

THE ROLE OF WORSHIP IN COUNSELING

Discussion

How is sin more than behavior?

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What role do you think worship plays in counseling?

Dynamics of Worship

1. We worship with our **minds**.
2. We worship by our **desires**.
3. We worship by our **wills**.
4. We worship by our **words**.

We are by nature worshipers. Each of us worships someone or something. The question becomes: What do I worship and why?

Diagnose

Tammy, an attractive woman of 30, is married and has a child. Her husband loves her, yet she has two problems.

First, she does not think that she is very attractive. She worries about her weight and is very insecure in relationships.

Second, when she has had a rough day and is stressed out, she secretly binges on food, downing a whole box of cereal or a half-gallon of ice cream. For a moment she feels satisfied. Then her satisfaction turns to horror and fear. Afraid of gaining weight, she runs to the bathroom and forces herself to vomit.

What would you say is at the root of Tammy's problems?

Key Scriptures

Genesis 3:6 "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was **desirable to make one wise**, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate."

Ezekiel 14:1-8 (3) "Son of man, these men have set up their **idols in their hearts** and have put right before their faces the stumbling block of their iniquity. Should I be consulted by them at all?"

Acts 7:41 "At that time they made a calf and brought a sacrifice to the idol, and were **rejoicing in the works of their hands.**"

Colossians 3:5 "Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, **which amounts to idolatry.**"

Idol Systems

1. What we treasure most is what we worship.
2. We develop bonds with our idols through our worship.
3. Idols are false gods to which we attach ourselves for desired favors.
4. The nature of idolatry is heart-worship.
5. Idols are accomplices and co-conspirators in one's rebellion against the Creator.
6. We seek to preserve our worship by protecting our idols.

Jeremiah 9:23-24 "Thus says the LORD, 'Let not a wise man boast of his **wisdom**, and let not the mighty man boast of his **might**, let not a rich man boast of his **riches**; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he **understands and knows Me**, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for **I delight in these things**,' declares the LORD."

1 John 2:15:16 "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the **lust of the flesh** and the **lust of the eyes** and the boastful **pride of life**, is not from the Father, but is from the world."

Idolatrous Worship

1. We seek desired blessings from the object of worship.
2. Our worship focuses on an idol-object.
3. We seek to promote self by our idolatrous worship.
4. We want to possess wisdom so we might be seen as wise.
5. We want to possess strength so we might be considered strong, in control, dominant, and in charge.
6. We want to possess riches because we think they will make us self-sufficient and self-reliant.

The Solution

True worship of the One True God through the power of the Gospel is the solution. True worship is genuine delight in God. God is the goal. A relationship with Him is what we value most, as He alone is treasured and worthy. True worship is our delight in God as God.

We do this **by faith** and **in repentance**:

1. **By faith** we see (understand) that God is valuable. *He* is the blessing our minds value.
 2. **By faith** we long for him and we delight in Him. He is the great object of our worship that our desires pursue.
 3. **By faith** we give our allegiance to Him. We become God-centered. Our allegiance is no longer with ourselves but with Him. His will becomes our will.
 4. **By faith** we openly need Him, love Him, and seek Him. Our words sincerely praise Him.
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1. **In repentance** we must turn from seeking the blessings of the idol (wisdom, strength, riches, etc.).
 2. **In repentance** we turn from the object itself. The rich man forsakes his riches. The prodigal forsakes the pigs. Paul forsakes his life as an honored Pharisee.
 3. **In repentance** we turn from self: from self-control, self-reliance, and self-sufficiency. We repent of demanding our way and of brooding over not having it (James 4:1-10).
 4. **In repentance** we turn from our desire to promote self and the desire to self-rule.

Remember: We worship with our **minds**; we worship by our **desires**; we worship by our **wills**; we worship by our **words**.

UNDERSTANDING IDOLATRY AND ITS IMPACT

Idol-Detection

1. What do I not have in my life that, if I had it, I believe it would make me happy?
2. What do I now have, that, if taken away, would leave me severely unhappy or devastated?
3. What do I have now that I spend a lot of time and resources maintaining and would fight to keep?
4. What is it that I now have in my life that I can't live without?

Defeating the Idols

James 4:6-10

“But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, ‘GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.’ Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.”

THE COUNSELOR AS AMBASSADOR

2 Corinthians 5:19-20

“In other words, in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting people's trespasses against them, and He has given us the message of reconciliation. Therefore **we are ambassadors for Christ**, as though God were making His plea through us. We plead with you on Christ's behalf, ‘Be reconciled to God!’”

Ambassador (Webster): A minister of the highest rank employed by one prince or state, at the court of another, to manage the public concerns of his own prince or state, and representing the power and dignity of his sovereign. They are also called ministers.

As Ambassadors, we live out:

The *message* of the King.

“What does my King want to communicate to this person in this situation? What truths from His Word should shape my response? What does he want them to know specifically in this situation?”

The *methods* of the King.

“How does my King bring change? How does He want to change this person? How would He respond if He was here on earth? What responses can I give that are consistent with the Gospel?”

The *character* of the King.

“How can I faithfully represent my King in His redemptive purpose with this person? How can I allow Him to show Himself in this relationship?”

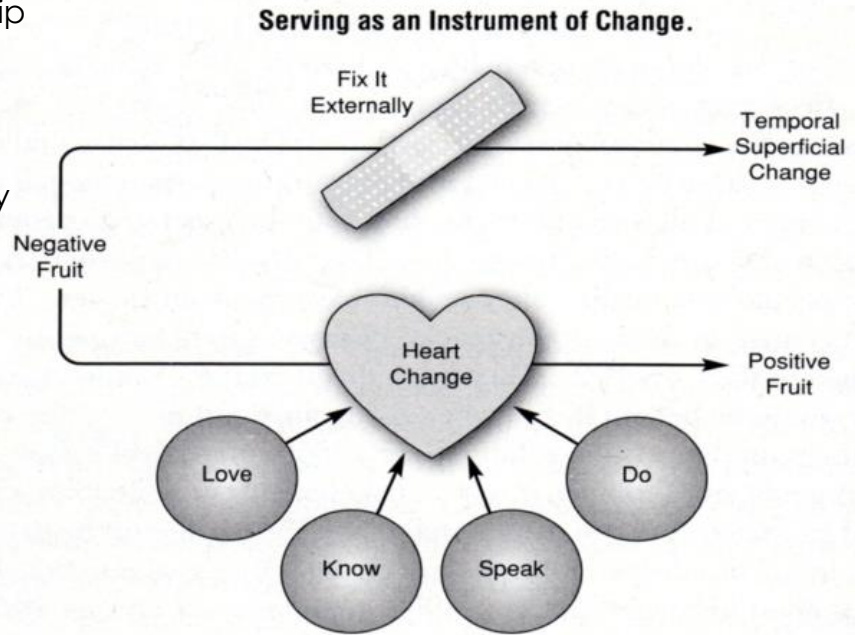
The *purpose* of the King.

“What is the work my King wants to do here? What in my heart could hinder the work He wants to do here?”

- One of the most powerful ways to help counselees see God is to embody His presence, His grace, and His love in our relationship with them.
- In so doing, we are in reality making the invisible Christ visible to people who desperately need to see Him.
- Being His ambassador means following His example in our words, our attitudes, and our methods.
- To do so we must be students of the Gospel accounts of His teachings and interactions with those He met.

Being Ambassador in the Counseling Relationship¹

- **Love** = The Relationship
- **Know** = Their Heart
- **Speak** = God's Truth
- **Do** = Help Them Apply



LOVE

Teach Your Counselee What Christ-like Love Looks Like

1. **The Gift of Acceptance**
2. **The Gift of Truth**
3. **The Gift of Kindness**
4. **The Gift of Prayer**
5. **The Gift of Consequences**

THE GIFT OF ACCEPTANCE: Not, "I can't believe you did that," or, "That was stupid," or other comments or questions that cause the person to sense that their faults and failings are a surprise or that they are being rejected as a person.

¹ Tripp, Paul David. *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing, 2002.

THE GIFT OF TRUTH: The goal is to help the counselee see reality more clearly (removing spiritual blindness). At times, giving the truth to a rebellious, disobedient, or unresponsive person can have wonderful results. Other times, the results can be obnoxiousness, greater rebelliousness, mockery, even outright rejection.

THE GIFT OF KINDNESS: Being kind and gracious in the face of sinfulness does not necessarily equate to cosigning that attitude or behavior. Kindness is not deserved, but it is due. This is the bearing of an ambassador or Jesus Christ and is a gift of love, not a reward for behavior.

THE GIFT OF PRAYER: Jesus was and is our intercessor (John 17:20; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 7:25). To be more like Him, we need to learn to intercede for others. To intercede means to speak on another's behalf or to plead their case. The gift of intercessory prayer is *other-focused*, just as Jesus' life was.

THE GIFT OF CONSEQUENCES: The gift of consequences is built into God's economy (Galatians 6:7). It may not seem like a gift at all, especially toward the one receiving it, yet, when given with the right attitude, the gift of consequences can surprise the receiver with life changing results.

It is not to be reactionary or punitive. It is to be a well thought out, prayed out course of action based on the specific wrong-doing constructed in order to communicate to someone: *This kind of behavior or action is not acceptable and I will not continue to act as if it does not matter that you do this.*

KNOW

Data collection becomes more than gathering information with which to diagnose a problem and determine a solution. Getting to know the counselee as one would a friend—their goals, their dreams, their strengths, their weaknesses, their fears, their successes, their failings—the goal is to get below the surface to the heart-level.

SPEAK

“Speak the truth in love...”

This is where God's truth is brought to bear on the person and their situation. The Gospels are full of examples of the way Christ helped people see the truth, and He did so with love yet without compromise.

DO

This is their part as well as ours. We are to help them do God's will with what they have gained insight of.

Insight alone is empty. As James admonishes:

“Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.” **James 1:21-22**

