



Freedom

focus

“To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God...” (Acts 26:18)



June—July 2006

Hindrances to a Teenager’s Spiritual Growth

Teenage rebellion against God and authority has become an epidemic in our day. In counseling teenagers, I have discovered that the following four areas often account for this problem and hinder their faith in Christ. Understanding and resolving these issues is paramount to their spiritual growth.

Hypocrisy

Hypocrisy is pretending to be something on the outside that is not real on the inside. It is an effort to mask the conflicts, hidden sin, and pain that are raging on the inside in an effort to impress those around us. Teenagers are prone to react to the hypocrisy in parents who put on a spiritual front in church on Sundays, while living in conflict the rest of the week.

Parents who condemn in their teens the same compromises that they allow in moderation in their own lives also communicate a double standard and unintentionally lay the foundation for rebellion. Though teenagers are individually responsible to God for their choices, many react by taking their parents’ moderations to excess. The solution is not sinless perfection, but open honesty. A parent’s willingness to openly acknowledge his/her struggles and failures will be a powerful example to a teenager.

2. Guilty Conscience

First Timothy 1:19 reminds us that failure to have a clear conscience can “shipwreck” one’s faith. Many teenagers make choices they later regret but never confess. As guilt begins to mount, many turn in rebellion against God and authority. Unless a teenager is willing to be honest before God and his parents about past failures, he will always struggle spiritually.

Parents can play a key role in encouraging open honesty by communicating unconditional love (1 John 4:16-18), rather

than reacting in anger to their child’s failures. Most teenagers need a relationship with Mom and Dad that encourages accountability and increases sensitivity to the Holy Spirit’s conviction.

3. Marriage and Family Discord

God designed marriage to be a visual illustration of Christ’s covenantal love relationship with His Church, in which the husband demonstrates unconditional love to his wife, and the wife responds in honor to her husband (Ephesians 5:21-33). Sadly, many Christian marriages hardly portray that picture accurately, and the children are most keenly aware of the problem because it forces them to take sides with one of the parents. When teenagers pray for their parents and fail to see any change in the relationship, they can become easily discouraged. Such unresolved conflict often leads teenagers to question whether Christianity really works. Resolving the marital conflicts can serve to strengthen a teenager’s faith.

4. Rejection

A child is never too old to need affirmation and acceptance from Mom and Dad. Teenagers need affirmation more at this crucial age, with the barrage of evil influences luring them into compromise. When parents fail to affirm character and achievement, teenagers often struggle with loneliness, self-rejection, weak identity in Christ, and an unstable relationship with God. Consequently, they often pursue acceptance from those who will give it to them, even at the risk of great compromise. Teenagers are never justified in this kind of reaction. Rather they must learn to forgive their parents for the rejection they have received, and to understand their acceptance and identity in the Lord Jesus Christ.

By Reverend Jeff Pokone

Church-Connect Luncheons



To learn more about the ICBC ministry or to sharpen your counseling skills, you are invited to attended any of

our upcoming **Church-Connect Luncheons**, located at the ICBC office.

At each luncheon, Rev. Jeff Pokone will feature a different counseling need and provide practical, biblical insight on how to address that issue. These luncheons are designed to be informal and very interactive.

Plan to attend!!

July 27 (12-2 PM)

August 31 (12-2 PM)

September 28 (12-2 PM)

**Please RSVP by calling
317.585.1845**

Visit Us Online

Welcome to ICBC of Indiana online! We just put up our own website, complete with upcoming events, resources, testimonies, free downloads, and much more! To stay current with what is happening here at ICBC of Indiana, please visit us at:

www.icbcindiana.org

The website is also a great place to refer anyone interested in our counseling services.

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Equipping Others for Effective Counseling

On Saturday, May 20th, we were invited to conduct a *Helping Hurting People Seminar* at the Alexandria Church of the Nazarene in Alexandria, Indiana. Over twenty people were in attendance, including pastors from several churches. It was exciting to see the interest among the attendees in becoming better equipped to provide lasting answers to hurting people.

This Seminar is a one-day presentation, specifically designed to be practical, informative, and interactive. It addresses such topics as *Understanding Hurting People, Overcoming Bitterness & Rejection, Resolving Strongholds*, and

Finding Restoration & Healing from Abuse.

In the scope of family, friends, and coworkers, we all know people who are hurting. Yet many Christians feel very inadequate or uncertain how to provide lasting, biblical solutions. It is our desire that this Seminar will be easily adaptable to meet your needs in your scope of influence, whether you are a pastor, counselor, homemaker, businessman, or parent.

For more information on upcoming seminars, please visit us at www.icbcindiana.org. If it is your interest to schedule a *Helping Hurting People Seminar* in your church, simply contact our office!

Finding Freedom and Healing



When I came to ICBC, I seemed stuck and unable to live consistently from my heart. The biggest issues were surrounding the abuse I suffered as a little boy. The pain that came from these abuse memories were crippling me. I think I understood there were issues that needed to be worked out, but I was unable to navigate my way through them.

This week was ordained by God for my healing. Rev. Pokone seemed to know exactly where I was and was able to lead me into healing.

The passage that really helped me was 1 John 4:16-17, "And we have known and believed the love that God hath

to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world."

I realized that I had believed in my head that God loved me, but never allowed myself to know this truth experientially. Therefore, I was unable to trust Him to really open my eyes and my heart.

Now, I believe that I am living more from the heart God gave me. I had built up layers to keep me from getting hurt, but I understand that it's the hurt part that is the real me. Living from the heart God gave me is allowing me to be free (Galatians 5:1).

By a Grateful Counselee

Introducing the ICBC of Indiana Ministry to the Local Church

Here at ICBC, we believe in the importance of the local Church. This God-ordained entity is important for three reasons:

- It is God's designed source of help for hurting people.
- It is God's designed source of spiritual protection.
- It is God's designed source for proper follow-up and accountability.

Our desire at ICBC is to be an assist to pastors and churches in a twofold dimension. First, we want to be available to assist with counseling needs that pastors may feel unsure how to address. Second, we desire to help churches be better equipped to help hurting people by providing practical, biblical training that will sharpen the discipleship counseling skills of any pastor or lay worker.

We were blessed to have the opportunity on June 10th, to

present the ICBC ministry to the Second Reformed Presbyterian Church in Indianapolis. The attendees had the opportunity to hear the firsthand accounts of some individuals who have been and continue to be impacted by the counseling ministry of ICBC in their walk to freedom in Christ. Rev. Jeff Pokone also presented a slide presentation of the ICBC ministry and concluded with a message on the *Keys to Freedom and Healing*.

This two-hour ministry presentation was an excellent way for us to get connected with a local church in our area, and a great opportunity for the church to become better informed about who we are as a ministry.

To learn more about the ministry of ICBC, please contact our office. We would be happy to answer your questions over the phone or arrange for a presentation in your local church.

ICBC of Indiana Fall Praise Banquet

On Friday, October 20th, ICBC will be having a Praise Banquet, located at the Indianapolis Training Center. This banquet will commemorate ten years of counseling ministry and will give us an opportunity to thank you for your support. We also trust this will allow you to learn more about the ministry of ICBC and how you can continue being involved in

this outreach to hurting people. The banquet will feature firsthand testimonies, a slide presentation of the Ministry, a message from Rev. Jeff Pokone, and great food! It is an occasion you do not want to miss! Please make plans to celebrate with us, and bring a friend. To RSVP, please contact our office at 317.585.1845. The cost is \$10 per person.