Alright. We’ve made it to week three already, and with this first lecture we will focus on Christian spirituality and ministry in counseling. To think of Christian counseling as a spiritual enterprise would seem completely understandable to many people. It is especially important to know what we mean when we talk about Christian spirituality, the ways in which counseling draws upon spiritual resources, and the ways in which spiritual life occurs in the life of our clients.
How do we respond to a client who says, “I think the answer to my problems lie in a spiritual realm. I think what I need is to become a more spiritual person?” How can we help a person like this? Clearly there is some thirst that the person is experiencing, and it sounds like a good thing to be a spiritual person, doesn’t it? But the problem for us is that “spirituality” and the word “spiritual” are used so widely in our culture that it’s difficult to know exactly what someone means when they say they want to become a more spiritual person. After all, haven’t both Madonna and Mother Theresa been described as very spiritual women? However, their lives and the fruit of their lives are quite different. As another example, aren’t Billy Graham and Bono both described as two very spiritual men in our time? Both of them have done good things, but their worldviews and their sense of faith is quite different. In this case, even given the facts that both men are Christian, the way they see spirituality are polar opposites. So let’s take a few moments to look at what spirituality really is.
The term “spirituality” was first used in the Bible by Paul to describe those who have the “Spirit of Christ.”

- In 1 Corinthians 2:15 he writes: “the spiritual man makes judgments about all things; he himself is not subject to any man’s judgment. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? But we have the Mind of Christ.” Paul was talking about those who have the spirit of Christ, making a clear distinction between life of the Spirit and life in human flesh.

- When we speak of spirituality from a Christian tradition, we are talking about life in the Spirit of Christ. We are not limiting ourselves to those who are interested in spiritual things or those who want to have an experience of transcendence or have climbed the mountain to meet a Guru. We are talking about Jesus Christ, the living Lord in the Spirit who comes and dwells in the hearts of His people. This is a distinct contrast in the way spirituality is used in psychological literature.

- This has actually become a very hot topic in the last few years as psychologists seek to find some defining terms for transcendent experiences and for the yearning for those experiences that all people seem to have. Part of the reason that psychology has shown such a recent interest is that the word “spirituality” has made its way into such common usage in our culture.
• Remember that in post-modern language, spirituality is spoken of as a “private alternative to religion.” This means that when post-modern people speak of religion, they are speaking of the community experience of seeking God or organized spirituality, usually in a negative sense. But spirituality can be used to speak of the private experience with God, or the private experience of one’s own soul or spirit, and is a positive and private alternative to organized religion.

• One of the important and ancient traditions of the church has been the study of spiritual formation. It has been seen in theology in trying to understand how people are formed in the image of Christ, in a careful consideration of how spiritual habits are formed, and in investigating how the Holy Spirit might move in the life of a person.

What Makes Counseling a Spiritual Enterprise?

“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13)

- Having a “Servanthood” attitude, not relying on techniques.
- Making ourselves available (1 Cor. 9: 19-23).
- “Creative Weakness”: Reliance on the Holy Spirit for client’s healing.
- Goal: To give new life.

Now God has spoken to us in the most direct terms about the work we do as Christian counselors when He said: “Greater love hath no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.” This what we are called to do as believers who counsel hurting people: to offer ourselves through our training, through listening to them, through prayers for them, and through our compassion and hospitality, to lay down our lives for them. And even then our goal is not only that, but to also do this as an offering to our Lord.
• Christian counseling is a spiritual enterprise because of the servanthood attitude that we bring. So in this sense, spirituality is never a technique that we use in counseling, but is really our way of seeing ourselves and others, and our relationship as God’s servant engaged in a ministry of healing.

• Christian counseling is also a spiritual enterprise because we are making ourselves available to others. When we open up ourselves to others through counseling, we are literally making our spirit available to them. Paul put it this way in the 9th chapter of 1st Corinthians:

“though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew to win the Jews. To those under the law, I became like one under the law, though I myself am not under the law, so as to win under the law. To those not having the law, I became like one not having the law though I am not free God’s law, but am I under Christ’s law, so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men, so that by all possible means I might save some.”

• What a great description about making ourselves available to people at their point of need.

• It is also describes how it is only by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit that we are able to show this kind of availability and vulnerability to our clients. Christian counseling in some ways can be seen as one of the ultimate spiritual enterprises because it involves a creative weakness, a reliance on the Holy Spirit, and a willingness to admit that healing does not come from us. Even with all the skills we bring to the counseling enterprise and all of the techniques that we might employ, they are useful only as God chooses to use them, and how the Holy Spirit chooses to work through us.

Our goal in Christian counseling as a spiritual enterprise is that a person might receive new life in Christ and become a new creation.
Now, our natural tendency as a fallen people is to be selfish; to do everything we do with some sort of motive that promotes the self, that works for us and that builds us up. But it is in Christ that we begin to develop an appropriate “self-love,” and also an appropriate way to deny ourselves. So the real challenge becomes to experience the Grace of God in a way that we will be refined. To understand that it is a “receiving and a purging” process all at the same time to become more Christ-like. It is this healthy becoming, this developing “spiritual-self,” that the client experiences in the therapeutic relationship through what we call the personhood of the counselor. If you’ll notice on the slide, the first column names qualities of the self that are received from God through Grace; healthy qualities of self-affirmation; of self-fulfillment; of self-realization; of a healthy self-love; of self-awareness; of knowing who you are; and ultimately of a healthy “selfhood.” It is part of the great command when Jesus said, “You are to love the Lord your God with all your heart, your soul, your mind and strength. And you are to love your neighbor as yourself,” so we need a healthy self to become an effective counselor for others. But, as the second columns states, each of us also needs Grace to be a refining furnace in our lives. For every human being there is much in our lives that is not as it should be.

It is by the grace of God that we are able to engage in self-denial; in self-emptying; in self-sacrifice; in a self-forgetfulness where it’s not about us all the time; to engage in appropriate self-disclosure making ourselves known in a way that is helpful to others without making the counseling session all about our issues; and ultimately a “selflessness” in which we are able to go beyond our own needs to use our ministry of counseling to help others and as a offering to God.
“Receiving” Grace
Self-affirmation
Self-fulfillment
Self-realization
a healthy self-love
Self-awareness
healthy "self-hood

“Refining” Grace
Self-Denial
Self-Emptying
Self-Sacrifice
Self-Forgetfulness
Self-Disclosure
Selflessness

Let’s finish up with a review about the Christian traditions behind spirituality and spiritual formation. From the very beginning of the church, in much of the writing of the New Testament, there is great attention to the formation of people to the image of Christ once we have come into the faith. On the slide, you’ll see on the left a series of items labeled “Faith tradition,” and on the right, the items are labeled “Formation Tradition.” As Protestants we are familiar with the “faith tradition,” that we must know what we believe and what our core values and beliefs are. But we also have to understand that it is a rationally-driven way of doing faith. It is focused almost exclusively on our thought life, focused around doctrine, and an approach to faith in which we are to agree or disagree with propositions about God and about faith. In addition, it is a vitally important part of our tradition that we are to be a witness to the world, following Jesus’ last command: “Go and be witnesses.” But we neglect our “formation tradition” at great peril. Here is where the work that we do in Christian counseling is of a spiritual nature. It can be thought of as a systematic way of helping people discover how to live out their beliefs, and is devoted to encountering the Holy Spirit as a spiritual experience. But how do we have such spiritual experiences? We do so by growing under the guidance
and leadership of others and by developing a patterns of “Holy habits”: the spiritual practices of prayer, Bible reading and study, and serving others, just to name a few. We must develop these habits as part of a regular pattern each day to become formed into the image of Christ. But remember that these practices are only valuable in the way that God works through them, not in their own right. Lastly in “formation tradition,” the focus is the “fruit of the Spirit” in our lives. We must be known for and produce “fruit” that can be experienced by those around us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness and self-control. As you process this lecture on spirituality in counseling, I would encourage you to think about your own life and ways in which you are a spiritual person, ways in which you would like to grow in the image of Christ, and any “holy habits” that you need to develop on a regular basis.

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**Christian Faith and Formation**

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**Week 3 Lecture 2**

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**Christian Faith and Formation**

- “Faith” Tradition
  - System of what we believe
  - Rational thought life
  - Doctrine
  - Agree or Disagree
  - Witness

- “Formation” Tradition
  - System of how we live out our beliefs
  - Spiritual experience
  - Daily rule
  - Known by our “fruits”
Welcome to the second lecture in Week 3 for COUN 506. In this presentation we will focus upon spiritual formation models for Counseling. As we have been talking over the past several segments about general integration, we now need to spend some time exploring concepts regarding personal integration.

The desire to help people to have a unity of life really is the meaning of spiritual formation. Notice this statement on the slide: Integration or unity of life is the key.” The more we understand that integration is really a pathway to unity, the easier it gets for us. Even then, as the following ideas show us, we still have a ways to go in getting it
right. For instance, if transcendence is compartmentalized we have a “functional transcendence,” or using spirituality as a “skill set” for our own selfish purposes. If transcendence is detached, we appear to have other-worldly pietism or hypocrisy. We become so “heavenly-bound” that we are no earthly good. Perhaps in the spiritual life, the term: “diagnosis,” where “dia” means through and through; and “gnosis” means knowledge, is trickiest. This is because NO ONE can accurately self-diagnosis their spiritual state. So as we talk about spiritual formation in counseling and discerning the spiritual state of our clients, we should not conceive of this in the terms of how a psychologist might speak of diagnosing someone.

What we are really seeking to find in this segment is some useful maps; maps for understanding how the Spirit of the Lord is working in our lives and in the lives of those we counsel and how we can keep in step. Now this is really an ancient way of thinking about spirituality. Going back to the first century thinkers, they spoke of spiritual formation as a three-fold path to God. They spoke in terms of purgation which is the purging of sin and the fleshly attitudes and habits from a person. Illumination is coming to see and understand how God is working in one’s life and union, which is fulfilling the great command to love God, self, and neighbor with all your being.
Writers over the centuries have focused upon the ways in which one might map the Spirit of God working in a human life. Two 20th century thinkers, Thomas Kelsey and John Ward, wrote about four patterns of movement in the spiritual life. They spoke of receiving, releasing, relating, and reaching out. This is really a very helpful pattern to think about for a moment. Receiving is the idea that unless we receive God’s grace, we are only “spinning our wheels” spiritually, or only staying busy in what we do. Then there is the healing power of Releasing, which is being released from the power of sin, and of fleshly influences in our lives through self-purging, through releasing of others, through forgiving, and our release by God through his forgiveness of us. And there is no such thing as a “lone ranger” Christian, which is why we need relating. One movement of the Holy Spirit is to drive us into a community, into fellowship and relate us to one another. Reaching out is that impulse that the Spirit of the Lord creates in our hearts to lay down our lives for others, to take the initiative to love God and to love others.
In Henri Nouwen’s book, “Reaching Out,” he writes that the spiritual life is a “movement,” not something that is static, or immobile. In addition, this really wonderful insight towards our journey to God is not linear, but that we all vacillate between polar opposites throughout our lives. He speaks of an intra-personal life pole that pulls the moods of loneliness to solitude, of an inter-personal pole where we move from a hostility to hospitality, and a trans-personal pole where we go from illusion to prayer. One of the real frustrations in the Christian life is the sense of failure we so often feel when we succumb to temptation, or when we find ourselves engaging in behaviors that we thought we had grown beyond. Now, if it is a problem with us, you will find that it is also a problem in the clients that you see. So the insight that Nouwen is trying to reminds us about is the understanding that we are all on a journey toward God, but it is a “two steps forward, one step back” journey much of the time. I’ve also indicated on the slide some counseling issues in which understandings these life poles might be helpful with. For example, when thinking about the intrapersonal life of a person, the movement that people make from loneliness to solitude, at least one counseling issue is the use of pornography, sometimes at a level of addiction. This “behavior in isolation” is when people are desperately trying to meet their needs for intimacy, but in a way that is very isolated, that actually enables loneliness, and encourages secretive, shameful behavior. In the area of the interpersonal, the pole is moving from hostility to hospitality. One counseling issue that would involve these dynamics would be anger management. These are clients in which anger is a consuming force in their lives, those for whom hostility is a way of showing up in the world, and the great joy that they can find when they move from hostility to hospitality with our help. Later on we’ll talk more about hospitality, and the absolute necessity in the counseling relationship of showing hospitality to people, and the life changing impact of a simple welcome, the creating of an open space for
change and the life-changing impact that might have. In terms of the transpersonal pole, consider for a moment those who are depressed, the condition of depression and how one can become so trapped in hopelessness. These clients are trapped in the illusion that they will always feel this way, that no one really cares, that life really doesn’t matter, that they can’t do anything right, and so these feelings become their reality. But Nouwen tries to point to the fact that there is a way through those kinds of illusions. Counseling depression is a complex problem that may involve physiological problems, behavioral problems, and always involves some type of cognitive distortions. But it is also a spiritual problem in which God is working through you the Christian counselor to help people move from illusion to prayer.

Let’s change our focus for a few moments and look at Brewer’s relational model of spiritual formation. This is a model that points to the fact that people never experience spiritual formation and isolation as individuals, but that spiritual formation is a community phenomenon. Here, the 5 “P’s” stand for the five relationships that every Christian needs. For instance, every Christian needs an authentic and healthy self-love and self-awareness; this really is the core of personhood. Every Christian also needs a pastor. Now, this may be an ordained minister, but more specifically it is someone who will be an elder to shepherd them into the image of Christ. Every person needs a partner, a spiritual friend and peer to encourage and hold them accountable. We also need a protégé. This may seem a little surprising, but it is important if we are going to grow in our faith, we need to be sharing and teaching someone else. We all need a
In order to have vital, Christian faith, we must be sharing our faith with lost people. I would encourage you to look in your own life and ask yourself, “Do I have a healthy sense of personhood? Do I have a pastor on whom I can rely? Do I have a partner in my life to share my faith and hold me accountable? Do I have a protégé that I am mentoring now? Do I have a prospect, someone in my life who doesn’t know Christ but for whom I am praying for, someone I can love and influence towards faith in Christ?” Over time as you engage in your counseling ministry, you’ll be able to build these kinds of relational nets with some of your clients, and certainly encourage them to build these kinds of relationships in their lives as part of their spiritual formation.

Adrian Van Kaam developed his formation field model, which is based on the notion that our formation as a person is always in process, that we are always giving and receiving “form,” and that it comes in several dimensions. He speaks specifically of spiritual formation in terms of the “force fields” around us.

We’ll go over these briefly as a way to acquaint you with these ideas so that you might begin to understand your own spiritual formation, and that of your clients in terms of the “force fields” around them.
The first dimension is “Intra-formation.” This refers to our inner life, the heart, the core self. This idea deals with those core elements of a person, such as integrity and conscience and the human heart. Van Kaam, as most writers in spiritual formation, believes that lasting change in a person is an “inside-out” process. So he’s very interested in this intra-formation dimension.
The “immediate situation” force field, what he calls “IN-formation” is the way in which we cope with the “here and now” and the impact that our coping today has on what sort of person we are becoming, not only for today, but well into the future. So in this area of formation Van Kaam addresses behavior, moods, attitudes, and those daily living challenges that all of us have with our jobs, our families, with time management, and the ways in which we deal with crisis. On the spiritual side, the “immediate situation” force field has to do with those daily disciplines that we need to develop, such as prayer, having a quiet time, and studying our Bibles.
The third dimension is “Inter-Formation.” This is the “relational” world in which we live. Think of it as being the “horizontal” dimensions in lives: our family and friendships, our inter-personal conflicts, our communication style, and the way in which we are servants to others. This is also the area in which we might work with clients on morality issues. This is where we help them understand the right and wrong in their lives, especially when morality issues are impacting relationships, for example, adultery in a marriage.

The final dimension that Van Kaam refers to is “Trans-Formation,” the vertical dimension. This is the heart turned toward God. This is the yearning that every person has for something “more in life”: the desire to worship, the desire to believe in someone and something bigger than ourselves, and the desire for a personal relationship that will not end. Van Kaam believed that every person feels this desire towards the transcendent, so it becomes a tremendous way to begin working on spiritual and faith issues with clients. This is especially true of those who do not have a connection with a church, or who are at a pre-Christian point of development in their lives so that we cannot talk to them using “traditional Christian language” because they do not know what we are
talking about. Well, we’ve covered a lot of information about spiritual formation models. As always, I encourage you to go through this presentation again and to reflect on how you might use these spiritual formations and models in your own life as well as with your clients.

**Week 3 Lecture 3**

Welcome to the last lecture for week three. Our focus this time is on spirituality, suffering, and counseling dynamics. We need to spend some time on this topic because suffering is a universal descriptor of nearly everyone you will see in counseling. It is very important to understand this spiritually as a way of helping us deal with the suffering of our clients, and how our “shared suffering” stemming from our role as “wounded healers,” becomes a source of healing for them. Let’s consider some dynamics behind these questions.
Henri Nouwen has offered us the term “wounded healer.” It is also a term that had been used by Carl Huhm as well as a term related to Greek mythology. Our greatest example of a wounded healer in all of history is our Lord Jesus Himself. He was the one prophesied about in Isaiah 53 as the suffering servant, and through his wounds, we have been healed. As Nouwen reflected on how healing had come into his own life through Jesus, he laid out a way of understanding the counseling ministry in terms of being a “wounded healer.” For counselors, entering into the suffering of others can be painful. There is a special connection with wounded clients in the counseling room - that connection of empathy and compassion, which brings tremendous healing to hurting people, but which also brings a cost to the counselor. Paul spoke of the way in which we share in healing and suffering together in 2 Corinthians 1:7 when he said: “and our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also, you share in our comfort.” It is in the Christian counseling dynamic that Christ himself works through our wounds. Using a theological term, we might speak of the incarnational presence of Jesus as we share in the sufferings of others. And there is tremendous strength in the solidarity that we have with hurting people as we make our wounds available as a source of healing. We have been and will be talking throughout this course about how we make ourselves available to others, and it is perhaps an area of counseling practice that requires taking great care, but also learning how to disclose yourself, and how to express empathy and compassion without becoming overly disclosing or distracting to the client. A primary way we express solidarity is through hospitality. That is the heartfelt welcome we give to those who have been “persona non grata,” feeling unwelcome in many areas of their lives. Hospitality involves focusing on that individual, concentrating on their needs and their personhood, and as trust is built, confronting those areas of sin and fallenness in their lives which may be a major source of the suffering they are enduring.
There are several underlying questions behind an individual’s desire for healing and their desire for counseling. One of these questions is about the nature of suffering. People need to talk about their suffering, and about the causes and meaning of their suffering. The most ancient way that people have thought about suffering is in terms of punishment. It is one of the major questions we have when reading the book of Job. Is Job being punished for his sins? Many of his so-called friends thought so, and they strongly encouraged him to confess his sin and perhaps be able to receive forgiveness from God. They saw Job’s suffering as punishment that he deserved. And you’ll find that many people today are wondering “what did I do to deserve this?” when they are suffering. Is this a punishment from God? Now it is certainly true that sooner or later, suffering comes to all people because suffering is the inevitable result of a fallen creation. But sometimes we bring suffering upon ourselves. Sometimes suffering is the result of disobedience to God’s commands. Sometimes suffering is our misuse of our gifts and opportunities and human freedom. Sometimes suffering comes in the form of internal dissonance. This psychological term points to the condition in which a person is behaving in a way that they know to be wrong and destructive, but keep doing it anyway. So perhaps a real source of suffering is that sense of tension, that sense of being unsettled and fractured within, that sense of “dissonance” that comes from the conscience and the heart when living a life that we know is off-track. Sometimes our suffering comes from a loss of our roots or foundation, which would certainly be true in cases where we are counseling people for extreme grief. The suffering here is the sense that what they had most counted on, such as a person, a job, or a relationship, is gone, leaving them hopeless. When counseling depressed clients, sometimes the nature of the suffering is that deep core of hopelessness that they feel. Now depression is distinguished in many ways, but two key characteristics seen in nearly all depressed clients is a lack of hope: a lack of belief that things will ever turn out for them, or that they will ever be happy again;
and helplessness: that they cannot get out of feeling depressed. If people have nothing to look forward to, no goals, no vision, then they have no reason to help themselves or try to get better, and eventually feel helpless about being able to do anything about it. And that is true suffering: to have no hope and nothing to look forward to. Sometimes people suffer under the condemnation of others. Often in families, a person suffering from a mental illness feels condemned by the other family members. They may also feel condemned by co-workers, or their peers at school, or maybe their friends. Or maybe they have engaged in public wrongdoing and feel ashamed of their behavior along with the condemnation of others. Another example is when suffering comes in the form of idolatry. When we make anything or anyone other than God the central figure in our lives, we suffer from a form of idolatry. The most common way we see idolatry in the counseling room is in the form of addictions, usually addictions to alcohol, drugs, sex, food, etc. When a person is addicted to a substance, they are committing a form of idolatry, and it will always leads to tremendous suffering.

Here is a list of several responses we can have to suffering clients. We have spoken a little before about hospitality, but BY simply extending a warm, genuine, compassionate welcome to suffering individuals, we open up a powerful healing dynamic in their lives. Remember the portrait painted of Job’s friends when they came to be with him. It says in Job 2:13 that “they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him because they saw how great his suffering was.” What a
picture of solidarity! To come and share your heart and your life for seven days, without a word spoken. So often that kind of solidarity of presence, when words fail us, is what someone needs the most. I would encourage you to really reflect on that story as you are considering your counseling practice, and how to deal with those times of silence in the counseling room. Many students beginning their counseling ministry fear the very thought that they won’t know what to say or what to do when the client falls silent. But to simply be there in solidarity with a suffering person has great value, and we’ll discuss in a later unit how you might use prayer as a way of reaching out to an individual in those moments of silence. Now, in responding to suffering people it is important that you clarify your role as you deal with that person’s suffering. Many clients come to counseling because they are hurting so badly that they can’t avoid it any longer, and they are there hoping for immediate relief and expect you to relieve their suffering. We have to make it known for them that we are not magicians, and that we do not have the answers to all of their problems. While what we can do is extend compassion and care to them, we don’t have some sort of magic wand to simply make their suffering go away. In explaining and clarifying your role, you really are providing healing to that individual. Another point is that for many people who are suffering, they simply have no one to talk to. Now, if we are really honest with ourselves, we have to admit that none of us actually enjoys hearing about the problems in the lives of others, since it can be very painful to hear about broken relationships, failures, and other people’s sins on a regular basis. So not only do we listen with our ears, but we learn to listen with our eyes by studying the body language of our clients, carefully studying the way look and act as they describe their suffering. Don’t underestimate how important it is to be an astute observer of what is not said, to be looking for body language and non-verbals that may help point out “faulty thinking” that a client is having about suffering. Then, as we develop a trust relationship over the sessions, we also begin to confront that faulty thinking. Some suffering in our lives is unavoidable. Some of it is actually redemptive. But much of it is needless. Here is where you can often provide immediate relief to a client – by helping them to identify needless suffering in their lives and to encourage them to make changes to alleviate that suffering. This begins to allow them to move from feeling “hopeless” to being “hopeful.” Everyone wants to see progress in their life, everyone wants to feel like the efforts they are making to improve is showing results, so to help a person get immediate results can be very powerful and helpful, and is ethically required of us as helpers. Lastly, it is also important for us to learn to be focused in prayer that is appropriate to the client’s level of faith development, and appropriate to our level of relationship with the client.
Now we are going to take a moment to look at a number of insights into the power of hospitality and having a welcoming response to people. Without using inappropriate self-disclosure, hospitality can be very empowering to our clients by helping them to see you as a real person, someone who is not perfect, and who also experiences suffering as a part of life. In counseling, hospitality is that ability to pay attention to the suffering of another, to not turn away, to not withdraw. Perhaps you have had the unhappy experience of knowing someone who has passed away, and going to the funeral home to visit with the family. It is interesting to watch people’s behaviors in situations such as this. Sometimes you see people have so much trouble being around the suffering of others, or feeling like they need to try and fix it, but just end up feeling more inadequate, and so hurry through the process of grieving. We provide a great healing service to people by simply paying attention to their suffering and concentrating on their needs without feeling a need to do something about it. Another point about hospitality is that it is balanced: it is grace, but it is also truth. Grace and truth in dynamic balance. Remember the prologue to the Gospel of John: “grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” We need both, don’t we? We cannot live without the grace of God, but we don’t know how to live without the truth of God. Sometimes you will find that our clients come seeking grace, even if they don’t know to use that word. They are looking for grace; they are looking for an unconditional positive regard from anyone, and we certainly can offer that to them. But they also need truth. They need to receive the truth from us in a way and at a pace that they can hear and they can accept. Both are necessary for hospitality, and this whole process begins with feeling at home with yourself and being non-defensive in your space as you receive a new person, a stranger, into your life.
Now in most cases those we counsel come to us as strangers. But that person is not only a stranger to us, they have become strangers to themselves, to God, and even a stranger to their family and friends. So an important part of hospitality is to help convert that stranger into a friend. Prayer is an important part of that conversion experience, and taking the risk to welcome a stranger, to allow them to walk into your life and for you to walk into their life; by asking the tough questions and to care enough to sometimes endure their anger and tears, that is the real hospitality of the Christian walk. We cannot underestimate the power of welcoming sinners in a way that shows true love, regard, and respect for them because it is powerful and life-changing. Remember the story in Luke 19 where Jesus calls Zaccheus down out of the tree and says “I must come to your house for dinner.” That man’s life was transformed forever by that kind of hospitality, and it can be true for the people that we counsel as well. Simple acts of acts of hospitality are among the most powerful therapeutic dynamic there is.
The subject today has been dealing with “inner space dynamics,” which is creating a process of change from the “inside-out.” Our work as Christian counselors is to help people learn to create an inner space, an inner freedom that they lack, a free space of forgiveness, of reconciliation to God, in which He freely welcomes and accepts them in full knowledge of their sin. It is often true that people become so enslaved in their guilt and shame that they can see no way out, and end up being in total bondage. So maybe just the beginning insight that God knows their sin but still welcomes and loves them begins to create a tremendous free space, and we model that in the way that we accept them. To help people increase truthfulness in their life is a key element in creating inner freedom and confronting illusions. Sometimes those illusions come in the form of faulty thinking, or sometimes they come in the form of distorted emotions and long held prejudices, but they always have the same effect. They draw people away from the truth. They create a strong sense of being in bondage. I hope that you have found these presentations on spiritual formation issues and spirituality in counseling to be helpful to you, and God bless you in completing your reading and studies this week.
Welcome to Week 4 of COUN 506, and this first presentation on the subject of multi-tasking in Christian Counseling. As you read the textbooks, one of the key issues you may have found is the challenge we face as Christian counselors to integrate three important areas in our counseling work: psychology, theology, and spiritual formation. So, how do we do this? How can we hold all of these important roles together as we do our best to be effective counselors with our clients?

Multiple Roles in Christian Counseling

- **Participants**: Authentic presence.
- **Observers**: Professional objectivity.
- **Engineers**: Continually assessing and adjusting to client need.
- **Ministers**: Serving as conduits of grace.
- **Disciples**: Counseling as an act of obedience and service to God.
A key is to understand that our multiple roles in Christian counseling are all equally important. Here, you see five roles that every Christian counselor must simultaneously engage in when they are doing the work of counseling. The first role is being a participant, which has to do with the therapeutic relationship. Obviously we want to carefully avoid over-involvement with our clients, but we cannot be so withdrawn so as to not be partners in the process of change in their lives. We need an authentic presence with them. At the same time, the effective Christian counselor is an observer through listening, through watching for non-verbal signals, and through maintaining professional objectivity. And, Christian counselors are engineers. We are continually assessing and adjusting our work to the client’s needs. This is especially important for those who are brand new to counseling. For instance, when you first meet a client you do an initial assessment. You begin to get to know them. But remember that the initial assessment is just that: it’s the beginning point. Throughout your work with the client you are assessing and adjusting to that person’s progress and to new understandings and revelations that you discover along the way. By the very fact that we call ourselves Christian counselors, then every counselor is also a minister. Our work is an extension of the church - a ministry of the body of Christ - and we are conduits of His grace. And then the last role is that all of us are disciples. For each of us our counseling work is an act of obedience and service to our God.

The level of professionalism in Christian counseling is not less than a secular counselor, but really more. The foundational motivation and method of our work is summed up by Paul in his writing to the church at Ephesus in Ephesians 6:7, “Serve whole-heartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not man.” That is our approach in Christian counseling. To keep in mind that we have to remember that our first client is always God, and that it is in the name of the Lord and for the sake of God’s kingdom that we engage in this
It is important for us to be pleasantly inflexible with clients. This means we are to be welcoming, to remain unflappable, but to also tenaciously cling to our core values, to not feel like we have to set aside things that really matter in order to connect with clients. It is important to be intentional. To not simply “go with the flow” of whatever works at the moment, but to have an intentional purpose, an intentional vision for your counseling work and for the particular work you are doing with a client. We also need to be trustworthy, to be humble, and to be personally integrated. These are character qualities that a professional Christian counselor must consistently demonstrate. If you are not a person whom your clients trust, they simply will not disclose much of their personal lives to you. And, if you are a person who struggles with arrogance, then clients will feel that they are not really welcomed, that they are not really appreciated, and they won’t be able to share from their hearts. On the right-hand column are detailed some ways of relating to people that are absolutely necessary in spiritually-sensitive counseling. We need to always be aware of our motives. To ask ourselves “what’s driving this?” Are I doing what I am doing and saying what I am saying because it is in the best interest of my client? We are to be diligent in constantly refocusing ourselves on what is best for the client. It is so important to be responsive, not reactive. Keep in mind that every person you see in counseling is there because they feel they have no place else to go. In their own way each one of your clients has tried to solve their problems themselves and it has not worked out. You will very often hear outrageous comments and you will see outrageous behavior. It is important to not be reactive, but to be responsive. If anything, we want to be proactive in helping people in their change process. It is important to not rely strictly on techniques in professional counseling. Techniques are important, but without some careful training in their use, it is hard to help people with their change. Because if techniques alone are the foundation of what we are doing with a client, we are lost. We need substance. Each one of us needs a personal faith and a personal theory of counseling, and this gives our counseling substance on which we can rely on and trust our core values in God. Another area is our trustworthiness. One of the key ways that trust is demonstrated is when we remain “honest under fire”: in the face of a client’s anger and distress, when we’re feeling challenged, we remain honest with them. Finally, a key piece of honesty is self-awareness. To have a sense of our own comfort level and our limits. Our ultimate goal in our professionalism is to demonstrate Christ-like character.
Now that we’ve talked about some key points in professionalism in spiritually-sensitive counseling, let’s review a short assessment map to help us in our work with our clients.

Continually assessing clients as we work with them is part of our job. So each time we encounter a client we should be asking the following of ourselves: **First,** does this client have an accurate sense of self-awareness? Do they seem to know where they are in their progress, or where they are not changing and where there are points of resistance? Does this client understand their own involvement in their behavior choices, and their responsibility for the consequences they are experiencing? **Secondly:** does this client have an accurate awareness of need? Does this person seem to understand where their needs might be? Or are they grandiose? Do they seem to think they can completely take care of themselves? Are they completely hopeless and depressed? Or do they think they are beyond need? And **finally,** does this client have a healthy openness to healing relationships? Is this person willing to be helped? Do they believe that they can be helped? Take just a few minutes to review these questions again. They will appear again and again in this course because it is a key piece of your work in multi-tasking in Christian Counseling.
Now we’ll look at building your theoretical map in Christian counseling.

It is important for the counselor to be quite self-aware of your beginning points, of your theoretical beliefs, and in the way in which you approach clients.

Listed here are **seven questions** that you are encouraged to continually clarify in your own mind as you approach the task of counseling.

The first is to understand your personal world-view behind your practice. *What do you believe? What do you not believe? Why do you do counseling at all?* The second is to understand your goals for counseling. *Do you think of counseling primarily in terms of dealing with clinical symptoms, or do you think in more global terms of transformational goals? Next, what is your theory of healing? How does healing of the whole person, the mind, spirit, and body, take place? Do you believe God is an active part in that? How does talk therapy and medication play into your theory? What part does behavior change play?*

There is also the question of what is your understanding of pain and brokenness? *What is your role as a counselor in alleviating suffering? And then this fifth question, how is counseling redemptive? Are you intentional about seeking the Lord’s work for your clients through your counseling? Do you seek to use prayer both in and out of the counseling sessions? Does your theory include including spiritual dialogue with your clients to the extent that it is appropriate in helping to develop them. Next, what is your theory of personhood and personal responsibility? This subject comes up again and again in this course because it is so important. What is your attribution theory? Do you think in terms of people being responsible for their own behavior?* That is considered an
“internal attribution.” Or do you believe in people simply being responsive to the systems and the relationships and the people around them? That is called an “external attribution.” Or are you aware and open to both levels of responsibilities, since in every case both internal and external responsibilities are always at work? What are your thoughts and theories related to that question? And what is your understanding of sin and of fallenness in world?

Now the way in which we put together our personal theoretical map has much to do with our temperament as people. When we think of background elements we think of training and experience and how in many ways our training and experience dictate what we emphasize. For instance, if you have been trained in clinical psychology, you are naturally going to use psychological theories and constructs and techniques as your beginning point. It does not mean that as a Christian that you don’t consider your theological beliefs and spiritual formation principles, but your beginning point will likely be where your greatest training is. It is also true that your belief system underlies your choice of techniques and your view of a client. So you must ask yourself, what is my belief system? On what is it based? Additionally, within your belief system, how does your sense of right and wrong influence how you understand and set boundaries? Understanding boundaries helps you distinguish them between you and your client, helps you understand what healthy boundaries in an individual might look like, and also helps you guide clients in developing appropriate boundaries in their lives.
There are several areas of counselor temperament that affect multi-tasking.

We are going to look at three of them as guiding examples, with the first being your personal style. Everyone has a personal relational style, and it does affect how you go about relating to your clients. Some people are naturally supportive, some are more naturally confrontive. This doesn’t mean if you are a more supportive person that you can’t be confrontive when you need to, or if you are more confrontive that you can’t be supportive when it is required. Are you more naturally an encourager or a challenger? Are you a person that finds it very difficult to challenge others, or do you find it difficult to be empathetic? We typically lean one direction or the other, so you do need to be aware of what is more natural for you to do. Another Important question in understanding your temperament is do you lean more towards being a “tasker” or a “processor?” That is, do you lean more toward “tasks,” such as getting the job done, completing goals, and seeing tangible results. Or are you more interested in the “process” of building relationships, of connecting with individuals, and of allowing the goals to occur as they need to? This important dimension will affect how you go about guiding clients and setting their goals. But the real key is to realize that your temperament is not the client’s temperament. We must be able to discern some of these elements of the temperament in our clients, and then learn to balance them with our own as we craft the therapeutic relationship. The third element has to do with your control needs. How controlling are you as a person? For those who have quite low control
needs, it may be perfectly normal for you to allow a client to take more control in setting their own goals and in controlling the flow of the therapeutic relationship. We usually see this in Carl Rogers’ person-centered counseling. For those who feel more comfortable having more control, you are going to want to know where things are going, and you are going to want to have some significant part of the direction the sessions are going. This is typically what is done in behavioral types of counseling, or in Albert Ellis’ Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy.

We have another assessment process that we engage in when we counsel which is called the “rate limiting” factor. The idea of the “rate limiting” factor is a term that McMinn borrowed from the science of chemistry. This is a very simple principle stemming from the idea that in any chemical reaction, what limits the rate of change for the entire process is the slowest change within the process. This principle can be true in the counseling process, as well. To the degree that we are able to assess a client’s needs and remain aware of our own processes will limit the rate of change of the client in counseling. So these five levels of self-assessment can be vital: 1. To know your client 2. To know your goals 3. To know your map 4. To know yourself 5. To know that you don’t know. We must constantly be assessing where to go next in the counseling process in order to be the most effective with clients. And it is very helpful to repeat these areas of assessment every time you meet with your client to make sure you know where THEY are AT when they come to see you. This helps us to ascertain the following: What sort of progress are they making? Where are they running into obstacles to change that seem to be frustrate them? Where is this client with the beginning goals they set? Are these goals in harmony with the goals that you have for this client, or do those need to be re-assessed at
this time? How is your theoretical map applying to this client? How are you feeling about this client as a person when you meet with them? Do you find yourself feeling tension or anger? What sort of internal signals are you getting about your theoretical map as it applies to this counseling relationship? What are you understanding about yourself as a counselor in this particular interaction with the client? Are you staying aware of your own limits, fatigue levels, and ability to remain present with the individual? Are you aware of your limits and prejudices in this counseling situation? Are you asking the Holy Spirit to guide you and to help you well beyond where your abilities stop? Well, this concludes our presentation on multi-tasking and multiple assessment. As always, I encourage you to take a few moments to review it again to familiarize yourself even more with these principles.

#### Week 4 Lecture 2

*METAMORPH Integrative Counseling Grid*

**COUN 506 (LUO)**
**Week Four, Lecture Two**
*(Download and refer to a copy of *METAMORPH* to use along with this presentation.)*

Welcome to this second lecture in week four of COUN 506.

In this presentation we’ll focus upon the **METAMORPH Integrative Counseling grid**, which is a tool that has been developed to assist counselors in approaching counseling in a holistic manner, and examines nine domains of human functioning.

As a way of introducing the Grid, METAMORPH is a *Greek word* that is translated as “*transformation.*” So already in this name, we are pointing to the purpose of the counseling grid. Certainly, we want to use this grid to help our clients with their suffering, and with the immediate problems that they are having. You will find that many of the approaches that are outlined in the grid will be very helpful to your clients in their immediate situation. But the real goal in this theory of counseling is
METAMORPH, or transformation. It is that interior change that occurs through the Holy Spirit and the power of Christ. And this points to the kind of meta-theory and assumptions behind the grid. As we take apart the details, it will be helpful to look at some of the fundamental assumptions behind it. But before we move any further, make sure that you have downloaded and printed a copy of the METAMORPH grid to have in front of you as a reference during this lecture.

One key to keep in mind is that responsible counseling is based upon an intentional “meta-theory.” This means that counseling is not simply finding some “tricks and techniques” to use with the client that helps them to feel better, but rather that we counsel in a thoughtful and intentional process while drawing upon our worldview.

A meta-theory helps us apply techniques in a specific way to specific needs for specific people. So the meta-theory for the METAMORPH grid is based upon a spiritual formation and soul-care tradition. The grid comes from the historic work of the church and in an integrative way, draws upon the resources of psychology and counseling theories, but with its foundation in spiritual formation and the soul-care tradition. This is a tradition that precedes modern psychology and counseling by many centuries. It is the kind of tradition that we see in Paul when he gives counsel to Timothy, and when he encourages Titus, or in the way that Jesus drew twelve people apart and taught them very carefully how to become His disciples.
As part of its meta-theory, the METAMORPH grid engages in “responsible eclecticism,” meaning that it draws upon many theories and techniques, but always in service of a Christian worldview. Are all psychological theories and techniques and constructs created equally? Are all of them friendly or even open to a Christian worldview? No, but many psychological theories and techniques ARE value neutral. For instance, if we are drawing from psychology and decide to use the “empty chair technique,” this is a value neutral process that can be used by a Christian counselor to do great work in helping a client to unpack their emotions, to deal with grief, or to deal with relational problems they are experiencing with other people. It is important from the beginning to understand that the METAMORPH grid is not meant to be a diagnostic tool that divides people in nine ways. Rather, the purpose is for us to be able to look at clients through these many lenses: the lens of the mind, the emotions, their transformational goals, their actions, their motivations, their body or organic life, their relational life, their spiritual elements, and their history. We are to look at the client through each of those lenses to see a whole person, to see how these areas of human functioning interact in them, and to understand that no area of human functioning is more important than the other. They are all part of the greater whole. You will also notice in the grid that a variety of techniques are employed or suggested. Many of them are “inside-out” techniques. This refers to changes in the heart, changes in the conscience, changes of attitude, changes in deep habits that drive our lives, changes in our thought-patterns, and changes in our emotions that drive our lives—that is “inside-out” change. This kind of thinking goes back to spiritual formation and the soul-care tradition based on the assumption that real change in people comes from “core self-change.” But the METAMORPH grid also draws upon some very useful “outside-in” techniques, those techniques that provide influences from outside the person to create inner change. We have already mentioned the central place of redemption and transformation in Christian counseling, so the METAMORPH grid sees redemption and transformation as ultimate outcomes. As you work with them, will your clients encounter immediate relief, or immediate change in many areas of their lives? Yes they will, and we see that as evidence of an early fruit of greater change going on in their lives, a change that comes from the redemption of Jesus Christ and the transformation through grace. Sometimes this process takes many years, sometimes a lifetime, but it is always the outcome that we are aiming for. And lastly, another key principle regarding METAMORPH is that it is a tool intended to assist you in learning how to multitask effectively. Don’t be daunted by the fact that it is a multi-page document. It is dealing with the complex issues of human functioning. But then, so are you. As a Christian counselor you are dealing with many complex issues at once, and the grid is just one more tool to help you in that process.
Now notice as you move into using the METAMORPH grid that it is an outline based on nine domains of human functioning. Each letter stands for an area of human functioning. This is really a system that is intended to help you to develop habits of thought about the way that you see other individuals as clients so that you begin to consider all these areas of their lives as you work with them. The first “M” in METAMORPH stands for mind, the areas of cognition and thinking and reasoning. The “E” represents emotions, or the client’s feelings, moods and perceptions. The “T” is for Transformational goals, and refers to the “core self.” Here, we want to be aware of the ultimate outcomes we have in mind for our client. “A” stands for actions; the behavior, the habits, the lifestyle of the client. The second “M” stands for motivations. This is the volitional life or will of the client, their attitudes, their conscience, and the ability to discern right from wrong. The “O” stands for organic factors, referring to their physical life, their body life, their overall health. “R” is for their relational dynamics. This is their community systems, their family systems, their pattern of relationships, and their relational style. The “P” stands for pneumatic elements. This comes from the Greek word Pneuma, or spirit, so we’re talking about the life of the spirit—a person’s spiritual traditions and practices; their involvement in church, if any; the way they describe themselves as spiritual persons; and their involvement in spiritual traditions other than Christianity. As the final element, the “H” stands for their history. Now there are six
elements of history undertaken in the grid, which includes a person’s developmental history, behavioral history, relational history, spiritual history, physical history, and very specifically, any trauma history they may have experienced. As you are working with clients you want to examine all six of those areas as completely as possible. So, those are the domains. It is a large but detailed picture of a client that you get by thinking of them in this way.

On this last slide, we are going to look at the descriptions of the columns that you find on the METAMORPH grid. Let’s take a moment to examine what each of these include and what they indicate. The first column, starting to the left, is labeled “Key Domains and Issues in Integrative Christian counseling.” This is the column under which we list the nine domains of human functioning: mind, emotions, transformational goals, actions, motivations, organic factors, relational factors, pneumatic elements, and history that METAMORPH stands for. There is also some additional information in terms of functioning that fall under this column as well. For instance, under the mind, we list related areas: cognition, thinking, reasoning and analytical skills, imagination, presuppositions, and their abilities toward discernment. Additionally, for each domain there is a key scripture included to help you reflect on the history of spiritual formation and soul-care related to this area, and to have as a reference in using scripture when you are working with your clients. Column two deals with “psychological theories and
elements.” Using the mind again as an example and moving across the grid, there is some background and spiritual formation provided, and in this area of functioning, there are some references to theories such as cognitive-behavioral therapy. Cognitive-behavioral therapy says we ought to identify cognitive distortions, faulty assumptions, and automatic negative self-talk. That’s a good beginning as you think about how to address thinking problems, cognition problems, or reasoning problems that clients are having. Also, from a very different theoretical perspective, there is a reference to the ad lareum theories, that to address these issues of the mind involves the re-education of faulty thinking and gaining access to private logic. From an object relations point of view, addressing issues of the mind involves identifying details of history and representations that feed client’s perceptions, attachments and desires. So, for every area of human functioning there are five to six counseling theory frameworks and spiritual formation backgrounds included as a way of thinking about problems. Column three includes “Biblical references.” This is intended to be a resource for you in the counseling room and in preparation for counseling with the client by looking up specific Bible verses that speak to the particular area of human functioning that you are trying to address. For example, if you are working with a client who is having distorted thought problems and negative self-talk, problems that fall into areas of the mind, there are some Bible verses that you might refer to: Proverbs 14:12, which speaks to self-deception and faulty thinking; Isaiah 40:13-14, where the mind of God is compared to human reasoning; Romans 8:6-8, where Paul assures us that conversion produces different thinking that is found in a spiritual mind. Column four is a brief synopsis of “spiritual formation principles” that you might apply to your counseling work based upon the area of functioning listed in column one. If we continue with the example of working with clients and their thinking problems, under spiritual formation principles we would refer to Matt. 22:37-38 as a reminder that loving God with our whole minds is the primary goal of cognitive activity; or 1 Cor. 2:11-16, the goal of cognitive therapy is to be an avenue for the working of the mind of Christ; or Romans 12:2, human transformation follows a spiritual pattern that differs from patterns of the world. Finally, for each of the nine areas of human functioning there are specific “techniques and strategies” that a Christian counselor might consider using. For instance, when considering the mind, you can try the technique of “exploring private thoughts and automatic self-talk in terms of habits of thought, presuppositions, worldly values and attitudes.” You could try having them memorize scripture to help teach spiritual foundations for Godly thinking and to replace faulty thoughts and perceptions. You could have them use journaling to explore ruminations and reactive patterns of thought. There are also some suggestions for using techniques from cognitive-behavior therapy, such as cognitive and covert modeling, thought-stopping, reframing, and identifying cognitive distortions. Well, I hope that by reviewing the METAMORPH grid you’ve been provided with some good background on this tool to begin using it in your counseling work.