of those who are impoverished. The same Bible that says I am not to turn away from a brother in need (1 John 3:17), also says, "The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10 (NIV)). Scripture never disagrees with itself. Our responsibility is to study the Word to find the real meanings of the teachings. We need to understand what real need is before we will know how best to meet that need. Scripture teaches, “Man shall not live on bread alone” (Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4). Jesus is here quoting from Deuteronomy 8:3, where God actually says He allowed need so He could teach an important truth. We do not need to go around creating needs! Our folks have plenty! We must discern what the real need is before we just do band-aids.

If we do not get this right, the recipient feels controlled and the giver feels deceived. If I help in a way that is not helpful, the recipient does not learn healthy coping strategies since the solution to the problem is provided with no effort on his part. If I force a

solution on the recipient, I have merely pulled a drowning person out of the water, but have not taught him either how to swim or why not to get himself in danger again. Doing for a person what they can do for themselves is demeaning, disrespectful, and crippling. Rescue Missions understand the long-term benefit of giving a hand-up rather than a handout.

When the helper is working harder than the helpee, the helpee is in a coasting mode and the result is no personal progress. The helper is becoming a crutch on whom the helpee is becoming dependent. When I find myself working harder on the person's problems than they are working, I need to take a step back and reevaluate whether I am helping or hurting.

If we do not personally get a solid handle on this, the result may affect our own attitudes. I have watched those on the front lines who have not had a grip on this truth descend into the ditch of disappointment and discouragement. When I am the one meeting another's need without his or her participation, any of the following can capture my heart and result in resentment and cynicism:

- Critical spirit as I observe a lack of progress
- Expectation of gratitude that never comes
- Development of resentment toward the recipient
- Impatience with perceived slothfulness
- Irritation with complaints, justified or unjustified
- Jealousy of any positive results
- Perpetuity of my own grandiosity

I get bigger in my own eyes and they get smaller and more insignificant. I begin to see this as a "thankless job" rather than a ministry unto the Lord.



## Analysis

Why are we helping? What is the goal? Here are some samples of goals we might have:

- Make the hurt go away?
- Increase knowledge of available resources?
- Acquire skills for meaningful life?
- Growth in responsibility, tenacity?
- Development of gratitude?
- Acquire freedom and self-reliance?
- Restore people to experiencing humanness in the way God intended?

All these are good answers. Yet do they individually address the real need? Brian Filkert, in his book *When Helping Hurts*, specified four areas. “The crucial thing is to help people to understand their identity as image bearers, to love their neighbors as themselves, to be stewards over God’s creation, and to bring glory to God in all things” (Brian Filkert p.145). What you determine to be your goal will determine the direction you take and ultimately the impact you will have.

What outcomes would we actually like to see? Seeing enhanced human dignity? Trusting relationships formed? Increased self-sufficiency? Point #1 of Analysis is to determine the “why,” which helps us determine the “what.”

Next, my definitions have to be correct. What is my definition of addiction? What is my definition of poverty? What is the meaning of “need” and “helping?” How I define these and how I see the human condition affect how I help, and how I help affects the impact I will have. Do I understand God’s meaning of “grace” and “mercy,” “truth” and “love?”

Many secularists define addiction as a disease. I define addiction as a worship disorder. When I am addicted, I am participating in idol worship, substituting something or someone in the place of my God. My practice of my addiction may well cause disease in my life and I will need to deal with both the surface and the root issues.

Poverty is defined quite differently depending on your own “condition.” Research has shown a wide variation in the definitions of poverty given by those who have material resources and those who do not. The former generally believe that poverty is best defined as lack of sufficient material resources. The words used by those with minimal financial means, when asked to describe poverty, include “shame, inferiority, fear, powerlessness, humiliation, hopelessness, depression, isolation, and voicelessness.”

Filkert refers to a “loss of meaning, purpose, and hope.” Bryant Myers, in his book *Walking With the Poor*, describes poverty as “the result of relationships that do not work, that are not just, that are not for life, that are not harmonious or enjoyable” (p.86).

Filkert makes a compelling case that poverty is the result of brokenness in four key relationships: with God, with self, with others, and with the rest of creation. If one of my goals is to address poverty, and if I agree with this definition, then I will need to do far more than meet the crisis need in the individual seeking help.

Lack of full disclosure, for instance, is dishonesty. Self-reliance means that with God’s help I can do this. Choosing to have my life and actions exposed to the light is personal accountability. When I start to define terms from God’s perspective, I begin to see that loving someone unconditionally means I am doing what is best for the person, which may include putting down some conditions for behavior. I must have a firm grip on what is truth when it comes to

the terms that are thrown around, or else I will be crushed with accusations such as, “And I thought you were a Christian.”

Next we discern the appropriate response...A crisis response calls for something different from an ongoing need. Is there really a crisis or is this a learned way of working the system? Am I teaching responsibility? How have I encouraged the person to take some piece in the solution? Have I inadvertently removed the sting of tough love and consequently removed opportunity for growth? Have I discerned whether the person is capable of providing answers, or do I observe a learned skill of undermining? Am I addressing the temptation of greed by checking if there is a practice of accessing other assistance? Discern, and then plan not to feed into the problem while searching for a solution.

Both my goals and my definitions will affect how I learn to help without hurting. I will also need to be alert to the results of my own behaviors toward those I wish to help. Am I promoting self-reliance and accountability, or am I accepting irresponsibility, dependency, and dishonesty? Do I need to be needed? When a person fails, do I take it personally? These soul-searching questions point toward our own attitudes that move us from helping to hurting.



In addition to analyzing  
My Goals...  
My Definitions...  
The Situation...

I need to analyze ME  
My motivations,  
attitudes, beliefs

## Solutions

First, I need to get my perspective aligned with God's perspective...To see people as God sees them and to see myself as God sees me.

Those who are blessed with imperfect vision, or have lived long enough for vision to start to wear out, know that when you go for an eye exam, the doctor determines the prescription by asking you to choose between one frame and another, which one is clearer, which one is not. We desire to see clearly. Sometimes evaluation and correction are necessary. What we believe we see influences our actions.

The problem is, we all have limited vision. The prophet told Jacob, "God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7 (NIV)). Do I see the person in front of me as impoverished? Needy? Having no resources? Or do I see them as God's creation, made in His image, with abilities? Do I see them as choice-making individuals?



We gain wisdom if we are regularly looking at how Jesus did ministry. Jesus frequently went about meeting real needs and refusing to address unreal needs. But in every situation the solution to the perceived need was bigger than first met the human eye. There was always more to it. Since you are in a place where you see need and are attempting to meet that need, Jesus provides great examples:

- Was open to exposing the actual problem when healing the man with the withered hand, Mark 3:3-5
- Utilized the help of the whole team when feeding 4000+, Matthew 15:32-38
- Did not focus attention on His own needs, Mark 10:45
- Made sure the recipients knew the source of the help when feeding the 5000+, John 6:32

If you, the staff person or the mission, is getting the kudos for supplying the client's needs, you are missing the boat. When the client knows the provision is coming from the Lord, there is greater opportunity for gratitude and less grumbling and game playing.

Clark Blakeman, Director of Second Stories, with CRCNA Global Missions asks, "What is wrong with the old saying, 'Give a man a fish, and he will eat for a day; teach a man to fish and he will eat forever?' Does the man already have some ideas how to fish but just hasn't been able to get the equipment needed? Or does he have the needed equipment and does not realize it yet?" What do people we want to help already have available to them? Do we give the fish, or teach the skill of fishing, or do we help the person to move toward owning the pond?

There is a great difference between providing service to or for the client and providing service with the client. What might happen if you are providing service for the client?

- Alleviates immediate needs, not long-term needs
- Moves toward the person
- Provides opportunity for your own self-satisfaction
- Gives unstructured assistance
- Develops dependency
- Promotes increased need

How does that differ from providing services with the client?

- Addresses the real need rather than a perceived need
- Promotes decision-making in their own lives
- Develops relationships with give and take
- Improves person's sense of self-worth
- Is time-consuming
- Incorporates the gifts of both
- Makes room for failure acceptable
- Empowers the client to problem-solve on his or her own

If my helping comes in the form of “doing to” the client, it is seen as coercion and at best the client does what I want as long as I am around but real change does not happen. If I insist on “doing for” the client, I at best become the consultant and I invite mere compliance. But if I move toward the practice of “doing with” the client, I encourage cooperation and change.

How can we move from “for” to “with?” We need to respond to the crisis, but lean toward change, accountability, personal decision-making, and commitment. Instead of the “what can we do to help you?” approach, we move to “let’s sit down and diagnose the problem to find a solution.” In this way we invite ownership of the problem and the solution. How might I lead by stepping back and helping people identify and utilize their strengths? How can we include the reciprocity principle of receiving and giving? Making contracts with a statement of what to expect from the client before the next action on the part of the staff person, ensures better collaboration.

## Chapter 23

# Addressing Shame Overload

Much has been written about the effect of built-up shame in a person's response to life, self, and others. Much of the behavior of our clients that seems so hard to understand, may well be the result of stored shame. Shame is passed down from generation to generation.

### **What Is This Thing Called Binding Shame?**

Shame means I wear masks. I have the feeling of needing to always be on guard lest the real truth be exposed. Shame is about fear of exposure. Shame shows up in hiding, withdrawing, feelings of depression, and low worth. Typically, the person is always looking down, and talking without making eye contact. You often observe blame-shifting and excuse-making. Sometimes stored shame translates into anger and rage, expressed without provocation.

Shame is not guilt. Guilt is a God-given thermometer that tells us we have done something wrong that needs to be corrected. Guilt is about our need to seek and receive forgiveness. Shame is about guilt that got misplaced or stored.

Shame is an uncomfortable word. Shame is seldom talked about – we avoid thinking about it and certainly avoid acknowledging it. We are usually ashamed of having shame issues and so the very nature of shame perpetuates itself.

When you have a shame-based identity, you see yourself negatively. You may try to perform your way to acceptance. You are unaware of personal boundaries, and as a people-pleaser, you cannot say no to others. Often this leads to further addictions.

You tend to stuff your feelings to avoid pain at all costs. Even though you are wounded, you must conceal these wounds and you often have feelings of abandonment. You are tired because survival is a lot of work. There are huge trust issues and much sense of abandonment. If you were raised in an atmosphere void of love, you continue to look for it in all the wrong places, developing possessive relationships because you cannot afford to fail. In all of this, you develop a high need for control so when you come to live in a shelter where someone else is in charge, you do your best to resist. You work very hard to be who you are not, so others will not discover who you really are.

### **The Difference between Healthy Shame and Toxic Shame**

Not all shame is bad or to be avoided. Without shame we would not understand our need for a Savior. We would not change our ways when we have gotten on a wrong path. But healthy shame is quite different from toxic shame.

Think about what you know about toxic materials. Vitamin A is very healthy in the amounts we need, but if we overdose, we can develop a disease called Hypervitaminosis A. Too much of a good thing is not good. Nuclear power is a great benefit to our lives unless it is put to toxic levels. Sunrays are healthy when absorbed in moderation.

Healthy shame is exhibited in embarrassment, humility, and sometimes in a very positive appreciation for correction. It lets me know I have limits, that I am not God. Healthy shame says I make mistakes and gives me permission to be human.

Toxic shame, on the other hand, is exhibited in feelings of being flawed, “no good,” and “worthless.” I cannot admit mistakes, but I know that I am a mistake.

## **Strategies Used to Avoid Dealing with Shame**

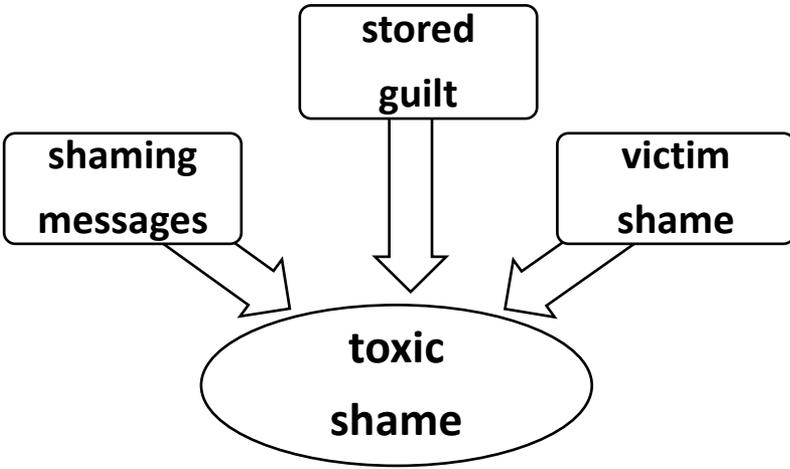
Any method that we would use to numb-out allows us to not think and not feel. This might be abuse of mood-altering substances. It includes any of the myriads of addictions. Some of the less-suspected strategies would include the following:

1. Withdrawal – the wearing of masks
2. Escapism – e.g. Workaholism
3. Paralysis – e.g. “stuck”
4. Flattering energy
5. Perfectionism – (can’t make any mistakes)
6. Criticism
7. Rage
8. Exhibitionism – e.g. “the clown”
9. Arrogance

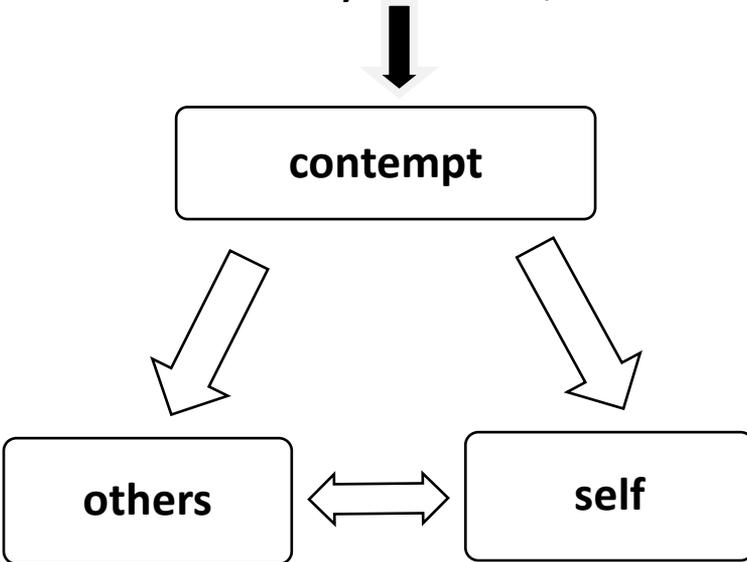
## **Why Should I Bother with the Process of Releasing Shame?**

- Until I deal with toxic shame, I can’t/don’t experience healthy shame
- Until I deal with toxic shame, my relationship with others is affected.
- Carrying toxic shame causes wrong motivation in my life...Do-gooders, over-committed, trying to make self okay, try- harder life style
- Until I deal with toxic shame, I will be paralyzed with a fear of failure.

The diagram on the next page shows the origins of toxic shame. Each of these is handled differently. Shaming messages coming from inherited shame should be handed back; they do not belong to you. Shaming messages from self-talk should be stopped. Stored guilt is confessed and forgiven. Victim shame usually has to be worked out with a caring counselor willing to speak truth. But all need to be disposed of to avoid wrong responses.



If not correctly disposed of, results in



## **Stored Shame Prevents Relationships**

Shame changes how I see myself and how I think others see me. If I am holding onto a garbage bag full of shame, I end up having to do something with it. I might choose to pass it on to someone else with shaming messages.

In my own experience in counseling in the Rescue Mission, many women would give the identical confession that their mother called them a slut when they were four years old. (Always the same word and always the same age). The women came to realize that such an accusation was an impossibility and the shaming message was someone passing on their own unresolved shame.

If I do not correctly dispose of the toxic shame in my life, it will grow into contempt, either for myself or for others. Whichever way it grows, it will move to the other side. If I have contempt for myself, I will pass it on to others, and if I have contempt for others, I will end up feeling self-contempt...A vicious cycle that can be cured.

## **Receiving and Giving Shame Messages**

A “shaming message” is a comment, a look, or an action that communicates to someone a negative statement about his or her identity. It is a negative statement about who they are, and their worth as a person. Examples would be a disdainful look, a slap on the face, or statements like “You’re an idiot,” or “You don’t belong here.”

Shaming messages include a need to increase one’s control over the one receiving the message. When I shame myself, I am usually feeling out of control (not experiencing the “fruit of the Spirit,” the God-given self-control). When I shame another, I am sometimes feeling too controlled by this person or the situation. In an effort to readjust that out-of-control feeling, I put them down in an effort to boost myself up.

Part of the healing process, then, is going to include both a proper understanding of control and a healthier self-concept.

The opposite of a “shaming message” is not just a compliment. A compliment can be a statement about what a person does rather than about who the person is. The opposite of a shaming message is a message of honor or respect. It may include a compliment about the person’s character or personality. Examples of weak compliments would include: “You do nice things,” “You are pretty,” “You sing great.” Compare those with these examples of honoring statements: “I like you for who you are,” “You’re a beautiful person,” “The message of your music blesses me.”

How does one stop internalizing shaming messages and move toward the freedom of respect for self and others?

- Acknowledge shame whenever it happens. Shame from my own sin must be exposed to the Lord (Psalm 32:3-7).
- Identify, label, and address all shaming messages. E.g., “When I heard you say..., I felt shame, like you were making a statement about my worth as a human being.”
- Learn to distinguish between healthy shame and attacks on identity and worth. E.g., (Self-talk) “I made a mistake, but I am not a mistake.”
- We need to identify the strategies we use to deal with shame on the surface, and confront those strategies when we catch ourselves engaging in them.
- Rekindle your wonder about yourself. Ask questions: What influenced me to think this way? What trained me to respond to others this way? What positive quality do I have and like about myself that causes these problems when done to an extreme?
- Get back in touch with WHO you are from God’s perspective (1 Timothy 4:4; Colossians 2:10; 1 Peter 2:9-10; Ephesians 1:4, 2:5,10; Isaiah 43:4).

## Chapter 24

# Compliance Versus Surrender

Working with clients who have issues that keep them from fully following the Lord and enjoying the abundant life is always a challenge. Many staff find themselves happy to work with agreeable clients who never seems to rock the boat. These clients seems to “really be getting it” until they leave and immediately relapse.

Should we be pleased with and try for compliance in our clients, or is there a bigger, better option?

The Israelites had compliance, David had surrender.

Law keepers had compliance, New Testament Christians learned surrender.

Compliance is a result of control.

Surrender is a result of giving up control.

Compliance can be about group-think.

Surrender is an individual decision and commitment.

Compliance promotes blame-shifting.

Surrender promotes self-responsibility.

Compliance is a formula.

Surrender is a life-style.

Compliance accommodates the temporary.

Surrender is about the permanent.

Compliance is about relationship with humans.

Surrender is about relationship with God.

Compliance is so much easier to work with than resistance, that sometimes I am tempted to promote it. However, compliance can

obscure inner reservations which surface at inconvenient times. The most difficult and regrettable characteristic, though, is to observe the compliant person who is not surrendered merely treading water.

We have the responsibility of discipling those who come to get their lives changed. Discipleship has some great benefits and some huge challenges. We need to give a balance of these when we are working with people young in their faith. Every person has his or her own dictionary of word meanings. Submission is one of those words that can be inflammatory. Whether you are teaching submission or surrender, make sure you are emphasizing that God is the recipient. You are not teaching them to surrender to you or the Mission's rules. That would look more like compliance. You are helping them see the benefit of surrender to God's will for their lives.

One of the largest stumbling blocks for our clients to achieve long-term sobriety and life-change is lack of honesty. We must help them to see God's view of dishonesty, call it what it is, and challenge them to reject it. Lying is more than speaking an untruth. Cover-up, misrepresentation, manipulating, and misleading, are all lies. Help clients to see that compliance is merely an effort to prolong the refusal to change.

Submission is something I do to human forces around me. (Submit ye one to another). Surrender is when I let go and let God, give in and give over. This action couples with acceptance of God being the Lord of my life.

I do not celebrate compliance, but I rejoice in surrender.

## Chapter 25

# Helping Clients Who Dread the Holidays

Real ministry in the Rescue Mission requires understanding your clients. News Alert: Most clients living in shelters and in long-term mission programs dread the holidays. You may have noticed or you may have experienced this yourself. The dread comes from a variety of reasons. For some, there is a guilt and built-up shame over behaviors of past holidays. For many, this will be the first sober Christmas in many years. For others, it will be a sense of rejection from family and friends, and the sense of aloneness is more profound if there has been any history of actual holiday celebration. There is more room for self-pity and for self-accusation. The common core for all of this, however, is the deep sense of loss: loss of relationship, loss of opportunity, loss of reputation, loss of quality of life.

The time to address this is before the holidays. Discussing this in classes, admitting the potential for dread rather than ignoring it in case it just won't occur, allows an opportunity for a new paradigm. Is there a new way to see the holidays? What is the godly perspective?

Consider a word of caution. If we are to help our clients get through this time when they have not yet had adequate healing from their past or growth development for their future, we must give them some understanding and some truth to get them through. Hopefully the need and opportunity for deeper healing will come after this immediate time, and the new experience will help in the process. Losses have to be grieved if they are to become positives. Although there may not be opportunity to help with longer-term grief-work during this season, you can at least

Speak truth into lives, truth that sets people free to experience more of a Christian view of the holidays.

The first step in helping others is to make sure I have been through the path myself. I need personally to determine if I have God's perspective for the weeks ahead. Do I have any baggage to get rid of myself to appreciate thoroughly the meaning of Thanksgiving and Christmas? Am I able wholeheartedly to focus on Jesus as the meaning for Christmas? Can I move away from what has been or has not been, and look at what is the blessed opportunity awaiting me in these upcoming weeks?

Sometimes the work of the ministry at the holiday season becomes so very intense that we push aside the meaning of the season. Sometimes our own busyness makes us respond in a non-loving way to the folks who are already hurting. This is a case of "mis-focus." Too soon the great opportunity to present the Savior of the world will pass, with all the attention given to whether everyone got enough packages to open.

The next step is to become aware of the hurts around me. The empathy needed in this situation goes way beyond compassion. Jesus was such a perfect example of the ability to look at people and realize the deep needs of those whose outward countenances were covered with mask-wearing. One of the best ways to break through this facade is to share in a vulnerable public way how the Lord has dealt with me personally. If I can stand in front of a group of clients and tell of my own previous dread of facing holidays and how the Lord broke through that pain with wonderful truth, I become approachable.

The third step is to share specific truths with people in the throes of grief, regret, sadness, self-pity, anxiety, or anger regarding the past or present. Here are some samples:

“We are approaching a season that is misused by so many who have no eternal awareness. But many of you have now met the reason for the season when you met Jesus as your Savior. This becomes, perhaps, not only the first holiday in a while that you experience sober, but the first with knowing real joy.”

“There is so much difference between happiness and joy. Happiness is short lived. Joy lasts forever, on into eternity. Happiness is dependent on day-to-day happenings. Joy is the gift from the God who keeps on giving. Happiness is based on stuff that can be broken and torn up. Joy is based on a relationship that will never be worn out or discarded.”

“Give yourself a gift this Christmas of packing away the regrets that you live with every day. Although they represent history that is not forgotten, they can be turned into opportunities for growth, as forgiveness is realized, and new habits are built.”

When a client shares meaningful experiences with you, there is often an opportunity to turn that conversation to the hope available in Him. If you do get an opportunity to minister to clients for whom the holidays remind them of pain and loss in their past, here are some ways to provide a new perspective for hope for change:

“I am glad you have been open to sharing your heart with me. I am also so very glad that God has saved you for something far more special and wonderful than anything you have experienced here on earth. One thought that has been important to me is to embrace my losses as ways

to identify with Jesus, who was willing to become homeless just for me, who went through much mistreatment, who left a throne to experience a very difficult life. Seems to me that He knows that my losses in life bring me closer to Him.”

“I am glad we have had this time together. There are a lot of things about God that seem like a mystery. Because God can see the future and knows all about the past, He understands me much more than I understand myself, and He knows how He plans to use the losses in my life to bring me closer to Himself.”

What do you think this verse means: “For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?” (Luke 9:24–25 (NIV)). How do you incorporate your own testimony into classes or sessions? You are looking for ways to identify with your clients without minimizing their own sense of loss or dread. I recommend short observations followed by some comment of how God brought you through the situation and grew you from it. Here is a piece of my own “holiday pain” that I have used with clients to show them hope:

My mother passed away when I was 31. My father announced shortly thereafter that we would never again celebrate Christmas in the family home, no decorating, no gifts, no cards. That worked okay for my siblings who celebrated with their spouse’s family but for me as a single woman, there was an empty hole. I remember spending Christmas day cleaning my basement for several years. Then I married a man who had lost contact with his children from a previous marriage and had little

energy for making new traditions. We both began working at the Mission and found that we could wear ourselves out for the weeks prior to the holiday with 60-hour workweeks preparing Christmas for others. By Christmas afternoon, we were exhausted, and satisfied with the outreach for others. The holiday had new meaning. I am not suggesting that is the best way to cope, but I do know that using this time to look to the needs of others rather than dwelling on one's own losses makes for much more joy.

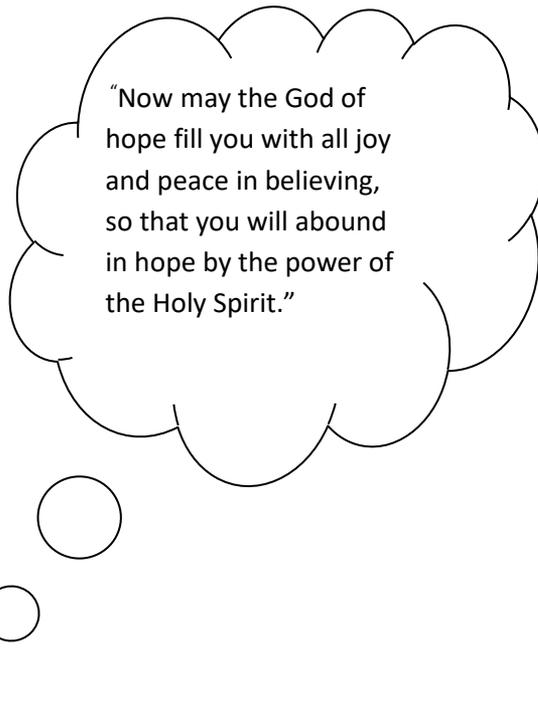
That was how I would speak with clients. But for you who are working with the clients, I want to encourage you in a different way. Do not pass this time by without relishing in the spiritual. You are called on to do your regular job and then, on top of that, celebrate the season with the clients. It can seem overwhelming. You know you get strength from understanding more about why Jesus came as a human. You know this was a time when both poor and rich were amazed with His entry into this earth-place. You, of all people, cannot afford to get lost in the busyness. Sharing from your own heart with clients makes an impact as they see where you get the motivation to do what you do.

We have all seen the ugly attitudes of some clients who seem so ungrateful for the gifts they are receiving. Again, look behind the façade and love the person. I have a picture in my head of how difficult it is to hug a porcupine. Jesus was sad when eight lepers did not respond as He would have wished. I believe He was most saddened, though, because He knew the loss was on their end.

Most of the ugly behavior you see at this season is a strange expression of fear mixed with grief. Truth is, these are the folks that Jesus agreed to come into the earth-place to be born and die for. We may never be thanked by our clients at the Mission for our

service, but since we are doing this for the glory of the Lord, He will be pleased.

For many of your clients, they just want to “get through” the holidays. Recognize where they are coming from, and be ready to offer a different path. If they have a picture of what the days will look like ahead of time, they lose some of their dread. If they are given the opportunity to reach out and make the holiday nicer for their fellow client, the angst is changed to challenge. But the time to start is ahead of the holidays. Dread is grown early on, and keeps growing as the calendar progresses. Take the opportunity in the week before or after Thanksgiving to start giving a different picture. Remember, you are working many times with new believers or with undisciplined persons. Go for the joy and peace.



**Romans 15:13**

## Chapter 26

# The Skill of Asking Effective Questions

One of the most important skills to acquire for long-term success in working with Rescue Mission clients is the skill of asking effective questions. Few people come with this skill. This skill is born out of beliefs and tested by those who have a continual desire to learn.

Here are questions to ask yourself to check your readiness to gain this skill:

- Do I listen to the client to get the whole story before making my conclusions?
- Do I resist judgment until I have probed below the surface?
- Do I have a real desire to understand the other person's view?
- Do I understand that differing perspectives and perceptions affect decision-making?
- Do I have a huge desire for clarification of facts and feelings before reacting?

If you can say yes to each of these questions, you are ready to develop this skill. Your “yes” answers mean that there is purpose in your questioning and you have a goal that is client-centered. You are more interested in getting to the truth than you are in coming to a conclusion. You understand that people think their way to change.

Effective questions help you to connect with the client in a more meaningful way. When I am asking how they see the situation, they begin to get the opinion that I think their ideas matter. There are many ways to show respect to people, but a superior way is to

respect their ability to think. Most people yearn to be listened to. This is a way for clients to experience you as relational.

We sometimes ask questions in order to get clarity for ourselves. We seek to more fully understand the client's presenting problem. A larger purpose of questions is to help the other person clarify his or her own thinking. Immediate cooperation is often the result of a command or instruction but long-term effects are the result of the person coming to his or her own correct conclusion, led by responding to effective questions. Effective questions allow you to direct the path of information toward a useful conclusion. We help people take responsibility for their actions and more easily solve problems if we ask questions.

Of course, we use questions sometimes to get cooperation and to defuse volatile situations. Used with wrong motives, we can manipulate or shame people into a temporary change of behavior.

This skill also has much usefulness with interaction among staff. Asking effective questions results in more solution-oriented problem solving and a reduction of mistakes.

Summarizing, behind effective questioning is:

- ability to listen
- willingness to suspend judgment
- intent on understanding
- clarification of fact and feeling
- freedom to evaluate personal perceptions
- desire to improve opportunity for clear perspective



**Beware** of the hazards that keep you from asking effective questions because of poor listening habits. Here are reasons why some have trouble with listening. If you truly want to help the client, these issues must be discarded:

- ❖ Desire to keep control of the conversation
- ❖ Dedicated to preconceived opinion
- ❖ In a hurry
- ❖ Desire to demonstrate own intelligence and skill
- ❖ Afraid of emotion

The payoff for getting good at asking effective questions is huge. Not only do you connect with your clients in a more meaningful way, you better and more fully understand your clients' problems. This allows you to help people take responsibility for their actions and solve problems more easily.

The skill of asking effective questions is also very useful in defusing volatile situations and getting cooperation. This skill helps you when working with clients who are argumentative or into avoidance.

This skill will also help you work with your fellow staff more effectively, doing more solution-oriented problem-solving and reducing mistakes. It is a useful way to plant your own ideas and even persuade people. Asking always gets you further than telling.

## Developing the Skill

An effective question is thought-provoking, open-ended, and not leading. An open-ended question is one that cannot be answered by one word or a yes or no. Closed questions can be used to start a conversation or summarize progress since the last encounter, but it is still useful to follow that confirmation with open questions. Closed questions are also good to use to finish a time by seeking commitment.

The best questions start with “what.”

*What are you doing?*

*What shall we do next?*

*What happened?*

*What is stopping you from succeeding?*

*What is the most important thing to do now?*

*What are you trying to achieve?*

*What is the real problem?*

*What is the solution?*

“Why” questions often tempt the client to lie or cover up. Here is where we have to understand the role of guilt versus shame.

“Who” questions often tempt the client to manipulate or get into the blame game.

Any skill is developed through practice. This skill is worth the practice. Try it. You’ll like it!

## Chapter 27

# The Accountability Issue

Most humans do not crave accountability. Putting it mildly, most humans resist accountability. Yet at the Mission, we know that accountability is one of the important services we offer to our clients. We will consider two aspects:

How do we interest clients  
in accepting accountability from us?

How do we maintain an atmosphere of “helping”  
while practicing accountability?

First, let’s be sure we have an accurate definition of accountability. As staff at a Rescue Mission, what are we offering our clients when we offer accountability?

Accountability is NOT controlling a person’s behavior. It is not managing their compliance with rules. Accountability is a loving commitment made with the view to assisting a person to succeed in a goal they, themselves, have set. Accountability means giving clients confidentiality without judgment, creating a safe atmosphere to fall and get back up. It is part of the process of change.



A major way that we can help our clients succeed is to influence them in practicing honesty. Check out your own experience. What percentage of your clients who lose their program status or who drop out have not yet learned personal honesty? Our clients come to us with limited proof of integrity and often without any experience in the practice of honesty. So we offer them a way to grow through accountability. We usually dislike accountability

because it forces us to grow in humility. It is a humble person who says, “I need help in being truthful.”

Another underlying reason all humans resist accountability is a misunderstanding of control. Human beings like control. Actually, it is in our DNA from creation. The problem is, we mix up what it is that we are to control. Self-control is rated high in Scripture, whereas the attempted control of others is unwise. As we discuss accountability with the client, we must show that the result is increased self-control. When I am acting as an accountability partner with the client, I am merely giving them a boost in their ability to retain control of their behaviors.

### **What Techniques Do We Use to Make Accountability Work?**

We start by getting on the same page. What goal does the client have, that you agree with, that requires commitment? Does the client understand that having a partner in reaching that goal is a scriptural and wise practice?

As you introduce the concept of accountability to the client, insist that the responsibility to set goals and to plan the accomplishment of those goals belongs to the client. Invite them to design a personal accountability plan including giving permission to hold themselves accountable as one of the steps to achieving accountability and subsequent success. Without setting agreed-upon goals, there can be no accountability.

***“Accountability only has strength  
when there is a buy in of the goal.” - CW Rucker***

For the client who has rarely received any affirmation, simple accountability promotes this experience. Having goals that are small enough to accomplish, and then to be praised for that accomplishment, puts the whole tone of accountability in a very desirable form. Success is a strong motivator in developing new

habits and practices and the art of accountability will promote that motivation.

Truth is a great educator! We can easily teach about scriptural accountability by looking at Scripture regarding our accountability to God (Romans 14:10-12). Helping the client to see that by utilizing God's provision of having human partners in accountability, we grow in our eagerness to have accountability with God.

At City Union Mission, we developed a practice among staff called "catch 'em being good." Every day, and especially in every team meeting, before we shared something negative about a client's lack of progress, we had to state something that showed the positive. This certainly changed our perspective and instead of making our meetings longer with extra reporting, we noticed the paragraphs of "griping" became significantly shorter.

David Busick at Opportunity Farm in Warsaw, Missouri, practices accountability by asking questions to uncover the truth. This practice allows you to move beyond everybody-from-the-same-cookie-cutter checklist approach. Asking questions and letting the client think through his or her actions promotes self-accountability.

Motivation to seek accountability is increased, both from seeing the value in practicing it, and also seeing the potential harm in refusing it. Once I learn the biblical principle of sowing and reaping, I will see accountability as a way to avoid negative consequences (Galatians 6:7).

If you would succeed in instilling an appreciation for accountability in the life of your client, you yourself must be willing to be accountable in front of each of them. That means if I am late to an appointment I better be willing to ask their forgiveness and give a rational reason for my lateness. Accountability is always a two-way street. Even Almighty God has been explicit in making sure we know from Scripture that He does what He says He will do, and that

He keeps His promises (Deuteronomy 7:9; Titus 1:2). I am to follow His example.

**Galatians 6:1 (NIV)**

“Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.”

**Romans 14:12 (NIV)**

“So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.”

**Jeremiah 17:10 (NIV)**

“I the LORD search the heart  
and examine the mind,  
to reward each person according to their conduct,  
according to what their deeds deserve.”

**Luke 16:10-12 (NIV)**

“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own?”

## Chapter 28

# Biblical Hospitality

Many of us are in the ministry of sheltering those who have found themselves homeless. We are following the command to care for the poor through providing for physical needs. Our assignment goes much deeper. Much more than providing for the physical need is the command to love. Meeting physical needs without love is useless (1 Corinthians 13:3). Hospitality is a demonstration of your love for your client.

God went to great lengths in the early Hebrew times to instruct His people to be hospitable. It became a way of life for them, looking out for the needs of the stranger among them. It gives us pause to see that the practice of hospitality was a way of bringing others into relationship with Him.

In following the example set before us by Jesus, we learn the value of welcoming. Hospitality can be defined as the practice of making the other person feel welcomed. Our clients are experientially trained to pick up on cues of the behavior and body language of those who come to serve them. Respect and acceptance are both hidden signs of hospitality the client evaluates.

Isaiah reminds us of God's reputation in Isaiah 25:4 (NIV). "You have been a refuge for the poor, a refuge for the needy in their distress, a shelter from the storm, and a shade from the heat." We have the opportunity to represent Him as we provide a refuge for those entering our doors. In order to understand the magnitude of what being a refuge means, start with understanding how God is a refuge for you. David frequently thanked God for refuge. "For you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the foe" (Psalm 61:2-3). Jeremiah understood refuge also. "O LORD, my strength and

my fortress, my refuge in time of distress" (Jeremiah 16:19(NIV)). Built into this provision is the sense of safety from the storms of life. Hospitality would indicate that I need to offer a place of security rather than a place of demand or ridicule. It is not enough that I treat the clients with love and concern, but I must also make a full attempt to protect them from the mistreatment from other clients. This raises the bar several notches and gives me motivation for maintaining a secure place.

Most Rescue Missions rely on chapels to share the Gospel. You might want to ask those who have found the Lord at the Mission what really was the motivation for seeking the Lord. Many will tell you what first opened their heart to consider Jesus was when they saw Him in the Mission staff. Hospitality allows us to show the effects of the Gospel in our own lives. Scripture says repeatedly, Truth is shared in love.

Why are we sometimes tempted to put hospitality on the back burner? We are too busy to be nice? We might give people the wrong impression, and they will want to take advantage of our pleasantness? We have had a hard day ourselves, and we deserve a little appreciation. They are hateful, and they do not deserve my care. I need to give to others what they are handing me. Yield not to temptation! No wonder Peter admonished us in 1 Peter 4:9 (ESV), "Show hospitality to one another without grumbling." Turn the moment into gratitude that God has considered you worthy to care for His creation in their lowest point.

Perhaps the great lesson for us as we attempt to obey the command to "Practice hospitality," Romans 12:13, is that such practice requires that we also obey Philippians 2:3, doing nothing from selfishness or conceit but humbly regarding others as more important than ourselves.

People want to know how much you care before they care how much you know.

## Chapter 29

# Recognizing the Value of Resistance

Many ministry workers see resistance in a negative light. After all, resistance seems to slow down progress for change. In reality, resistance is a very valid part of the process of seeing someone come to a long-standing change.

Resistance gives us clues of what hang-ups are getting in the way of progress. Ignoring these obstacles only short-circuits the desired growth. Being able to address the hang-ups clears the way for profitable change.



We sometimes are tempted to take offense at resistance because we believe the person is resisting us rather than seeing the resistance as directed toward some roadblock. Make the competition between both of you and the problem at hand, rather than between you and the other person.

Without resistance, products made from metals would be destroyed by erosion; without resistance planes would not be able to land because they would lose the capability of friction; without resistance, a car would not have brakes; without resistance, we would not have electrical heating and no control over the usable amount of electricity. Resistance is a valuable fact of life.

For the purpose of this discussion, we will define resistance as “saying no, pushing away, fighting against, refusing, opposing.”

Resistance is often present when there is a sense of threat. Threat comes in many ways. Here is a chart to show not only why I am

resistant but also what I can do to get past resistance. If it works for me, perhaps I could offer it to the client.

<b>Why am I resistant?</b>	<b>How can I get past this?</b>
Fear of loss of control	Agree with God about His control
My experience says it won't work	Recognize difference in my strength and His
I like my comfort zone	Evaluate consequence of no change
Don't know if it is worth it	Find out, ask others who have changed
Fear of failure	Get God's perspective on failure
Just don't want to	Pray – ask God to make you willing

Without the opportunity for the client to see the source of his response, he will not have the opportunity to develop work and relational skills for his future. Resistance is a form of passive-aggressive behavior, sometimes a learned response in reaction to authority. There are those clients who have learned resistance as a way of manipulation and even sabotage.

Some people just have a habit of resistance. I know, because I was one of those. No matter what, something new is met with doubt, hesitation, and distrust. The good side of that coin is evaluation and discretion. The opposite side is procrastination and inflexibility.

The starting point always needs to be agreement on what is the goal. Then follow this with questions rather than preaching. If you can share in the goal at hand, you can help the client to see options to meet that goal. When they come up with “their own ideas,” they do not resist.

We can exacerbate the situation by initially giving clients something to resist, like starting the conversation with “You need to change your behavior.” We need to roll with their resistance. Avoid arguing for change, actually inviting people to defend the behavior they might change. Most people have a lot of ambivalence, and if we can identify it, we can help them wrestle with it.

For starters:

- Seek to clarify, understand
- Reinforce person’s role as problem-solver
- Keep on your client’s side
- Confront by asking questions
- Offer new perspectives

When should I be resistant?

- *when it is scriptural to do so*
- *when God’s plans for me are challenged*
- *when someone could be hurt*

Help your clients see the value in using their resistance ability to resist in good ways, and the waste of resisting in ways that are not good. Again, you will have greater success if you do this via questions.

<b>Resistance That Is Good</b>	<b>Resistance That Is Not Good</b>
Resist Evil One	Saying no to God
Drugs	God-Directed Authority
Sin/Wrong	Learning
Temptation	Playing Dumb
Fears that keep me down	Avoidance
Peer Pressure	Lying

One good reason for resistance is the desire for your clients to develop critical-thinking skills so they will not accept everything that is said to them.

Rather than getting hung up on seeing the client as just stubborn, here is an opportunity to get to the bottom of the specific issue at hand and also to develop new practices for a new life. I challenge you to see it as opportunity for a changed life.

## ***Motivation to change***

Ready – a matter of priorities

Willing – importance of change

Able – confidence to change

Do I know it is worth it?

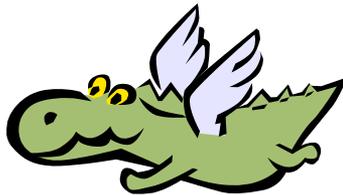
Do I know the pathway works?

Do I trust the people involved?

Who is in charge?

What is my responsibility?

What will be the result?



## Chapter 30

# Control Issues and Power Plays

Control and power are responsibilities God gives His servants. When used as God gives them, there is great advantage. When used in the flesh, there is great opportunity for destruction. This is an issue to solve before I can expect to have much impact on others.

Let's review the facts:

- God is Sovereign. That means He is in control. The only control I have is what He gives me.
- I am assigned to develop self-control. This assignment is a prerequisite to receiving more assignments.
- I am never to control other people. I am to assist them in cooperating with God's control.
- God is not a God of confusion. He gives me the responsibility of maintaining order. Proper control prevents chaos.

God has made each of us as choice-makers. When I take away a person's responsibility to make choices, I am denying that they are made in the image of God. I control the environment but I give the client a choice in whether to cooperate with that environment.

When a person has violated their stay at the Mission, I do not assume that they are to leave because I said so, but because they made a choice to be not in compliance. Since my responsibility is to control the environment of the shelter, I must enforce rules of safety. The client chooses to cooperate to receive the provision.

Staff may have control issues for a number of reasons. If you have a problem with control, check out these possibilities to give you an opportunity to work on this area of your life:

- Heart issues – pride, self-centeredness, fear
- Learned through survival

- Modeled from parents
- Not wanting to be offended
- Not wanting to be judged
- Developed a pattern, habit
- A misunderstanding of who “I” am
- Being dependent on self instead of God
- “I want things MY way”

We begin by developing qualities of self-control, humility, patience, and respect.

Proverbs 25:28

“Like a city that is broken into  
and without walls  
Is a man who has no control  
over his spirit.”

We then develop understanding of the role of power and control in our lives. When God created humans, He gave them dominion over certain areas (Genesis 1:28). Learning to exercise that dominion is part of representing God in this world. Misusing that dominion is copying the practice of the enemy.

What controls me is master over me. *“For by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved”* (2 Peter 2:19). Sometimes we give away our control (responsibility) to people, places, or things, by the way we think, speak, or act. We allow addictions, habits, attitudes, people, and even desire, to control us. Paul had the right answer in 2 Corinthians 5:14, *“For the love of Christ controls us.”*

Whether I am tempted to misuse the authority I have been given and get into a power play, or whether I find myself grumbling about someone else trying to control me, I need to check my focus. Do I focus on what others should be doing or on what I can be doing? The best antidote for being upset about feeling controlled is to remember this truth: Other people are responsible and

accountable before God, and I am responsible for my choices, my actions, and myself.

We usually label a person with control issues as someone who uses aggressive communication, comes across as bossy, or is abusive. There are many more observable characteristics such as coming across as a know-it-all, being manipulative, not receiving instruction, being a self-pleaser with no regard for others, snapping easily, or being overbearing and rude. None of these characteristics is Christ-like and none is useful in ministry.

### **Fear Is the Root of Most Control Issues and Power Plays.**

When I have to protect my turf, when I feel that I have to always watch over my shoulder for someone who is wanting to diminish my ideas or standing, or when I feel like I always have to fight for my rights, I am impeding ministry with fear. Who is in charge here? Who is in charge of your future? This ministry belongs to Whom? Check some different translations of these verses for your encouragement: Proverbs 21:31 and Psalm 20:7. Study the life of Joshua to see a powerful man who believed God was his protector from his own people and his enemies.

A few years back there was a popular bumper sticker that read, "Question Authority." It seemed to be a mantra for clients at the Mission. Perhaps the real issue was more about control and feeling controlled. As you learn to use control in a godly way, you will have opportunity to show that authority is God-given (Romans 13:1-4), and includes being accountable before Him for how it is used. We must help clients to see the difference between self-reliance and dependence. Understanding Who is in ultimate control and why He has given us the ability to make choices, allows us to be free of fear.

As staff, sometimes when we want things a certain way, we may discover it has more to do with what we think we do best rather than considering that others have abilities and good ideas. Much is

lost in ministry when there is no sense of unity and community. Let it begin with me.

You will from time to time encounter a control issue where the person wants to be controlled. There is accumulated fear of failure, fear of not doing something right. Soon this will result in an opportunity for laziness or a lack of initiative. These folks are people-pleasers, with poor boundaries and no self-respect. You may like working with such compliant people, but they are not who they were created to be. Helping them to see the benefit of being under God's control is the answer to their freedom. Confidence in who God made them to be improves their quality of life.

Sometimes we do not even recognize our control issues. One way we may try to control others is through manipulation.

Manipulation is simply a convenient way of lying and deceiving. Sometimes we control by using trade or bartering – the “you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours” attitude. Too often, we display improper control mechanisms with clients when we refuse to put situations in proper perspective, lose patience, and rudely move them out of our way.

As discussed many times in this book, we are empowered to help others with issues in which we ourselves have found some level of victory. As you work with clients, you will see indications of power issues through their comments as well as their actions. Please become alert to opportunities for intervention in faulty thinking. Here are some samples of comments you may hear:

1. The devil made me do it – *an excuse and a lie. No one can make you do something. It is your choice.*
2. He made me angry – *another excuse. We are responsible for our choices/actions.*
3. I can't make my own decisions here in this mission – *Lie. You can make whatever decisions you want here, but you have to be willing to accept the consequences for your choices.*

4. I cannot remember what we did in class two days ago – *Excuse.*
5. This is messing with me – *Excuse.*
6. Addiction cravings call me – *Excuse. You are putting yourself in the control of something other than God. When you choose to feed cravings, they keep coming back.*
7. Leave me alone. I am taking charge of my own recovery – *Dependence on Christ is crucial to our recovery.*

Part of the control issue for the client is learning to survive in a structured environment. This is perhaps the first time they have come face to face with the difference between being in charge and being in control. This is a time for education and mercy.

So as you wrestle through this area in your life, remember that when God created us, we were programmed for control. Proper control prevents chaos and promotes quality of life. It is a responsibility assigned from God and not to be misused. We have the opportunity to honor Him with our lives when we practice self-control. Rather than trying to control others, we help them to be wise choice-makers.

When you put on the badge that says you are “staff,” you are given a measure of authority and power, assigned a responsibility of control within the workplace. Consider an alternative to your past definitions of power and control, with the substitution of the word, “Influence.” Your best role in the ministry is that of Influencer. Your success in being a person of influence has much to do with the way you use your authority, power, and control.

**“Walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love.”**

**- Apostle Paul, Ephesians 4:1-2**

## Chapter 31

# Addictions Overview

Since there are several different beliefs among Rescue Missions regarding addiction to substances, this document will address only the overview of how front-line staff should address this debilitating problem among our clientele. The most important thing we can all agree on is this is an issue that must be addressed. If you want a conversation on whether addiction is a disease, or if there should be restrictions on how a recovering person refers to himself, this chapter is not for you. You do need to be in unity with the rest of the staff so you are talking with a united voice, but here we are considering what we need to be addressing with our clients.

Here are some common understandings:

Addiction is a gradual process, beginning with use, moving to abuse, and developing into addiction. The movement along this path is quicker for some substances. Alcohol addiction can sometimes take years to develop, whereas some drug addictions can happen almost immediately. In the same way, relapse is not usually an overnight event. A person is often in relapse long before they actually use the substance. It is our responsibility to learn the signs of relapse and be able to warn the recovering person.

Addiction is widespread in our lives. Addiction to substances is the most easily identified, but the principles of addiction apply to practices of pornography, spending habits, lying, eating, sexual behavior, relationships, and even exercise, to name a few. The real definition of addiction is a “worship disorder,” placing something or someone above God in the way we live our lives. The addicted

person plans his day to practice his addiction, and is willing to sacrifice to participate.

The same things that ensure a person victory in beginning recovery become the evident signposts of danger if they are discarded. Acceptance of the problem, awareness of the result of continued behavior, humility to reach out for help, and willingness to be accountable, are all beginning practices of recovery. Moving away from any one of these is the beginning of relapse.

What responsibility do we have to provide for the recovering person?

One way you can discover the signs of relapse is to have a good conversation with a person who has relapsed, if they will be honest with you. Most of them have stopped reading their Bible and have skipped church attendance. Many recovering persons know the phrase “stinking thinking,” the thought process that leads a person down the path to full-blown relapse. None of us can afford to get into grumbling, criticalness, lying, or hiding. If you hope to help a person in recovery, you will need to have ways to encourage them in maintaining healthy godly thinking.

Part of recovery is to learn a new way of thinking. It is the responsibility of the Mission to assist new disciples. For instance, consider a class about getting off your pity pot. There are plenty of Scriptures about ridding your thinking of self-pity: 1 Corinthians 13:5; Philippians 4:11-13; Romans 12:1-15; and Hebrews 13:5. Some classes in honesty, gratitude, and contentment would give opportunity to clean up old thought patterns. Rescue Missions need to offer truth as the alternative to addiction thinking.

Providing a safe place to begin and continue recovery is important. Separate those who are trying to quit an addiction from those who continue to either use or express desire to use. Set up a structure

for developing new habits of sleep times, of social interaction, and early restriction from getting in the wrong parts of town.

Relapse signs include irritability, resentment, withdrawal, loss of focus, or boredom. These are thought patterns that were medicated in the past. Learn to identify changes in the behavior of the recovering person and be willing to address it.

Normal early-withdrawal symptoms include mood swings, anxiety, depression, sleeplessness, and memory loss. Whatever you share with a client in the first days of withdrawal needs to be repeated when the mind clears. A person who stops feeding his or her addiction usually has at least three days of symptoms. The body has to clear out the stored chemicals. The length of time depends on the substance and the amount of usage. Nicotine takes at least a week to clear, while some of the other drugs take longer.

We need to have frank discussions about cravings and triggers. They are different and they are successfully handled in different ways. Cravings will come. Cravings are the desires which, if not handled correctly, turn into an urge for action. A craving will last seconds, maybe 3-5 minutes, and can be avoided by distraction, truth-telling, etc. A trigger, on the other hand, is a cue that is set off by something that reminds the addicted person of their past use or current “need” for the substance. It can be music, people, events, places, etc. Both cravings and triggers will eventually become less powerful as new methods of thinking are developed.

The recovering person needs to hear that dreams of using are normal. These times can be reframed to give freedom. A useful way of responding when awaking from such a dream is to turn it to thankfulness to God for deliverance from the old way of life.

The more myths that can be replaced with truth, the more the client is helped on the way to recovery. Since denial is always a challenge for a person deciding to begin recovery or to continue on

the path to recovery, simple facts need to be presented. For instance, blackouts are a sign of the second phase of alcohol addiction. Although they eventually cease while the person is continuing to drink, they are not getting better, but are progressing to a third phase of the addiction. It is a myth that people who have crossed the line into alcohol addiction can eventually learn to “manage” their intake. Abstinence is their only future of freedom.

We need to warn our recovering persons of physical ways recovery can be compromised. Be careful when receiving donations to check for anything that could compromise the abstinence commitment of a person in recovery. For instance, many well-meaning donors will provide mouthwash that has a high alcohol content. Alcohol-free mouthwash is quite available. We all know of clients who relapsed when they discovered the availability of Nyquil from our medicine cabinets. When a client has a medical procedure where the doctor wants to give pain medication, teach the client to ask for non-narcotic alternatives.

Missions differ in how relapse is viewed. We know that how we respond to a client’s use affects the thinking of the other clients in recovery. Some Missions exercise a total-abstinence policy accompanied with regular testing. Others treat with grace the client who “slips” and returns to confess. Research shows that only 5% of clients who stop cold turkey never have a relapse problem, and their attitude many times reverts to one of pride.

Everyone needs a relapse prevention plan. When relapse is aborted before substance use, and the client gains ground in learning relapse prevention practices, we see that as a victory. When a person experiences a full-blown relapse, destroying the ground gained in their recovery, we too often excuse it in our minds with the idea that the person had not hit bottom yet. Are there, instead, some things we need to implement in all of the above?

The majority of clients coming to us to achieve freedom from substance addiction do not have all the information needed. We can help each one as we work through a relapse prevention plan with them. There are many examples of healthy relapse prevention plans on the web. One thorough resource is <http://www.usdrugrehabcenters.com/the-relapse-prevention-plan/>. The important note here is that someone cares enough to sit down with the client to talk it through.

The spiritual component in recovery is basic and foundational. Anyone can stop using/drinking. But when life comes under the Lordship of Jesus, the thinking process begins to be cured, which changes more than behavior. You have heard of dry drunks. We may help a client who is in a long-term program “simply” refrain from using because they are in a safe locale. If their thinking has not changed, they are simply a non-using, sad example of a captive Jesus came to set free.

Since all freedom from addiction includes basic practices of honesty, accountability, and self-control, the spiritual component is radically necessary. We need the power of the Holy Spirit living within us. Only through God can we do all things. We learn to worship Almighty God rather than a counterfeit power. We learn to seek His presence, the One with whom we have to be fully transparent.



# **Part III**

# **Serving the**

# **Staff**



## Chapter 32

# Leading Good Discussions

If you intend to have an impact with groups of adults, you need to acquire the skill of leading discussions. Adults learn and retain by speaking the facts themselves, not just sitting and hearing someone else speak.

A group discussion usually needs a leader if the group is five or more. A good group discussion is going to include the ideas from everyone in the group so a leader is needed for traffic control. Some participants will be too ready to talk and others will be reticent.

Since you as the leader want to hear from everyone in the group, you have a responsibility as you guide the discussion to encourage participation from those who are less verbal and minimize participation from those who could monopolize.

Sometimes the effective discussion leader needs to ask intriguing, challenging, or provocative questions to move the group to further thought. Sample questions when the group is not making much progress could be:

Do you agree with what she is saying? Why or why not?

Do you think there is a better way to get this done?

What do you think would happen if we did this?

Brainstorming is a technique used in discussions to broaden the creative thought. To utilize this, first explain to the participants that brainstorming rules say that no one can be critical of another's comments. There can be a time when people disagree, but save

that for later. Brainstorming allows each person to think outside the normal box.

If the desired outcome is to increase knowledge for participants, as in a class setting or a staff meeting, then one necessary component is the art of summarizing. After one or more persons have given an answer to a crucial question, the leader summarizes by bringing out the preferred information. One way I have found useful to summarize is to take notes on the white board of the comments being made as they fit into an outline of desired information.

Seek feedback during and following the discussion to verify the discussion was productive. This is done best with open-ended questions.

Here are some specific rules to help you become a good discussion leader for client groups.

1. Know your desired outcome. Why are you having this discussion? When you know why you want to have a discussion, then you know how to guide the discussion. There is a big difference between having a discussion to impart new information/knowledge and having a discussion to clarify thinking. When you know your goal, you will find it easier to keep on track.
2. Some potential reasons to engage a group in a discussion include:
  - (a) Inspire curiosity in a topic or concern
  - (b) Get participants to make their own discoveries by contrasting their views with the views of others
  - (c) Discover levels of understanding within the group
3. If you do not know your desired outcome, you will tend to stray far and end up wondering if it was all a waste of time...and probably it would be.
4. Commit to seeing yourself as a facilitator and not the guru with all the answers. Understand the wisdom of the

statement, “It's not about me.” If you do not do this, you will tend to dominate the conversation and keep the participants from actual growth.



5. Be aware of the physical surroundings to prevent as many distractions as possible. Many times clients will enter into discussions easier if they are able to sit around a table rather than in a circle, with less concern about their physical appearance.
6. Be prepared. Know enough about the topic for discussion that you do not permit the propagation of false information or error. Without this, your integrity will be in question and in some cases, you will have the proverbial egg on your face.
7. Learn the art of affirming, even when the person has not been the most articulate. Without this skill, you will end up having fewer and fewer people making comments out of fear of inadequacy. Sometimes when a person gives wrong information, you can respond with something appreciative of their participation without giving agreement to their comment. An example would be, “Well, Steve, I really like the way you speak clearly, and I am glad you shared that, because I want to talk about some new information in that area.” Of course, before the discussion is completed, you

will be careful to review and clarify the accurate information.

8. Plan the time. Have a solid introduction that clearly states what the topic of the hour is, and then ask an introductory type question. Have several questions prepared that get more and more challenging. Always close the discussion with review, either one that you have developed or ask for feedback from the participants, e.g. "What is the most important thing we gained today from this discussion?"

The role of discussion in the process of working with clients in a Rescue Mission is major. Chapels and counseling are both important but every staff person needs to look for opportunities for small group discussions. We want to follow Jesus' example!

## Giving Effective Instructions

As Rescue Mission staff, we have the responsibility to give instructions to clients on multiple levels. From chores to room maintenance to applications to job hunts, we are frequently instructing clients on procedures. Developing skill in this area is part of respect and hospitality, as well as training. If we give shoddy directions to accomplish an assignment and the client does not do according to our desires, perhaps we need to come to understand that we may have set the client up to fail. On the other hand, if we give too much detail when giving directions, we may be seen as putting the person down. Technique and skill in this area will do much to improve both our relationship with the client as well as preventing wasted time for both of us.

In order to gain some compassion and motivation to learn this skill, remember the last time you opened a box of something that you had to assemble, and the frustration you felt with the way the instructions were written.

Or consider the time when you stopped at the service station to ask directions and were given the run-around. Why did you feel irritation? Probably the same reason your client will be frustrated if given ineffective instructions.

### Effective Instructions Are:

- clear
- concise
- well-defined
- comprehensive
- complete
- unambiguous
- goal-directed

First, we have to understand a principle of leadership: “Do Not Assume.” If you have done a chore many times, it is easy to

assume that every person would know how to do it. Surely everyone knows how to mop a floor or how to load an institutional dishwasher! Really? Instead of such an inaccurate assumption, think back to the first time you had to do said chore and think about what you wish someone had told you. Such an example will give you a humorous way of introducing your verbal instruction the next time. Allow the client to understand that everyone learns things for the first time, and because you are not privy to know how much a person knows, you have developed your instructions to reach everyone. You can always respectfully say something like, “I apologize if this is something you are already skilled in, but bear with me to give you the way we do things here in case that is different from your method.”

Next, we need to have a clear understanding of the finished product. If you have ever tried to manipulate a wood puzzle, you know a clear picture of the end product is crucial. Giving the client a heads-up at the beginning of the instruction by describing the quality and the value of the finished project, puts even the most menial of tasks in a good light. For instance, instructing a client in how to load the commercial dishwasher correctly is prefaced by a short acknowledgement of how important proper sanitation is to the clients who are exposed to many germs in close living quarters. And, of course, a little humor is also useful: “You may think we are training you to be a dishwasher, but in reality we are training you to be an Environmental Sanitation Expert!”

Providing other overall information, either before or after giving the steps to follow, is also useful. How long will this take? How often do we have to repeat it? How will I know if it was successfully

completed? What is the worst thing that could happen if I don't get it right the first time?

Set the training atmosphere as a safe place. Encouraging the client to ask questions and give input promotes a sense of inclusion. An important “fact” for them to know is there is no such thing around here as a “stupid” question.

Remember that your client does not like to fail and often has a fear of more failure. For most, there has been little history of affirmation for jobs well done. For these reasons, there is frequent resistance to someone evaluating the finished work, but this is a great opportunity for growth if the evaluation is done correctly.

Think of every step that must be done. To mop the floor, one step that must be included is how to prepare the cleaning solution. What step has to be done before you can do the step you are describing? To instruct a person to “take the bus” may need to be preceded with “acquire a bus route” or “discover the bus stops.”

Break down the task into short steps given in order of sequence. Sometimes, numbering the steps gives a way of helping recall.

Stay on task. It is so easy to start chattering and skip around, promoting confusion for the novice. Do your visiting before or after giving the step-by-step procedure.

Don’t mumble! If you have given the same instruction every day to new people, resist the temptation to go to “boring automatic monotone.” Use universal language. If your instructions say to use a wet mop or a deck mop when there is only one kind of mop in the closet, just say “mop.” I have long accepted the axiom that a great communicator speaks the language of the listener. If I am showing off for the trainee with my vast command of the English language, I need not expect great results.

There are three basic learning styles: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Visual learners think in pictures, auditory ones think in sound and dialogue, and kinesthetic learners need motion and gesture to understand. We need to learn how to give instructions

that cover all three. If you have a task that you are repeatedly training clients to perform, then write down simple directions to give them. Visuals are even better.

Use caution if you are assigning the responsibility of training or giving instructions to a client. New problems arise when you ask one client to train another. Use this method successfully only if the client has already passed the “humble test,” and actually follows instructions on how to give instructions. A client usually does not yet know how to deal with resistance and disrespect.

Demonstration is best for physical tasks. Give the verbal instruction. Then demonstrate. Then give a written sequence of activity. For more mental or behavioral instruction, such as how to decide which job opportunity is best, discussion replaces the demonstration step.

Check for understanding. Ask the trainee to repeat the steps back to you. In order to keep this from the appearance of being demeaning, you can raise the level of value by asking them to tell you the steps they would list to train the next person to do this chore.

Another way to confirm understanding is to give examples of previous observations of failure and ask how to prevent that. For example, after finishing instructions on how to mop the cafeteria floor, tell the story of some time back when the mopped floor was very sticky, and ask the trainee what part of the instruction was probably not followed.

Understand that a number of your clients for one reason or another have very short attention spans. Make your times of instruction short but repeatable, with review planned throughout. If the assigned task has two parts, stop and confirm understanding after the first before proceeding. You can say things like, “I want to make sure I did okay with giving these instructions.”

Learn from your mistakes. Clients at CUM are now instructed how to carry the trash bags out to the dumpster after much experience

**Problems to avoid:**

- Leaving a piece out
- Talking too fast
- Making assumptions
- Using language that can be misunderstood

in time-consuming cleaning of the concrete where food liquids seeped out of bags dragged across a rough texture!

Before you complete your preparation to give specific instructions, play a game with yourself. Pretend you are the person you are about to instruct and work through the steps yourself. If you

can't do the task perfectly with your instructions, go back and reconstruct the procedure.

We learn to give effective instructions at the mission for three reasons:

- ✓ we don't have the time or resources to do jobs over.
- ✓ we want to give life-skill training to clients that can be transferable on the job or in the home in the future.
- ✓ we get a built-in opportunity to give affirmation and respect to clients.

*Lord, help me  
to have the  
same  
perspective  
You have  
for Your  
creation.*

## Chapter 34

# Detours, Discouragements, and Disappointments

So why are we going to talk about all three together? What do they have in common? Do they have similar solutions? Truth is, you will experience all three if you are in ministry. If you are going to succeed in ministry, you have to learn how to deal with all three.

### Definitions

A “detour” is “a roundabout way or course, a deviation from a direct course of action.”

“Discouragement” is defined as “to lose courage, confidence and energy.” Discouragement can cause a loss of motivation.

“Disappointment” is “the feeling of being let down, or a feeling of sadness or frustration because something was not as good or satisfactory as expected, or because something hoped for did not happen.” Enough disappointment can result in discouragement.

Warren Wiersbe observed, “Depression and discouragement are occupational hazards of the ministry.”

### Roots

What is behind each of these? If they feed on each other, what starts the process?

A major source of disappointment and discouragement is those crazy things we call “expectations.” We tend to have lots of them...expectations of the Mission, of staff, of clients, of ourselves. We have expectations of results, of timing. We have realistic ones and those we don’t realize are unrealistic. There is one expectation I encourage and only one: In order to be truly prepared for ministry in the real world, we must expect ministry to be often difficult and sometimes discouraging! Expectations probably mean that we are putting our confidence in someone or something other

than God. He is the only One who will always do what He says He will do and be what He says He will be.

A second root or source of discouragement is weariness. We are warned in Galatians 6:9 (KJV), “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

And 2 Thessalonians 3:13 warns, “But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good.”

Some definitions of weariness include:

- *Having run out of strength, patience, or endurance*
- *Lack of strength, inner drive, and motivation*
- *Unable to exert yourself anymore*
- *No more endurance*
- *Feeling like, “I’ve given out and have no more to give”*
- *Lack of strength to keep moving forward*

This feeling of exhaustion on the inside that arises when we feel like we just don’t have the strength or motivation to keep going, is one we must deal with and learn to overcome. This kind of feeling is not just because you are physically tired, it is the result of emotional and spiritual tiredness which has been allowed to set in. Getting physical rest alone won’t deal with it. Disappointments in ministry and the resulting discouragement weigh on us, and over time cause us to get weary and tired on the inside. We don’t suddenly go from being strong and courageous in God to being weary. It is not an overnight thing. It’s a process of slipping backwards.

The enemy “sifts you” through pressure here and then there, one disappointment, then another, each time getting you out of the Word, further from God, and weaker spiritually. He wears you down over time, with the goal of getting you off track, away from God, and eventually to get you to give up.

A third condition that produces disappointment and discouragement is focus. We are greatly affected by our perspective. Is our focus on people and things around us – or are we focused on God and His call on our life?

We need to remind ourselves that God called us, and that His hand is upon us – He is all we need to make it. As you move into

ministry, expect to be down, but don't let it take you out. Don't let disappointment and discouragement lead you to defeat.

Instead of giving in to discouragement from the disappointment of not seeing fruit from your efforts, remember your job is not to wait around to see the end result of everyone's life where you had some input. You are not in charge. God is, and He will keep tracking with what He is accomplishing in that person's life. You had the privilege to be one cog in the wheel. If being one cog in the wheel tempts you to feel insignificant, imagine a wheel without one cog. I am to be faithful in what God assigns me.

What is your perspective of the situation you find yourself in? Is God's perspective different or bigger? Disappointments may really be His-appointments (Romans 8:28). No experience in life can come in that is not Father-filtered. God has allowed these situations in my life. The delay is there because God has allowed that delay. The difficulty is there because God has allowed that difficulty. The disappointment is there because God has allowed that disappointment. The discouraging situation is there because God has allowed it. Disappointment then becomes an issue of, "Am I really going to trust God? Am I going to grumble? Am I going to complain like the Israelites and die in the desert? Or will I trust God?"

### **A Look Back**

There are many examples in Scripture of people experiencing detours, discouragements, and disappointments. We can learn from them.

Biblical examples of people experiencing detours:

Jonah – belly of a whale

Paul – over the wall in a basket

Moses – from Egypt to live with his in-laws

Joseph – from Canaan to Egypt to save Israel

Biblical examples of people experiencing disappointments:

Paul - 2 Timothy 1:15, everybody in Asia turned away from him.

Moses - Exodus 15:22-27, and multiple other places where he received criticism and lack of appreciation.

Jesus - John 5:40; John 14:9; Matthew 26:40

Biblical examples of people experiencing discouragement:

Elijah - Romans 11:3; 1 Kings 19:4,10,14

Job - Job 3, 10

Joshua - Joshua 7:7-10 after the first battle of Ai

How did they cope? Elijah felt suicidal; Moses lashed out in anger; Joshua lay down and felt like giving up (first battle of Ai). We can't afford to let disappointment cause us to take a detour from God's plan.

An anonymous writer at [www.gbcdecatur.org](http://www.gbcdecatur.org) put it this way, "Can you imagine Jesus Christ returning to heaven ahead of schedule and the angels ask, 'Jesus, You're back home ahead of schedule.' And Jesus saying, 'I'm sorry. I had a bad experience down there on earth. They didn't appreciate Me. They didn't give me the strokes I needed. They were very ungrateful for the things I was doing. I just decided to pack up my bags and come home.' Jesus didn't do that."

Paul was detoured many times. Check out the account in Acts 16:6-10. "They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them; and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.' When he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them."

God has His reasons for allowing issues. One example is the Marah experience for the people of Israel. The Israelites were excited to find a source of water in the desert and disappointed to find it to be bitter (Exodus 15:25). God's purpose was to teach them to trust Him, a lesson He knew they would need to achieve for future experiences.

The problem that many of us have with disappointments is we get so caught up in the disappointments that we don't see that the solution is right there before our eyes...and we take the first way out that will help us feel better! You will never see God's solution as long as you're wallowing in self-pity. You've got to pray. You've got to let God show you. Ask, "God, what is the solution to this disappointment?" and God can show it to you – and will turn bitterness into sweetness.

### **Concerns**

Christians cannot afford to take disappointment and discouragement too lightly because these are little foxes that spoil the vine (Song of Solomon 2:15).

Disappointment should not be allowed to mature into discouragement. Disappointment is normal, but despair is abnormal.

Detours can lead to disappointment that can lead to discouragement that could take you to despair, despondency, or disaster.

Craig Brian Larson says, "Unrealistic expectations curtail the joy and often the longevity of ministry. They can cause me to give up either in deed or in heart. I don't have to resign to quit. I can simply decide this job is impossible and it is foolish to try." Craig Brian Larson, *Staying Power* (p.82).

One result of not dealing with detours, discouragements, and disappointments is the chance of becoming cynical, a path that will lead to dissatisfaction, discontent, and ineffectiveness.

A very dangerous result of detours and disappointment, when left to flourish, is the potential birth of resentment, which develops into bitterness if not checked; a poison that destroys ministry and ministers. Don't rehearse it, disperse it. Give it to God.

### **Solutions**

Scripture gives specific remedies for discouragement. Check these out:

2 Corinthians 4:1 "Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart."

2 Corinthians 4:15-16 "For all things are for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God. Therefore, we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day."

Hebrews 12:3 "For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."

It truly is about perspective. I must remember that the ministry is a gift from the Lord and He will give the mercy needed to fulfill it. I also must always remember why I am doing what I am doing. Do I want to see God's grace spreading to more and more people? Do I understand what is inside of me is much more important than my outer fatigue? Do I focus on Jesus and remind myself that I want to be like Him?

It is important that we see discouragement for what it is and how it can hinder us, or even stop us. It is also important that we learn how to stop it from setting in and how to overcome it. We need to remember we are not alone.

“God uses Joseph in Egypt to save His people, and ultimately the entire human race. God uses Joseph to be part of the plan He has for the world. As Joseph endures animosity, betrayal, prison, and hardships, he did not realize that he was being prepared to fit the big picture of God's plan. And because the part designed for Joseph was so big, the preparation was so profound and painful at times. Joseph shaped the future of many nations.”

- Wahid Wahba, Walk Thru the Bible

Isaiah 40:21 “He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power.”

Scripture says we have not because we ask not. You have a source that is powerful. Do you have a prayer team that holds you up in prayer?

2 Timothy 2:10 “For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.”

Bottom line – know your calling. Did God put you where you are? Then He will utilize the assignment as He planned and wishes. I know Who is in charge and I know His capabilities. Entrust your situations to God, knowing His character and promises. Paul said, “And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day” (2 Timothy 1:11-12 (NIV)).

We have the responsibility of encouraging others. But what about encouraging yourself? In 1 Samuel 30:6 (KJV), “David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.” Psalm 42 gives us some insight of

how he did this remarkable thing. He had a good talk to his discouraged soul: “Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God” (Psalm 42:11).

“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you” (1 Peter 5:10 (KJV)).

Disappointments – give them to God. He can handle it. Joseph had every reason in the world to be resentful and to be disappointed in other people but he wasn’t. He said, “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives” (Genesis 50:20 (NIV)).

“The call to the ministry is an invitation to unequalled privilege - none of us would argue that. It is an invitation to unsurpassed blessing, but that is not all. The call to the ministry is also an invitation to discouragement.”

- John McAurthur

Disappointment is inevitable, expect it!

Discouragement is a mindset; a choice you make!

Detours: see them from God’s perspective!

## Chapter 35

# Preventing Burnout and Compassion-Fatigue

Some “authorities” writing in this area believe that burnout is an inevitable condition for care providers. The condition has even been given a name, “secondary traumatic stress disorder.” Once it was actually referred to as “secondary victimization.” That belief is based on the idea that caregivers come to believe that any effect of positive change is elusive and probably impossible. These researchers promote the idea that caregivers see the society they live in as uncaring. They blame the upbringing of caregivers being taught to care for the needs of others before meeting their own needs.

We who work in Rescue Missions have a source of strength that allows us to prevent falling into this debilitating lifestyle. There is truth that sets us free to do what God calls us to do for the hurting people who come our way.

Some burnout is brought on by overextending. We can all work extra shifts for a short period, but too many hours will eventually take a toll. Burnout can also be a result of excessive commitments, when there is not enough of you to go around. In this chapter, we will focus on defining burnout as compassion-fatigue, coming to the point of seeing need but feeling empty of personal resource or desire to meet that need.

### **My Own Testimony**

You will run into people who deny the possibility of burnout. Sometimes it helps to talk to someone who has been through it. God assigned me to go to the Rescue Mission in 1980. I worked

hard and long. Three years into my assignment, I experienced burnout. It was a terrible experience. I was empty of compassion. I felt like I had nothing to offer the crowds coming through the doors each day. The next months were amazing. First, God shut down my schedule. “Suddenly” there were many no-shows in my counseling schedule. There was little for me to pay attention to other than to seek His face. It was in that time following that I learned how to do Rescue Ministry God’s way. I came out of that time understanding that God did not need me to do His work, but He would offer me the opportunity to be His mouthpiece if I was willing to let Him be in charge. I learned that I was not capable of generating daily compassion, but I was responsible to go to the “faucet” daily to get my bucket filled from the Source. I learned to give God’s compassion instead of what I generated myself. (The quality and quantity was far superior). I learned that not every problem had to be solved, that sometimes the process was more important for the client than the solution. I came to understand that God’s plan for the client was far better and more long-lasting than mine. I began to do ministry with God’s energy rather than my own.

No one has to go through burnout. Prevention is far better than recovery. When we block the refilling of daily compassion in our life bucket, we are set up to respond in our own strength which can turn ugly. We begin to major in criticalness, cynicism, or plain fatigue.

### **Our Source of Compassion**

God invented compassion. He models compassion. He is the source of our compassion (Psalm 103:13). This is one of many ways He is not like the gods of manmade religion.

Scripture often speaks of the compassion of Jesus. These passages show the God-given energy to respond to needy and suffering people.

## Self-Evaluation Tool

Take this quiz to see if you are headed into the danger zone:

- I have my own personal issues that I am thinking about regularly during the workday.
- My fellow workers seem to lack understanding of the clients.
- My fellow workers seem to lack understanding of me.
- When small changes have to be made, it really bothers me.
- When something big happens, it takes many hours to unwind.
- I have little hope for most of my clients.
- I am fearful of what may come during the shift beginning now.
- I am overwhelmed with deadlines to be done.
- I have lost my sense of caring for others.

## Avoiding Burnout

Here are some practical ways of building a defense against going through burnout.

Check out how you see yourself. There is no room for a second savior or rescuer. God is sufficient. You are simply the conduit of His truth and grace. You are the mouthpiece for encouragement and challenge. Your clients should get their hope from the same Source you use.

Be careful of identification and comparison. If you have experienced similar crisis as the client you are working with, do not get into one-upmanship in either silent or verbal comparison. The need and path for recovery may be different for your client than your own experience.

Put the experiences of others into perspective. The client who seems to be at the end of his or her rope has probably been there before. How has this person survived in the past without you?

What does God want to do in this situation? How can I stay out of His way if He is trying to get the person's attention?

Learn not to take up an offense. Empathy is a good thing, but taking up an offense that is not yours is destructive. As you study the prophets of the Scriptures, you see them asking God to deal with offenders Himself. This leaves you free of a critical spirit and able to help the client with perspective.

Develop supportive relationships on the job. We are not in this alone. Others struggle in the same way. Be honest with each other and learn to debrief, pray together, and share scriptural truth, always pointing each other to the Source. Do not hang with people who major in cynical.

Keep the big picture in front of you. It is easy to get bogged down and lost in the trees and not see the value of the forest. When the issues pile up, order comes by sorting out priorities.

Replace crisis-mode thinking with dependence and trust in God. God's timing is superior.

Don't listen to lies. Struggling in this area does not mean that you should be questioning whether you are meant for this type of work. If you know God called you to this ministry, you know He has a plan for you. He is waiting for you to open your eyes to see it.

Make it your daily prayer to ask for a fresh supply of His compassion. As you dress for the day, turn your thoughts toward God's perspective. "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience" (Colossians 3:12(NIV)).

## Chapter 36

# Team Players and Lone Rangers

This chapter is not about how to lead a team. Every person who aspires to be a team leader first needs to learn how to succeed as a team member. We will not even be using the term Team Player because this is not something we can afford to “play.” We need to participate in a much more meaningful way.

### **What Can I Do to Support Others on the Team?**

Hopefully within your Mission there is a place for teams. There is no way “lone rangers” can make it in ministry (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10). Even Jesus had a team. Teams give support. Proverbs 15:22 connects success with working with others. The effort of developing a good team is a way of preserving unity in the workplace. Not only can a team promote the preservation of unity, but also unity is the foundation for good functioning of the team. Unity of purpose means that each person knows and agrees on the overall purpose. An identified common goal allows the team to move forward. If an individual has a goal of “I want to be a VIP,” he does not belong in the ministry.

A great advantage of having teams is that the individuals making up the team have a variety of gifts and skills. A huge problem in building teams is that the individuals making up the team have a variety of opinions and levels of maturity!

Teams require a good level of communication, and often communication improves out of the necessity of functioning as a team. Not only is the giving of information to those who “need to

know” most important, good communication means I am on a two-way street and I am listening to others, seeking input from them.

Good teams mean there is delegation of responsibility and authority. Everyone knows who is responsible for what. When mission staff are left in the dark, misunderstood, or confused, the ministry and the staff suffer.

Logistically, every team needs an agreed-upon leader and a willing, capable note-taker. These may change from time to time in the team, but should never be eliminated or ignored. After every team meeting, clarify and repeat decisions made together.

### **Scripture Says It All**

What does it take to be a team member? The characteristics of a good team member are identical with the characteristics of a mature Christian.

Taking ownership of responsibility is crucial. Blame-shifting has no place. When failure occurs because of someone else, there is no benefit in being the team police officer.

Humility is the desired characteristic. Bragging will not work. Everyone knows who is responsible for success. When people do not recognize your contribution, you can take great comfort, since God tends to reward those who do not shop for accolades from fellow humans. (See the principle stated in Matthew 6:1-4).

Turf-guarding is poison in a ministry. Look at the way the Trinity functions (John 17:21). God sets the example for us earthlings. Jealousy and competition within the workplace are destructive. Self-promotion is not necessary if you know God is in control and the One to receive the glory.

It is quite easy to read this material and be thinking of others in the organization. Please stop. The only way the ministry improves is

as each one looks at himself or herself, and is willing to do some personal evaluation. How do I improve as a team member? Since the Holy Spirit dwells in believers and you are a believer, check out these Scriptures for a spiritual growth challenge:

Philippians 2:14 “Do all things without grumbling or disputing.”

Proverbs 15:1 “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”

Proverbs 16:28 “A perverse man spreads strife, and a slanderer separates intimate friends.”

Proverbs 17:14 “The beginning of strife is *like* letting out water, so abandon the quarrel before it breaks out.”

Proverbs 20:3 “Keeping away from strife is an honor for a man, but any fool will quarrel.”

Proverbs 18:9(NIV) “Whoever is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys.”

Hypocrisy, pride, self-promotion, laziness, and strife, may work for Lone Rangers or Superstar Wannabees but they do not work as characteristics of ministry team members. Team members help each other. When a need is observed, they step up to the plate to help.



- No place here for attack-dog mentality

Excuses aren't necessary. If you are the new kid on the block, you do not need to use your novice status to lower expectations of your input. Paul had some strong words for his mentee Timothy: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12).

"Eliminate criticizing, complaining, condemning from your speech, your thinking, and your actions." - Dale Carnegie

## Chapter 37

# Unity in the Workplace

Who said that working in Christian ministry ensures that everyone is perfect in interactions with each other? No way. The advantage we have over secular organizations and businesses is that each of the staff we interact with has an Authority in his or her life, and that Authority sets standards for His children's interactions with each other. It is that higher standard that becomes the guideline for our interaction. Of even greater advantage is the Holy Spirit living within us, directing us toward unity. He is the author of unity. Ephesians. 4:3 does not instruct us to invent or create unity. We are to "Keep," "Maintain," and "Preserve" the unity of the Spirit. He manufactures it and we keep it.

Perhaps it is easiest to define unity in the workplace by defining what it is not. Unity has never meant agreement at all cost. Sometimes I have to come to a point of acceptance of something I disagree with, but never does a variety of opinions have to translate into automatic disunity. It is normal and healthy in an organization or ministry that ideas are presented and discussed before decisions are made. The key to this being a working practice in Rescue Missions is the initial agreement of the beliefs and values of the Mission. When I am employed in the ministry, I must be certain the goals and purpose of the organization are scriptural and godly and ones that I agree with.

Does this mean that I must never offer counter suggestions to practices with which I come to disagree? When do I actively negotiate or appeal for change to practices that I begin to object to? I do not become a staff person in order to change an organization. It is important to be part of the ministry for a year

before I fixate on changes that I want to see. You may be quite surprised to see how your views change over the year. You also may discover that such changes were tried already unsuccessfully.

Change comes slowly in a large organization for good reasons. Major changes need to be blanketed in prayer for wisdom. What does not change is the purpose God has given to the organization.

Think through what is the meaning when the Scripture talks about being in “one accord.” Philippians 2:2 indicates that it is being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit, and of one mind. Apparently, this verse also shows that we can affect each other’s joy when we participate in unity with others.

Scripture also states what causes disunity and conflict. James 4:1 links fights and quarrels with selfish desires, our human practice of one-upmanship, our need to have our own way all the time at all cost. A very important lesson I learned early on was there was no room for offense in the ministry. I personally believe that I am never to see myself as offended.

**Proverbs 19:11 (ESV)**

**“Good sense makes one slow to anger,  
and it is his glory to overlook an offense.”**

If I take on the “right” to be offended by others, I will also be presented with the temptation to engage in murmuring, disputing, and gossiping. I will have a challenge to continue to love unconditionally. This victim mentality does not fit who we are in Christ. When I am tempted to feel offended by one of my brothers or sisters in ministry, I go back and review Hebrews 12, where I am exhorted to consider Jesus who put up with much more than I ever will encounter.

Another huge attack on unity in the ministry workplace is when I find myself with a critical spirit, seeing my brother or sister in the worst possible light. I learned the pain and destruction that comes from that practice. According to Revelation 12:10, the enemy is

the daily accuser of the brethren, and I must not be on his side. I follow Jesus, and His position is clearly stated. In the daily heavenly warfare, let me never be on the side of the enemy.

**Romans 8:34 (NIV)**

**“Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died--more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.”**

Thankfully, Scripture includes the good, the bad and the ugly for our edification. Unity was not an easy life-style for many. Consider what happened to Paul and Silas when they experienced disagreement over John Mark. “They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company” (Acts 15:39 (NIV)). (Please also note that this disagreement did not have lasting effect when you see that Paul had wonderful statements to make about John Mark in Colossians, where he refers to Mark as a “fellow laborer,” and in 2 Timothy 4:11 where he says that Mark is “useful to me for service.”

Where disunity starts to fester and grow, we have the ministry of reconciliation, 2 Corinthians 5:18. I have the responsibility in the workplace to be a peacemaker. When given the opportunity, I can help others to resolve conflict. I learn not to take sides but to work as a truth-teller and a mediator.

Be careful to guard against misunderstandings. Many a conflict begins with a simple lack of communication or miscommunication. Rather than making assumptions, ask questions.

Hebrews 12:14-15 (ESV) “Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no ‘root of bitterness’ springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled.”

Romans 12:17-19 (ESV) “Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so

far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.'"

**Lord, help me to  
take every opportunity  
to preserve the unity  
in the mission  
community**

**- to honor You**

## Chapter 38

### Establishing Respect in the Workplace

Everyone wants respect. We have spent time in this book talking about showing respect to the client. Let's talk about your contribution to a culture of respect in your own workplace. Respect is one of those things that connects a person with another. Respect, as discussed in the Scripture, is in the context of agape love. Many people believe that they give respect to those who give them respect. No, in ministry, respect is not a reciprocal action. I respect you because you are made by the Creator God whom I serve, and because He paid a huge price for you. It has nothing to do with what you did or said. God has earned my respect and He expects me to share it with others.

Our definition of respect has often been clouded with other characteristics like admiration, fear, or envy. Putting others on a pedestal is not the scriptural definition of respect. We are even told to not give special attention to the man wearing fine clothes (James 2:3-4).

Fortunately, the chapter on respecting the client came before this chapter. If you are more concerned with being respected than being respectful, you have a problem. The golden rule (Matthew 7:12; Luke 6:31) of doing unto others what you want yourself is a God-directed mandate for success. Once you struggle through the responsibility of respecting others, you are much less demanding of respect for yourself. I have come to the place after years of such struggle to understand that I only seek God's respect, and that is more than sufficient.

You see, respect in the workplace begins with me. Think about it. If the staff around you are dependent on getting their respect-bucket filled each day with responses from the clients, how filled

do you suppose they will be? Respect is a great gift to give to fellow staff. Remember, it is a gift, and a true gift is not something that is earned.

There are several basic ways to promote a culture of respect in your workplace. One key practice is to refrain completely from gossip. Gossip is best defined as speaking evil of a person, whether that evil is true or not. Gossip comes from the desire to put someone else in a negative light, defame their reputation, or cause ridicule. One minute of gossip in the workplace can destroy weeks of respect. Of course, there is no such thing as one minute of gossip, since it never stops there.

Be willing to be vulnerable. When you are having a difficult day, rather than barking at other staff, simply tell them that you are standing in the need of prayer to make it through. And sometimes when you see other staff doing the barking, just be willing to pray silently for them instead of being critical.

People tend to feel respected in different ways. As you build teammanship, you begin to get to know the other staff. Some will respond best when you are willing to listen to them without an instantly negative response. Others will seem to wait for you to be interested enough to ask them for their opinion. I have known staff who felt disrespected if I did not acknowledge them when I walked into their presence. That is a matter of courtesy. But if you are not raised to practice such a habit, you will want to put it on your to-do list!

The culture of respect in the ministry workplace is best developed when each of us has the same desire as Jesus, who seemed to always want others to succeed. Are we willing to be like Paul when he modeled his admonition in Philippians 2:3(NIV)? “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves.” If we busy ourselves with trying to help

others succeed and look good, we will be amazed at the joy and real success we ourselves experience.

Let's talk about self-respect. Sometimes we spend time putting ourselves down in our thoughts, speech, and actions, which must bring sadness to our Maker. Unfortunately, our lack of respect for others can come because we have developed a storage bin of self-disrespect. The opposite is also true. If we think too highly of ourselves, we become critical of others.

Perhaps the most important part of this discussion is, how do you resist building walls, or maintaining offense, when you have experienced disrespect? This is most important, not only for your own outlook and joy, but also for the impact you will have on others. Have you heard the expression, "Give them the benefit of the doubt?" It was an idiom in the mid-1800's and needs to be revived today! Regard someone as innocent until proven otherwise; lean toward a favorable view of someone; believe something good about someone rather than something bad, when you have the possibility of doing either.

Complaining and murmuring were both ways the Israelites showed their lack of respect for God and for the leader He gave them. We best learn from their mistakes.

So much wrong happens when we make assumptions. Research the issue. Ask the perpetrator what they meant when they said or did something. In a loving way, give them a chance to see how it affected you. I have been greatly blessed when someone has come to me and asked me what I meant when I said something that seemed offensive to them, giving me the chance to make the situation right.

Love "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Corinthians 13:7). Leon Morris defines the phrase, "Believes all things" as, "To see the best in others...This does not

mean that love is gullible, but that it does not think the worst (as is the way of the world). It retains its faith. Love is not deceived...but it is always ready to give the benefit of the doubt.” - *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*.

Finally, I recommend you look for ways to verbally show respect to other staff. Have they done something that blessed you? Did you tell them? Have you ever told one of them that you were glad they worked here? You can do this even with those with whom you have difficulty relating. I once honestly told a person I was glad I worked with him, but did not finish the sentence to say that I knew God was using him in my life to teach me some tough stuff! Look for ways to respect others. You will be amazed when you look at their good qualities. God gives different gifts and abilities to different folks. Can I appreciate the variety and respect the contribution? The best answer I know to conflict is each one exercising respect.

The culture of respect in the workplace...will you be part of the solution?

**1 Peter 3:8 (NIV)**

**“Finally, all of you, be like-minded,  
be sympathetic, love one another,  
be compassionate and humble.”**

## Chapter 39

# Summing It Up

Jesus was willing to leave a very posh place and come to live homeless and poor. He left me a fantastic example of how to do the work He has prepared for me. His methods work. His servant-leadership still amazes me every time in every detail. His main thing was that He loved people and He wasn't afraid to spend time and energy showing it. He focused on His purpose, and made daily decisions based on that purpose. He understood the need for much prayer and made aloneness with the Father a priority.

Driving back eleven hours from a district meeting in South Dakota, Jonathan Buttram, a staff sLi student, picked my brain at length until finally he asked, "So what's the bottom line? What is most important?" I was not prepared with a quick answer. There is no quick answer. After having had some time to mull over the question, I believe there are some basic principles we have talked about over and over in these pages.

Our job is the one Jesus gave us. Our job description should look like His. He was never willing to leave people where they found Him; He always desired them to move higher. He did not settle for partial solutions. He was into relief of hunger for food or thirst for water, but incorporated the solution of a much greater need.

Let us not be satisfied with minimal ministry. Let us look for ways to lead people to abundant living both here and for the hereafter. I have watched many clients go through the motions, wanting to change their lives on their own. My job was to offer them real change through Jesus. Discipling includes giving the truth that will both empower and protect them.

My own focus in working with clients who had experienced the life-change of salvation was to focus on those areas that seemed to be the most neglected. I believe in the years of working at the mission, I have observed two behaviors that show up repeatedly in those who succeed in living their newfound life. If somehow we can teach them the necessity for both gratitude and personal honesty as life patterns, we have given them a huge advantage to flourishing in their earth-life. I have grieved often for those who missed these two foundational practices and had to wander in the desert more years.

What's the bottom line to being able to stay the course of Rescue Mission work? I know I can only succeed when I know absolutely that God is the One in charge, not me. It is the temptation of the ages. I do not take credit when good things happen, so I do not shoulder the world when the results are not as I wished. I can go to work every day knowing the truth that "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" Romans 8:1.

When I have invested time in a person who slips back into his or her old lifestyle, I remind myself it was never "my time" anyway. Since I belong to God, my time belongs to Him, and God is not finished with the person yet. I was privileged to be mentored for many years by Maurice Vanderberg, Executive Director of City Union Mission for 37 years, and son-in-law of the founder. He taught me much, but his one indelible statement that I repeated each time a client went AWOL was and still is,

**"The last chapter's not written yet" - Maurice Vanderberg**

And so it is with this book. The last chapter is not written yet. Take the ideas presented here and build on them in the ministry God gives you, staying grateful for His calling you and giving you an opportunity to be His representative to people He cares about deeply.

“I thank Christ Jesus our Lord,  
who has given me strength,  
that He considered me trustworthy,  
appointing me to His service.”

1 Timothy 1:12(NIV)

