

COUNSELING YOUTH

INTRODUCTION

As we begin, please note that I am not in any way the sole source of this information you are learning. This is the work of Raphael & Namukolo Banda who has written a seven part series on Male- Female Relationships. The part of this material on love and Infatuation was gleaned from their book “*True Love or Infatuation*”. Please make effort to source the whole series. They are a great aid to counseling youths. My other source is a book entitled “*Changed into His Image*” written by Jim Berg. Another powerful book that helps Christians realizes the plan of God in sanctification by which He transforms our lives to be in the likeness of Christ. I have made necessary changes so as to suit and meet the purpose of this workshop. Therefore for your further reading and in-depth knowledge see to it that you source a copy of these books if you can.

The subject we handle in this workshop is a mammoth of a topic that cannot be exhausted in this time frame. Counseling youths is one of the most demanding areas of church ministry. Though the youths are a part of the church today, we should also realize that they are the tomorrow church. What we teach them today will reflect tomorrow. Therefore, in this process of counseling them our perception must be that they are going through the process of progressive sanctification. In the event that the youth is unsaved it can never be anything else save regeneration.

This workshop is also biased to the assumption that the youths we go back to counsel are Christians who have a genuine relationship with the Lord. They are simple going through a time in life when they are changing. Therefore our task in their lives is to help them change in their image to the likeness of Christ. We shall focus on the process of change, discipleship, and a case study on love and infatuation.

I. THE GOAL OF COUNSELING YOUTHS IS THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

Someone has said that sanctification is the “Christianizing of the Christian.” Preachers through the years have described it as the process whereby the Spirit of God takes the Word of God and changes us to become like the Son of God.

The Bible teaches that the believer has three main spiritual responsibilities in the sanctification process. God, the Holy Spirit, is the primary initiator in all of these activities, but a believer must cooperate with what the Holy Spirit is doing in his life. Those three responsibilities are listed in the first column of the following chart. Take a minute to look them over and notice the passages from Paul and James that refer to each activity. Notice also in the last column that the Holy Spirit, when He enables a believer in those activities, produces a certain kind of fruit: the flesh is restrained, the mind is renewed, and Christ is revealed through the believer’s example and ministry to others.

OUR PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY	PAUL'S INSTRUCTION (Ephesians 4:22-24)	JAMES'S INSTRUCTION (James 1:21-25)	THE HOLY SPIRIT'S RESULT
1. Mortification of the flesh	“put off (the ways of the old man (i.e., the old unregenerate self)”	“lay apart (lit., put off) all filthiness”	The flesh is restrained through the Spirit's enablement.
2. Meditation on the Word	“be renewed in the spirit of your mind”	“receive...the engrafted word”	The mind is renewed through the Spirit's illumination.
3. Manifestation of Christ likeness	“put on (the ways of) the new man (i.e., the new self in Christ)”	“be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only”	Christ is revealed through the Spirit's fruit.

While every believer has a personal responsibility to carry out these commands, the Bible clearly teaches that these activities can be performed only in the power of the Holy Spirit. Keep in mind that sanctification has been designed by God to be a cooperative venture between God and us. Notice the joint responsibility in the following verses:

- Romans 8:13
- Galatians 2:20

In each case, we are commanded to do something: “mortify the deeds of the body” and “live in the flesh (in this body) by the faith of the Son of God.” At the same time, God says He is doing something: “through the Spirit” and “Christ liveth in me.”

Truly biblical counsel will emphasize to believers, not merely mention in passing, that to change they must “put off (the ways of) the old (unregenerate) man,” “be renewed in the spirit of (their) mind,” and “put on (the ways of) the new man (in Christ).”

Always note the Holy Spirit's role in the sanctification process as the believer yields himself to the Spirit's control. This is God's plan! Therefore, it is our only answer and our wonderful hope. It is the continued work of the gospel in us.

II. THE COUNSELING YOUTHS MUST BE PERCEIVED AS DISCIPLESHIP

Discipleship must be the primary concern in the realm of youth counseling as well. Too many who attempt to counsel do not have the biblical process of progressive sanctification in mind when they try to help someone. They do not see themselves involved primarily in a discipleship relationship of helping their youths grow in likeness to Christ.

A youth may come to such a counselor for relief from his despair, anxiety, anger, guilt, or fear. He may want help in getting out of peer pressure or may desire direction in restoration. He may be struggling with the effects of sexual abuse or the life-dominating clutches of drugs, alcohol, or homosexuality. A young girl may be grieving after a sexual abuse and the discovery of a disease. In each of these cases, change and growth toward Christ likeness are the needs of the hour. When the counselor's mindset is not truly biblical, the counseling process will not intentionally move toward biblical goals.

For example, when a woman who was sexually abused as a child by her uncle comes to such a counselor for help, he may think she needs to recover hidden memories or build her self-esteem. Or he may believe her “damaged emotions” need to be healed or her “inner child” needs to be re-parented. He may suppose that a “Christianized” twelve-step recovery program is the solution or assume that giving her “insight” into why her uncle was abusive in the first place can help her more easily forgive him.

In the process, she may find some temporary relief from whatever was troubling her most. She may even learn some spiritual truths she had not known before. **But unless the path of sanctification is clearly charted for her**, she will spend months, and perhaps years, steering from one navigational heading to another looking for lasting help. What she needs is a counselor who understands that God’s “recovery program” is sanctification. She can become godly and useful to Christ as an adult, no matter what her past, if the counselor will help her learn and practice the basics of biblical change. Any attempt to produce love, joy, peace, endurance, and so forth apart from the Spirit of God is reliance upon strategies that are in competition with God.

In conclusion to this first section, if you are to better counsel a youth, assuming he/she is a Christian, you must be aware of the sanctification process as the bible sets it forth, otherwise you will forever mislead them

III. LOVE AND INFATUATION

Among many other things that the youth is troubled within the church is the subject of Love and Infatuation. Our young people need to be sanctified (process of change). Someone has called the 21st C as the sex age. The social trends of this century have misplaced the place of sex as an act of love in marriage to be a mere emotion in a person that needs to be satisfied. The interchange of infatuation for love has catapulted this phenomenon.

Sadly the biblical definition is also being lost in the church. Today, young people have no idea what the word love means. More sadly church leaders and teachers have equally forgotten to handle this subject as an urgent need in the life of the youth. Because the church has become lazy in teaching the real meaning of love, our youths have turned to Hollywood and Bollywood, DSTV and the internet to teach them.

This situation can only be handled if we can help set forth the work of sanctification in the young people’s lives by drawing them back to the bible. To help you do this, Raphael & Namukolo Banda’s chart is great guides in helping our young people learn the difference. Because the line is so slim between these two emotions, most young people tend to fall into infatuation and think they are in love.

In the bible there two stories that an example of these emotion. We do well to use them to counsel the youth. These are the story of Amnon and Tamar (2 Sam 13:1-15), and Jacob and Rachel (Gen 29:16-22).

TRUE LOVE	INFATUATION
THE STORY OF JACOB AND RACHEL (Genesis 29:14-21; 25-30)	THE STORY OF AMNON AND TAMAR (2 Samuel 13:1-22)
Is a strong but controllable affection towards a member of the opposite sex. As strong as death yes but still controllable and subject to reasons	Is a strong, explosive and paralyzing affection towards a member of the opposite sex tending to produce unreasonable behavior.
Is interested in sex in its rightful context.	Is interested in sex out of its rightful context.

<p>This includes other forms of physical intimacy like kissing and fondling. It reserves all forms of physical intimacy for marriage.</p> <p>Notice that Jacob looked forward to sleeping with Rachel but only after marrying her. <i>Verse 21.</i></p>	<p>It wants it here and now. The relationship revolves around physical intimacy. Amnon wanted to sleep with Tamar there and then even if this meant sinning against God. <i>Verse 11</i></p>
<p>Is patient and it is willing to wait. Jacob was willing to wait for seven years. The love he had for Rachel sustained him. <i>Verse 20</i></p>	<p>Is impatient and it is not willing to wait. This is the type of love that is prepared to elope without the blessing of church or parents.</p>
<p>1 Corinthians 13:4 tells us that love is patient. If she is studying, he is prepared to wait. If current circumstances do not permit, they will wait.</p>	<p>It is prepared to disrupt the girl's school and career because it does not care about her future.</p>
<p>Observes all the necessary laws, social and biblical. Laban's family put conditions before Jacob and he followed them all. He was also governed by God's law, which demanded that he married from his own people.</p>	<p>Breaks both social and biblical laws in the process e.g. courting a non-Christian, a married man, or having sex outside marriage. Another example is that of Samson (Judges 14:1-3). He had no regard for his parent's wise advice.</p>
<p>Respects its object. Jacob kept his hands off Rachel. He respected her dignity and did not force her to do anything illegal. On the contrary, by his behavior, he made it easier for her to live a holy life.</p>	<p>Does not really love nor respect its object. Amnon raped Tamar and afterwards threw her out.</p>
<p>Burns steadily like the sun and grows with time. Notice that time did not weaken Jacob's love for Rachel. It only strengthened it. How many people rush into marriage out of the fear that he or she might change their minds!</p>	<p>Burns like a meteorite and quickly disappears with time leaving behind a dark sky. This is its peculiar and notorious characteristic. It comes in through the back door and leaves through the window!</p>
<p>Leaves all parties edified and happy. Jacob was happy. Rachel was happy. Laban and his people were happy. Jacob's family was happy. Above all God was pleased and honored.</p>	<p>Brings sorrow and leaves all parties devastated. Pregnancies, diseases, broken relationships, and church discipline follow its path. Notice that it did not bring satisfaction or happiness to Amnon himself even after he got what he wanted. Tamar was devastated. David was furious. Absalom hated Amnon.</p>

<p>Is sacrificial. It is selfless. It is prepared to give up its wants and needs for the sake of another.</p>	<p>Is selfish. It wants to satisfy itself at any cost. Amnon's interest was what he could do <i>to</i> her not <i>for</i> her. <i>Verse 2</i></p>
<p>Is responsible. Jacob shared his intentions with Laban, who had both the authority and responsibility over Rachel. True love consults trustworthy people like church pastors, elders and parents.</p>	<p>Is irresponsible. Looks at the character of Amnon's confidant. An equally irresponsible person. This is the type which abandons the family and leaves them stranded. It is also the reason for so many single mothers in our land.</p>
<p>Appreciates both the external and internal beauty of the other. <i>Verse 7</i></p>	<p>Only attracted by the external. <i>Verse 1-2.</i> Amnon was captivated by Tamar's beauty and nothing else.</p>
<p>Uses honest means to win its object. It uses the front door. It does not hide anything but deals openly with the other.</p>	<p>Uses lies, trickery and deceit to win its object. It might also involve striving and fighting. How many girls have got married to loafers thinking they are marrying a general manager of some company?</p>
<p>Experiences healthy relationship inspite of difficulties. Rachel had problems with child bearing. Jacob did not ditch her. Compare with what happens in the world when there are no children. We recall burying a lady workmate who when she immediately started getting sick, her husband ditched her!</p>	<p>With time, feels trapped in the relationship. Problems will only serve to break the relationship or marriage. Can only manage good times and not problems.</p>
<p>Has a traceable genealogy. Jacob knew Laban's family. He also spent time with them before choosing Rachel. He did not marry a stranger.</p>	<p>Has no genealogy. Amnon just wakes up one day and he has this strong feeling for Tamar. It has no sound history or background.</p>
<p>Is public and open. Jacob made his thoughts known. Both Rachel and her family knew his intentions.</p>	<p>Is secretive. Amnon plotted his moves like a military operation. David and Tamar were completely in the dark as to his evil plans. Infatuation thrives in the darkness and in secrecy. Listen to the worldly songs. They are all about what will happen when 'I meet</p>

	<p>you <i>tonight</i>', 'I will love you <i>tonight</i>'. Why the night? Some of you are in relationships which you do not want anyone to know about. You know that the man is a married man or he is a non-Christian and so you hide the friendship.</p>
<p>Respects and honors the institution of marriage. Jacob knew and respected the institution of marriage. He lived up to the vow, 'Till death do us part'. Jacob's relationship with Rachel was only ended by the death of Rachel.</p>	<p>Does not honor nor recognize the institution of marriage or it takes it lightly. Tamar was prepared to marry Amnon. We have heard of people in courtship where the lady fears to bring up the topic of marriage fearing the man will get annoyed! Even after entering marriage a counterfeit love will not respect the marriage.</p>

Jim Berg. *Changed into His Image*, BJU Press. Greenville South Carolina 29614 USA 1999
 Raphael & Namukolo Banda, *True Love or Infatuation*, Evergreen Publishers, 50946 Lusaka Zambia. 2008

For more information or help in the area of counseling youth please contact:

Pastor Saidi F. Chishimba,
Faith Baptist Church Riverside,