

**Resolving Conflicts Through
Discipleship Counseling**

Growing a Family Identity

Session Seven

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Characteristics of...

...A Weak Family Identity

- Everybody does his or her own thing, going in different directions.
- Children are annoyed at having to be with family.
- They prefer friends or outside activities—anywhere but home.
- They are embarrassed to be seen in public with their parents.
- They dread being seen caring for younger siblings.
- They can't wait to move out some day.
- They demonstrate contempt for parental authority.
- Peer dependant.
- Teens become increasingly alienated, as they grow older.
- Constant sibling rivalry—cutting down one another.

...A Strong Family Identity

(Ephesians 5:1,2; Philippians 2:1-4)

- Atmosphere of love and acceptance—1 Peter 3:8
- Purpose and Direction—Ephesians 5:17
- A vision—Proverbs 29:18
- Centered on Biblical conviction—2 Timothy 3:16
- They enjoy family times together—Philippians 1:3
- They work on and through conflicts—1 Peter 3: 9-12
- Older children have a sense of responsibility—1 Corinthians 13:11
- Character training is ongoing—Philippians 1:6
- Respect for authority—Hebrews 13:17; Ephesians 6:1,2

What a Strong Family Identity Is Not

- Focused on rules but is focused on the relationship—Galatians 5:13-15
- Independent from each other or other authority—Hebrews 3:13
- A temporal focused family but, eternally focused—John 4:36
- Reacting to the world, but taking action for God—Romans 12:1-2
- A perfect family, there is none.

The Path to a Strong Identity

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”

(Colossians 2:8, 9)

Marriage and families without Christ or without Christ at the center can promote a false pursuit of self-worth by focusing only on the following:

- **Appearance**—finding approval based on how I look to others.
- **Performance**—finding approval from others based on what I do.
- **Status**—finding approval by titles, positions of significance, and achievements.

The following are personal needs that only Christ can righteously meet:

- **Life**—abundant life found in Christ—John 10:10
- **Identity**—based on who I am in Christ—Ephesians 1:18-20
- **Acceptance**—we are accepted in Christ—Ephesians 1:5; Colossians 2:10
- **Security**—we are secure in Christ—Romans 8:35-39
- **Significance**—we are significant in Christ—Philippians 4:13; John 15:16

Home as a Safe Place (1 John 1: 3-4; 1 John 4:7)

Adapted from The Life Model (Pasadena, CA: Shepherds House Inc., 2004)

1. A place of “glad to be together”
2. A place of unconditional love.
3. A place of needs being met
4. A place where we learn to understand our hearts.
5. A place where we can express our emotional upsets and be comforted.

6. A place where can share our needs and desires.
7. A place where we evaluate the consequences of our choices
8. A place where our interests and talents are developed
9. A place where we are encouraged to do the tough things in life
10. A place where I learn to live from my heart

Motivation Systems

Adapted from The Life Model (Pasadena, CA: Shepherds House Inc., 2004)

“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. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.”

(1 John 4:16-18)

1. Fear-based—shame, condemnation, fear of rejection, fear of failure, anger

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” (2 Timothy 1:7)

- Out of duty trying to avoid negative feelings and shame
- Breeds insecurity
- Hide true feelings or facts for fear of upsetting them
- Win/lose or lose/lose situations
- Deceit and pretending
- Live according to the flesh

2. Love based—conviction of the Holy Spirit, conscience, desire driven, faith, hope and love

“Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.” (1 Timothy 1:5)

- Brings life to the relationship
- We get to know each other better
- We can share both the positive and the negative
- We can act like our true selves
- Truth and authentic giving
- Living out of our new Heart in Christ

Encourage Godly Family Dynamics in Counseling

- Mom and Dad need to focus on their own unresolved issues

- Formally establish family vision and purpose.
- Clearly define goals and boundaries.

Success is accepting God's goal for our lives and by His grace becoming what He has called us to be.

- Train children up in who they are in Christ—Colossians 2:6-7.
- Establish their trust with each other—Matthew 5:37.
- Children must see themselves as important to the family. Fulfillment is discovering our own uniqueness in Christ and using our gifts to edify others and glorify the Lord.
- Children need to be an active part of family.
- Live for the family agenda.
- Plan daily times to be together (family worship, meal times, activities, etc.)
- Focus on the greatest commandments—Mark 12:29-31.
- You together have a common enemy—Satan.

Key to conflict—address problems as spiritual in nature (Ephesians 6:12).

- Grow in grace—Galatians 2:20-21.
- Establish restrictions early in life—Deuteronomy 11: 18-19.
- Do family activities and have fun, work, and minister as a family.
- Minimize outside activity.
- Cultivate individual relationships, gifting, interests, talents, and passions.
- Demonstrate heart forgiveness.
- Show affection- voice tone, touch, and smile.
- Be happy.

Key concept—wanting what we have: *Happiness is being thankful for what we do have, rather than focusing on what we don't have, because happy are the people that want what they have—Philippians 4:12.*

Practical Help for Weak Families—Deuteronomy 6:5-7

- Work on death to self—demonstrates humility.
- Look for signs of independence.
- Eliminate clutter—“walk through.”
- Have a wise schedule—1 Corinthians 14:40.
- Get in control of your home early in the morning “Wake up early.”
- Learn to have fun together – uninhibited spontaneity is key.
- Commit to praying together.

- Teach your children to fear God and respect the Word of God.
- Teach character continuously.
- Mom must have stress relief and Dad needs time with God.
- A regular time for evaluation of goals and planning.
- Pray for your children to understand the power of God.
- Return to joy together at the end of each day.
- Call a family meeting and confess sin for lack of interest, direction, etc.. Explain new vision and goals.

Identifying and Resolving Strongholds that Weaken a Teenager's Faith

Identify Five Areas that Satan Uses

- **Hypocrisy**

1. Teenagers are very aware of sincerity in others; they tend to admire people who are “real”.
2. Hypocrisy is pretending to be something on the outside that is not real on the inside.
3. Parents and Christian leaders that do not live out what they teach break a trust in the relationship—1 Peter 2:1,2
4. None of us are perfect; so if we are looking hard enough, we all fall short and could be called a hypocrite—Isaiah 9:17
5. It is important for the parents to own up to their failures and make sincere changes based on the work that God is doing in their life, not react in pride and make excuses for our failures while demanding a different standard for our children. This kind of example teaches our children their own need for God—1 Peter 5:2,32

Identify Lies Satan Wants Teenagers to Believe

- My parents don't really know what is best for me.
- If God (Christianity) were real, my parents would love each other.
- “They're all just a bunch of hypocrites.”
- If I were really a Christian, I would not struggle with this sin.
- I will never be good enough for God (or parents).
- I can't tell my parents, they would not understand.
- If I told my parents, all they would do is get angry at me.
- If God really loved me, he would not have let this happen.

- **Guilt—1 Timothy 1:18-19**

1. Young people who have hidden sin in their lives will not have a clear conscience and this will ship-

wreck their faith—Acts 24:16

2. A relationship with the parent and God where the child can share their failures is very important. This happens when the parent does not react in anger to their child's failure and there is an atmosphere of unconditional love—I John 4:16-18 Most Christian teenagers know right from wrong; they need an atmosphere that the conviction of the Holy Spirit can do its work. Example: A young man who struggles with Internet pornography.

- **Marriage and Parental Discord—Mark 3:27**

1. Marriage is a picture of Christ's love relationship with the body of Christ. Is it any wonder when mom and dad are not walking in oneness and demonstrating true love toward one another that our children would question does Christianity really work?
2. Unanswered prayer weakens a child's faith, many young people pray for their parents when they see mom and dad fighting with each other.
3. Unfortunately many homes are filled with anger, tension, rebellion and hatred. Satan wants us to feel our battle is against flesh and blood.
4. A Father's lack of Spiritual leadership may cause young men to think Christianity is unimportant.
5. Many times I find the need to counsel the parents before I can help their teen.

- **Rejection From Others (*real or perceived*)**

1. Objects of Rejection
 - Mom and Dad (Performance based acceptance)
 - Peers
 - Society
 - God
 - Self
2. Results of Rejection
 - Emotional immaturity
 - A love vacuum
 - Loneliness and fear
 - Self-rejection
 - Weak identity in Christ
 - Unstable relationship with God
 - Unable to give and receive love
3. Steps Out of Rejection

- Forgive those that have rejected you
- Find your identity in Christ needs of love, acceptance, security, and significance
- Christ Esteem- seeing myself as Christ sees me

- **Unhealthy Soul Ties**

1. Definition of Unhealthy Soul Ties

- They are, “*unholy alliances, perverse relationships.*” They are best defined as *an unhealthy strong intimate bonding relationship between two or more people.* I like the term soul-joined.

2. Difference Between Healthy and Unhealthy Soul Ties

- **Healthy**—centered on that which is founded on love (agape), what is Godly, eternal and good.

—*Jonathan and David—1 Samuel 18:1*

- **Unhealthy**—centered on that which is lustful, sinful, temporal, and evil

—*Sexual immorality—1 Corinthians 6:16*

—*Evil companions—1 Corinthians 15:33 (AMP Version)*

Understand How to Counsel Teenagers Who Struggle With Their Faith

- Look for evidences of salvation.
- Show them the Spiritual battle to be won—Ephesians 6:10-18.
- Help them understand the power of their will. “So big, it can choose against an almighty God.” They must commit their will to God.
- Have them read and meditate on Proverbs—a Book written for young men.
- Teach them that faith comes by hearing the Word of God—Romans 10:17.

Communication

Three Forms of Communication

- 55% non-verbal behavior (facial expressions & body language)
- 38% tone of voice (inflection, how it is said)
- 7% Literal words used (content)

Purposes of Communication

1. Inform—Educate
2. Persuade—Convince
3. Motivate—Encourage
4. Build Relationships
5. Entertain

Common False Beliefs About Communication

1. If you speak loud or raise your voice, then people will listen
2. People will always pay attention when you speak to them.
3. If you repeat something over and over again, then that ensures people will listen and understand what you are saying.
4. If you speak clearly, then people will understand you.
5. When people say: “*I understand,*” then that means they really do understand.
6. If you speak in a sweet tone of voice, then people will listen and understand you.
7. If you give people all the facts, then they will understand you and change their behavior.
8. If you criticize people, then they will do what you expect.
9. When you define the meaning of words, then people will understand what you are saying.
10. People will always listen and understand everything you say.
11. If you threaten people, then they will understand you and conform to your expectations.
12. Whenever you argue with people, then they will always understand you and do what you want.

Six Possible Messages Every Time You Try to Communicate

- What you actually said
- What you meant to say
- What the other person hears you say
- What the other person think he hears you say
- What the other person said about what you said
- What you think the other person said about what you said

Effective Communication

One of the most difficult things in life is communication. Effective communication has not occurred until the following things happen:

- Person A (wife) tells the message to Person B (husband)
- Person B listens to the message of Person A

Anticipated Response

- How do you think others will respond?

Personal Preferences

- What you would prefer to be done

Reasons Why Listening Is Difficult

1. Thinking of your response instead of listening.
2. Assuming you understand what was said without verifying it.
3. Upset with the person
4. Distracted by noises or movement
5. Worried or anxious about other things
6. Listening for the purpose of criticism
7. Assuming you know what they are going to say

Four Fallacies About Listening

Intelligent People are good listeners.

- **Reality:** Pride may hinder from learning listening skills.

Everyday listening builds listening skills.

- **Reality:** People naturally practice bad habits and repeat mistakes.

Reading develops listening ability.

- **Reality:** Reading is a solitary experience you can do alone.

The words *Hearing* and *Listening* are synonyms.

- **Reality:** Hearing is *the process whereby a sound wave travels through the air, hits the ear, is translated into neural current, and proceeds to the brain.*
- **Reality:** Listening is *the sorting out process by which we choose and describe which stimuli will have our attention.*

Steps to Effective Listening

Focus

- Concentrate only on what the person is saying.

- Put everything else out of your mind.
- Do not think of your response.

Attention

- Listen without interruption.
- Pay close attention to what the speaker is trying to communicate.

Response

- Think carefully before you respond.
- Do not respond impulsively and say hurtful things.
- Express your feelings calmly.

Openness

- Try to understand the other person's point of view.
- Everybody has a right to their opinion even though a majority of people would not agree with it
- A Native American said, "*Never criticize someone until you have walked a mile in their moccasins.*"

Paraphrase

- Put what you think they said in your own words

Reflection

- Use reflection to understand how the speaker feels about what he is saying.
- How does this speaker feel? What is he trying to say to me?
- Ask questions to better understand what the speaker is saying or to obtain more information.

Eye Contact

- Look the speaker right in the eyes.
- Stand or sit as close to the speaker as possible.

Divine Guidance

- Ask God to help you say the right thing in the right way. Speak the truth with love.