Building Healthy Spirituality in Christian Counseling

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OBU Issues in Christian Counseling
Conference: Spiritual Issues

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Building Healthy Spirituality in Counseling

Session Description.

▶ This workshop will examine the role of spirituality in an individual's health and well-being, as an essential part of competent counseling. Components of spirituality and ethical ways of incorporating faith into treatment planning and practice will be addressed.

Learning Objectives

▶ **Participants will:**

  ▸ Examine the necessity of addressing the spiritual dimension in counseling

  ▸ Identify the ethical use of spiritual resources in counseling

  ▸ Learn examples of spiritual resources and practices in counseling.

▶

The Necessity of Addressing the Spiritual Dimension in Counseling

The Problems with Addressing Spirituality in Counseling

▶ Problem of addressing the spiritual dimension—inadequate training

▶ Challenge of addressing the spiritual dimension—multiple views

▶ Personal views of religion—counselor and counselee

▶ Views even within a common faith tradition are not homogeneous

Research: Spirituality & Mental Health

▶ Around 90% of the world's population involved in some form or religious or spiritual practice.

▶ Koenig argues that "religion is a powerful coping behavior that enables people to make sense of suffering, provides control over the overwhelming forces of nature (both internal and external) and promotes social rules that facilitate communal living, cooperation, and mutual support." (p. 283)

▶ Koenig, H. G. (2009). Research on religion, spirituality, and mental health: A review. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, 54*(5), 283-291.

▶ Harold G. Koenig, M.D., is a Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Associate Professor of Medicine, and Director of the Center for Spirituality, Theology and Health at the Duke University Medical Center in Durham, North Carolina.

Most American Believe in Supernatural Healing

Research Releases in Faith & Christianity, Sept. 29, 2016. Barna Group.

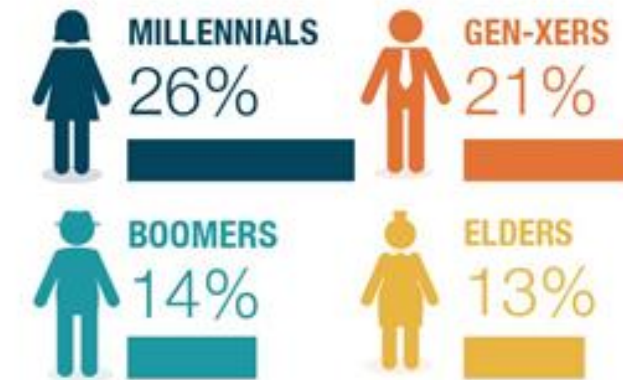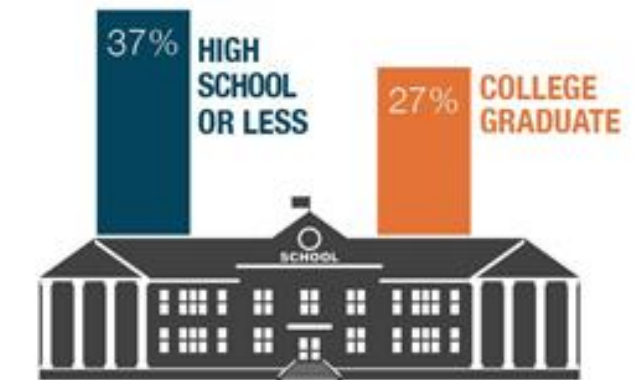People can be physically healed supernaturally by God?

ALL ADULTS
- 33% AGREE STRONGLY
- 33% AGREE SOMEWHAT
- 15% DISAGREE SOMEWHAT
- 19% DISAGREE STRONGLY

GENERATIONS (% of those who *disagree* strongly)
- MILLENNIALS 26%
- GEN-XERS 21%
- BOOMERS 14%
- ELDERS 13%

EDUCATION (% of those who *agree* strongly)
- 37% HIGH SCHOOL OR LESS
- 27% COLLEGE GRADUATE

FAITH SEGMENTS (% of those who *agree* strongly)
- EVANGELICAL 87%
- PRACTICING CHRISTIAN 61%
- OTHER FAITH 21%
- NO FAITH 7%

DENOMINATIONS (% of those who *agree* strongly)
- PROTESTANT 55%
- CATHOLIC 19%

ETHNICITY (% of those who *agree* strongly)
- HISPANIC 26%
- WHITE 29%
- BLACK 55%

REGION (% of those who *agree* strongly)
- WEST 22%
- NORTHEAST 29%
- MIDWEST 32%
- SOUTH 43%
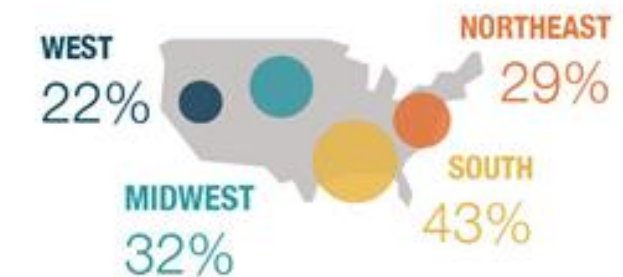
n=1,011 U.S. Adults 18+ | January – February 2016

AFFORDABILITY AND EXPERTISE ARE KEY TO CHOOSING COUNSELORS

Barna

Of the attributes below, which two are most important to you in choosing a counselor?

Attribute	Percentage
AFFORDABILITY (including insurance coverage)	46%
SPECIALIZATION OR EXPERTISE	42%
YEARS OF EXPERIENCE	34%
POSITIVE REVIEWS FROM PEOPLE I PERSONALLY KNOW	22%
PROXIMITY OR CONVENIENCE	18%
EDUCATION LEVEL	13%
SOMEONE SIMILAR TO ME (such as same age, gender, background, etc)	9%
SIMILAR RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND	8%
SOMEONE WITH MORE OR DIFFERENT LIFE EXPERIENCE THAN ME	6%
ACCOLADES OR AWARDS	3%

n=1,021 | February 8-14, 2017

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‣ While only 8 percent of U.S. adults say a similar religious background is one of the most important factors, this is much more essential to some. For example, **among conservatives, one out of five (20%) indicates a similar religious background matters greatly to them,** far more than the 3 percent of liberals who say the same. Among evangelicals, almost half (47%) also list this factor among their top two, a striking comparison to the few of no faith (1%) who look for a therapist with a similar faith experience.

‣ https://www.barna.com/research/americans-feel-good-counseling/?utm_source=Barna+Update+List&utm_campaign=6cd4244584-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_12_28&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8560a0e52e-6cd4244584-172181801&mc_cid=6cd4244584&mc_eid=13846be090

Religious Affiliation

- Between 2007 and 2014, Christians in the U.S.A. declined from 78.4% to 70.6%
  - Of the 70.6%, 25.4% (or 62 million) are evangelical Protestants
  - The 62 million represents an <u>increase</u> from 2007 of 2-5 million
- Unaffiliated (atheists, agnostics): 22.8%
  - Source: Pew Research Center

The Current Situation in Counseling

▸ Mental health professionals are less likely than the general population to have a belief in God or, with the exception of marriage and family therapists, attend religious services.

▸ Secular therapists and their counseling philosophies historically have tended to maintain an attitude of antagonism or indifference toward religion, finding no therapeutic value in combining high levels of spiritual content in the counseling process.

Exploring the Role of Spirituality in Counseling

- Past: Emphasis in counselor training on separating religion from counseling
- Historic view:
  - Religion as personal
  - Religion as unhealthy
    - Freud: "an illusion"
    - Religion reduced to psychological processes with naturalistic explanations
  - Religion as beyond the realm of competent counseling ("Don't go there…")

Skinner & Behaviorism

- "A god is the archetypical pattern of an explanatory fiction, of a miracle-working mind, of the metaphysical" (p. 192).
  - Skinner, B. F. (1971). *Beyond freedom and dignity*. New York: Bantam/Vintage Books
- "When I passed a church I often speculated on how it could be converted into a behavioral laboratory" (pp. 113-114).
 - Skinner, B. F. (1979). *The shaping of a behaviorist: Part two of an autobiography*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Religion and Mental Health in the Past

▸ Result: Mental health professionals are more likely to see spirituality as a cause of problems rather than a source of solutions.

  ☐ Pargament, Kenneth I. (2007). *Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapy: Understanding and addressing the sacred*. New York: Guilford Press.

▸ Fact: The more education and professional training in counseling you have, the less likely you are to use spiritual interventions.

  ☐ Counselors with doctorates are who members of national professional associations are "the least likely to use spiritual interventions."

    ☐ Eck, Brian E. (2002). An exploration of the therapeutic use of spiritual disciplines in clinical practice. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity, 21*(3), 266-280.

Spirituality and Counselors in the Past

▶ Over 90% of the U.S. population reports belief in a personal God, 58% report that religion is very important to them.

▶ Only 24% of clinical and counseling psychologists report belief in a personal God, and only 26% indicate that religion is very important to them (p. 9)

    ▶ Pargament, Kenneth I. (2007). *Spiritually integrated psychotherapy: Understanding and addressing the sacred*. New York: Guilford Press.
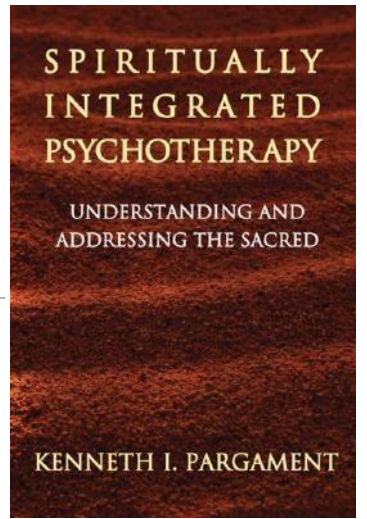
Spirituality and Counselor Training in the Past

▶ "Most young professionals leave graduate school unprepared to address the spiritual and religious issues that they will face in their work" (p. 9).

▶ Survey of training directors: Less than 20% report offering a course on religion or spirituality in their counseling psychology graduate programs (p. 9).

> ▶ Pargament, Kenneth I. (2007). *Spiritually integrated psychotherapy: Understanding and addressing the sacred.* New York: Guilford Press.

Spirituality and Counselor Training in the Past

▶ "This state of affairs is a reflection of the deeply seated assumption within the mental health field that spirituality is, at most, a side issue in psychotherapy, one that can be either sidestepped or resolved through an education to reality, I believe this assumption is just plain wrong" (p. 9).

> ▶ Pargament, Kenneth I. (2007). *Spiritually integrated psychotherapy: Understanding and addressing the sacred*. New York: Guilford Press.

Changing Views on the Role of Religion In Counseling

- A national survey of American Counseling Association members found that they strongly support the importance of spiritual and religious competencies for effective counseling practice.
  - 68% Strongly Agreed that formal training in addressing spiritual and/or religious issues in counseling was important BUT
  - 43.5% indicated Strongly Disagreed, Disagreed, or Neutral on their ability to practice in accord with the ASERVIC (ACA) identified spiritual competencies.
    - Young, J. Scott, Wiggins-Frame, Marsha, & Cashwell, Craig S. (2007). Spirituality and counselor competence: A national survey of American Counseling Association members. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 85*, 47-52.

Changing Views on the Role of Religion In Counseling

▶ A random sample of American Psychological Association and American Counseling Association professionals found that "cognitive dissonance among mental health professionals in the current population is minimal regarding religious ideology and/or scientific orientations of knowledge. In addition, the participants of the study approve of the integration of spiritual and religious diversity into the counseling education process. Previous research has suggested psychologists avoided issues related to spirituality and religion when working with clients (Bergin, 1980, 1983; Frame, 2003; Young, Wiggins-Frame, & Cashwell, 2007; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2000)" (p. 119).

> ▶ Gough, Sharon R. (2009). *Spiritual and Religious Diversity: Implications for Counselor Education Programs* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Walden University.

Changing Views on the Role of Religion In Counseling

▸ "The responses from the present study suggest among the mental health professionals participating, attitudes toward spiritual and religious ideologies are more accepting than they have been in the past. Nearly 74% of respondents agreed or somewhat agreed with the statement 'I have a religious identity that is a central part of me'. The current study demonstrates today's psychologists are less influenced by secular limitations than have been seen in the past and suggests psychologists appreciate religious and spiritual concerns and view them as relevant to clinical practice" (pp. 119-120).

▸ Gough, Sharon R. (2009). *Spiritual and Religious Diversity: Implications for Counselor Education Programs* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Walden University.

Review of Research

▶ Research indicates that therapists are more open to religious/spiritual issues, that clients want to discuss these matters in therapy, and that the use of religious/spiritual interventions for some clients can be an effective adjunct to traditional therapy interventions.

▶ Post, Brian C., & Wade, Nathaniel G. (2009). Religion and spirituality in psychotherapy: A practice-friendly review of research, *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 65*(2), 131-46. doi: 10.1002/jclp.20563

Discrepancies Between Belief in the Value of Religion and Practice in Counseling Still Exist

- A study of college counselors' (N = 77) integration of religion and spirituality into substance abuse counseling found a discrepancy between the importance ratings of religion and spirituality and the frequency of using such elements in counseling practice.

- The college counselors generally were neutral towards incorporating religion and spirituality, but it was rarely addressed and included in practice.

  - Amanda Giordano, Elizabeth Prosek, and Tessa Hastings (2016). Examining College Counselors' Integration of Religion and Spirituality Into Substance Abuse Counseling. *Journal of Addictions & Offender Counseling, 37,* 102-115.

Is Religion Good for your Health?

SPIRITUALITY IN SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS (SUD)

- Direct correlation between spirituality and positive outcomes in SUD

- Patients in recovery often prioritize spiritual programs in their treatment

- Spirituality is an essential part of the recovery process

  ▸ *Addiction & Spirituality,* Jaime Grodzicki, M.D., Associate Director Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse; Director of Substance Abuse Referral Program (SARP), NYU/Bellevue Hospital Center

    - *www.med.nyu.edu/**spirituality**/**addiction**_and_**spirituality**.ppt*

IMPORTANCE TO RECOVERY (RANK ORDER)

	Patients (N=101)	Medical Students' View (N=119)	
		of Students	of Patients
Inner Peace	1	8	7
Medical Services	2	3	3
Belief in God	3	9	11
AA	4	11	5
Outpatient Tx	7	4	2
Gov't Benefits	9	2	9

Medical students and staff do not appreciate spirituality to be essential to a patient's aspirations for recovery

Goldfarb L et al. (1996), Medical Student and Patient Attitudes toward Religion and Spirituality in the Recovery Process, *American Journal of Drug & Alcohol Abuse 22* (4), 549-61; McDowell D et al. (1996), Spirituality and the Treatment of the Dually Diagnosed: An Investigation of Patient and Staff Attitudes, *J Addic Dis 15 (2)*, 55-68.

Where is God?

▶ "The openness of sick people to respond to a spiritually or ideologically oriented option is often underestimated by treatment professionals, much to the disadvantage of their patients."

▶ Galanter, M. (2002), Healing Through Social and Spiritual Affiliation, *Psychiatric Services* 53 (9), 1073.

Research

▶ Summary of the research systematically reviewed in the *Handbook of Religion and Health* (2nd edition, Oxford University Press, 2012).

▶ Covered every study published in the English language in a health science journal that measured religious or spiritual involvement and health outcomes in a quantitative way

  ▶ Koenig, H. G. (2013) The influence of faith on mental health and well-being. *Christian Counseling Today Magazine* Vol. 20, No. 3, 48-53.

Religion, Spirituality & Mental Health

▸ Koenig's research on religion and mental health studies prior to 2000 found that the majority (476 of 724 quantitative studies) reported statistically significant positive associations (p. 285).

▸ For example, 5 or 8 studies on the relation between religion and depression found that "religious-based psychological interventions resulted in faster symptom improvement, compared with secular-based therapy or with control subjects" (p. 285).

▸ Koenig, H. G. (2009). Research on religion, spirituality, and mental health: A review. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, 54*(5), 283-291.

Benefits and Costs of Religion and Well-Being

Benefits:

▶ Provides a more positive life meaning (worldview) than nonreligious

  ▶ Hope, joy, love

  ▶ More often associated with positive mental health benefits

▶ Religion helps with coping, including alleviating stress and anxiety

▶ Provides social support in times of stress

  ▶ Park, H. N., Cook, K., LePine, S. E., & Steininger, C. (2019). Do nonreligious individuals have the same mental health and well-being benefits as religious individuals? *Journal of Psychology and Christianity, 38*(2), 81-99.

Benefits and Costs of Religion and Well-Being

Possible negative effects:

▸ Social support may increase shame and guilt and lead to isolation

▸ Obsessive Compulsive Disorders may be exacerbated by religious communities

▸ May lead to avoidance of professional medical and psychological help

Overall, research supports benefits outweigh costs

▸ Park, H. N., Cook, K., LePine, S. E., & Steininger, C. (2019). Do nonreligious individuals have the same mental health and well-being benefits as religious individuals? *Journal of Psychology and Christianity, 38*(2), 81-99.

Benefits and Costs of Religion and Well-Being

Review of 22 quantitative studies (Park, Cook, LePine, & Steininger, 2019)

▸ Results: 15 studies (2/3) found benefits for religious people; 5 found no difference between religious and non-religious individuals; 2 found better mental health among nonreligious

▸ Difficulties of definition: "nonreligious," "spirituality," "meaning in life"

▸ Park, H. N., Cook, K., LePine, S. E., & Steininger, C. (2019). Do nonreligious individuals have the same mental health and well-being benefits as religious individuals? *Journal of Psychology and Christianity, 38*(2), 81-99.

The Definition Problem: Spirituality
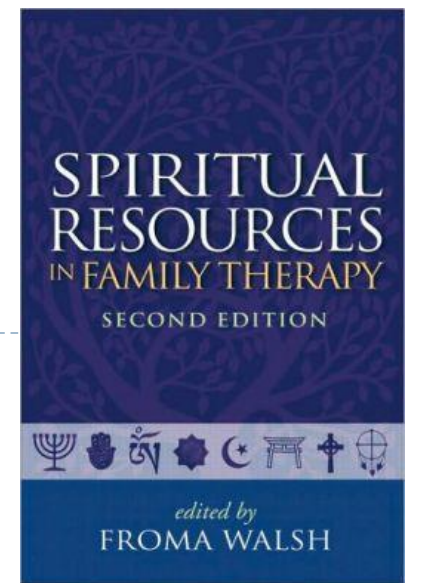
▸ "the quality or state of being concerned with religious matters"

    ▸ Merriam-Webster

▸ "Spirituality: "an overarching construct, refers to a dimension of human experience involving personal transcendent beliefs and practices, within or outside formal religion, through family and cultural heritage, and in connection with nature and humanity."

   ▸ Froma Walsh (ed.), *Spiritual Resources in Family Therapy,* 2nd ed. (New York: Guildford, 2009), 5.

Spirituality

- Harold Koenig, expert on the study of spirituality and health has said that the secular understanding of spirituality is humanism.
  - Harold G. Koenig (Director, Center for Spirituality, Theology and Health, Professor of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences, Duke University): "Conducting Research on Christian Interventions," AACC World Conference, September 14, 2013.

Spirituality
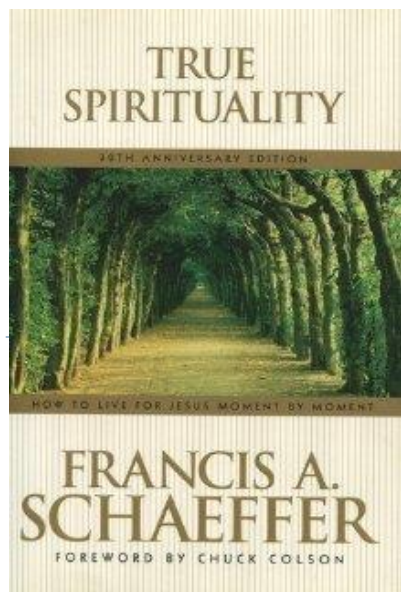
- True Spirituality (Francis Schaeffer):
  - "it is impossible even to begin living the Christian life, or to know anything of true spirituality, before one is a Christian."
    - Jesus: "No one comes to the Father, except through me," (John 14:6)
  - "True spirituality is not achieved in our own energy. The 'how' of the kind of life we have spoken of, the true Christian life, true spirituality, is Romans 6:11: 'Reckon ye also yourselves' (there is the faith) then the negative aspect: 'to be dead indeed unto sin'; but then the positive: 'but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' this is the 'how' and there is no other. It is the power of the crucified, risen, and glorified Christ, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, by faith."
    - Francis A. Schaeffer, *True Spirituality* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1971), 3, 59.
- (A Different Worldview)

True Spirituality & Life's Basic Questions

- Basic Questions in Life:
  - *Who are you?*
  - *Who am I and what is my purpose? (Why am I here? What is the meaning of my life?)*
- In the biblical worldview, our life story is part of a bigger story, with an Author/Creator, a beginning, and an end that gives life meaning and purpose.
- (Note: Science, the authority in the naturalistic worldview, is ill-equipped to answer these questions)
- Note also: These questions are often basic to counseling

Religion, Spirituality & Mental Health

▸ Religion as coping behavior

▸ *The New England Journal of Medicine* reported that 90% of Americans coped with stress following 9/11 (Sept. 11, 2001) by "turning to religion."

▸ Numerous studies report high rates of religious coping in patients with medical disorders. (One reported that 90% [n=330] used religion to cope.)

▸ One of the most common strategies is prayer.

▸

Reasons Religious Coping is so Prevalent among Patients

▸ Religion provides a sense of meaning and purpose that assists with psychological integration during difficult times

▸ Promotes a positive world view of optimism and hope

▸ Provides role models in sacred writings that assists in accepting suffering

▸ Gives a sense of indirect control over circumstances, thus reducing the need for personal control

▸ Offers a community of support (human & divine)

▸ Helps reduce isolation and loneliness

▸ Also, "religion is available to anyone at any time, regardless of financial, social, physical, or mental circumstances" (Koenig, 2009, p. 285).

▸

Emotional Well-being

▸ Research has repeatedly found that committed religious belief and devout practice are related to higher levels of emotional well-being, happiness, and life satisfaction.

▸ Koenig, H. G. The influence of faith on mental health and well-being. *Christian Counseling Today Magazine* Vol. 20, No. 3, 48-53.

Relational Well-being

▸ Those people who are more religious report significantly greater social support than those who are less religious.

▸ Of the 79 quantitative studies measuring religiosity and marital satisfaction and stability, 68 (86%) reported significant positive connections. Those who are more religious have better marriages based on existing research.

▸ Koenig, H. G. The influence of faith on mental health and well-being. *Christian Counseling Today Magazine* Vol. 20, No. 3, 48-53.

Research

▸ Nearly nine out of 10 objective quantitative studies by health researchers published in peer-reviewed science journals (including some very comprehensive studies, as well as longitudinal research with married people) find that religious devotion is associated with more stable, more satisfying marriages.

▸ Koenig, H. G. The influence of faith on mental health and well-being. *Christian Counseling Today Magazine* Vol. 20, No. 3, 48-53.
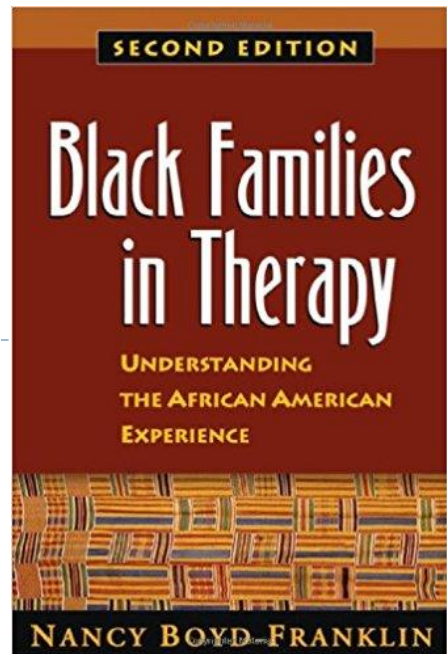
Research

Physical Well-being

▸ Study after study reports a positive connection between religion and physical health.

  ▸ Koenig, H. G. The influence of faith on mental health and well-being. *Christian Counseling Today Magazine* Vol. 20, No. 3, 48-53.

Black families, Spirituality, and Counseling
Nancy Boyd-Franklin, *Black Families in Therapy*

- ## Chapter 7: Religion and Spirituality in African American Communities
  - "The mental health field has largely ignored the role of spirituality and religious beliefs in the development of the psyche. In the treatment of African-Americans, this can be a serious oversight. It can also be a major error to assume that all of our Black clients share these beliefs."
  - Spirituality is an essential and deeply embedded part of the African American psyche (p. 126)
  - Boyd-Franklin challenges therapists to resist the traditional mental health practice approach of compartmentalizing spirituality as an issue outside of the normal therapy process
    - Nancy Boyd-Franklin, *Black Families in Therapy*, 2nd ed. (New York: Guilford, 2003).

▶ "It is incumbent upon practitioners working with African American clients to examine their assumptions and biases about African American spirituality, to become familiar with its characteristics and expression, and to draw on its power for therapeutic change" (p. 19).

▶ Reasons counselors fail to integrate religion and spirituality into counseling include the view that it is pathological and unhealthy (cf, Freud), it is nonscientific, and counselors may have personal presuppositions and philosophies that lead them to reject religion (p. 20).

▸ Marsha Wiggins Frame & Carmen Braum Williams, "Counseling African Americans: Integrating Spirituality in Therapy," *Counseling and Values* (Vol. 41, October 1996): 16-28.

Importance of Training Counselors in Religious and Spiritual Diversity

▸ Counselor training in religious and spiritual diversity needs to be intentional.

▸ Need to have faculty with specialized expertise in religious and spiritual issues, incorporating these issues into courses and clinical training.

▸ Intentional collaboration with religious professionals is needed.

▸ "When programs with religious identities are up for accreditation, it is routine to receive public comments from constituencies within APA objecting to their accreditation bid, but we have never heard of a program being questioned because it does not pay adequate attention to religion or spirituality in training."

▸ McMinn, Mark, R., Bufford, Rodger K., Vogel, Michael J., Gerdin, Tyler A., & Goetsch, Brian Lee, et al. (2014). Religious and spiritual diversity training in professional psychology: A case study. *Faculty Publications—Graduate School of Clinical Psychology*, 115. https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/gscp_fac/115

Importance of Addressing the Spiritual in Counselor Supervision

- Terri S. Watson (2018). *Developing Clinicians of Character: A Christian Integrative Approach to Clinical Supervision*. IVP Academic.

- What did your counseling supervision cover?

  - How to address the spiritual dimension?
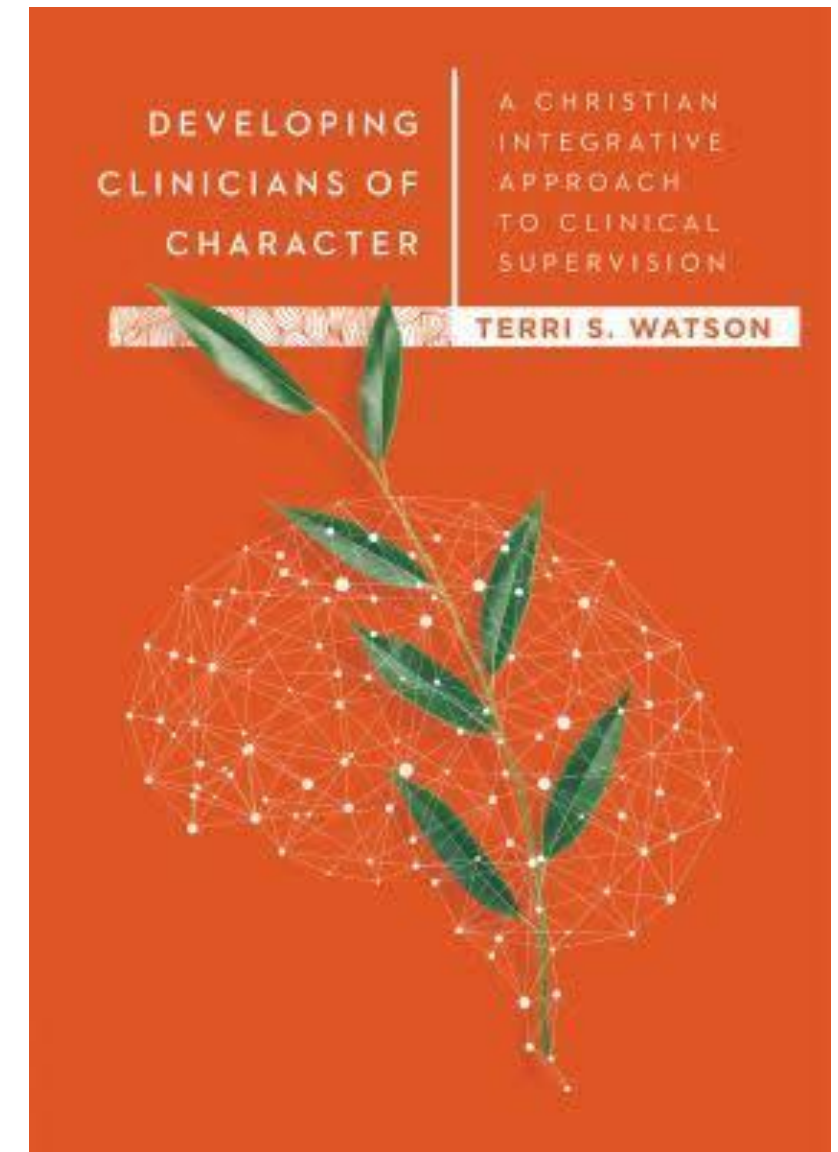
Clinical Supervision is Formative

- In supervision, you learn lessons about thinking, living, and working with stages of development in counselors

- Involves character formation

- Christian integrative approach includes virtue and the character strengths of faith, hope, love, wisdom, justice, temperance, and courage. (Watson, pp. 2-3)

- It is an intensive interpersonal educational process that applies classroom knowledge to competent intervention and counseling in the real lives of suffering people

Character Formation

- Development of Christlike character
- Character formed when virtuous action becomes consistent practice—through individual and community practice toward the ultimate goal of loving God and neighbor.

Religious and Spiritual Needs in Counseling

The importance of addressing religious and spiritual needs (pp. 10ff)

▶ Five training areas:

  ▶ Defining of terms—spirituality vs. religion

  ▶ Assessing client's spirituality

  ▶ Incorporating faith and spiritual development

  ▶ Exploring relationship between faith and client's symptoms, problems, and religious beliefs

  ▶ Encouraging self-awareness of supervisee's own religious and spiritual history and its effect on the client (Bienenfeld & Yager, 2007)

▶

Conclusion

▸ Addressing spirituality is not only important but necessary in competent counseling.

▸ The question is not **should we** introduce spirituality in counseling, but **how do we** do it.
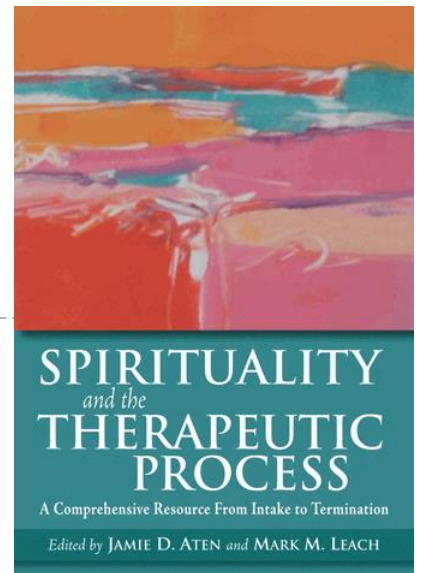
Conclusion

‣ Most counselors are not qualified (trained or competent) to address spirituality in counseling.

‣ Christian counselors and Christian counseling organizations must play a more active role in communicating the importance of the spiritual dimension in counseling.

The Ethical Use of Spiritual Resources in Counseling

The Concern & The Challenge

▸ "The various ethical principles, standards, and guidelines of the contemporary mental health professions do not prescribe personal spiritual development as either a professional duty or even an aspiration. …the predominant secular attitude of our training models leads us to a dim vision of spiritual and religious issues that are often of overriding concern to our clients…."

  ▸ Hathaway and Riply provide 26 practice guidelines for working with religious and spiritual issues

    ▸ Hathaway, W. L., & Riply, J. S. (2009). Ethical concerns around spirituality and religion in clinical practice. In *Spirituality and the therapeutic process: A comprehensive resource from intake to termination*. Edited by Jamie D. Aten & Mark M. Leach (p. 45). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

ACA 2014 Code of Ethics

Cultural Sensitivity & Defining the Problem (Recognizing Worldviews)

ACA Code Section A.2.c. Developmental and Cultural Sensitivity

Counselors communicate information in ways that are both developmentally and culturally appropriate. Counselors use clear and understandable language when discussing issues related to informed consent. When clients have difficulty understanding the language used by counselors, they provide necessary services (e.g., arranging for a qualified interpreter or translator) to ensure comprehension by clients. In collaboration with clients, counselors consider cultural implications of informed consent procedures and, where possible, counselors adjust their practices accordingly. (*Emphasis added.*)

ACA 2014 Code of Ethics

ACA Code Section E.5.b. Cultural Sensitivity

Counselors recognize that **culture affects the manner in which clients' problems are defined.** Clients' socioeconomic and cultural experiences are considered when diagnosing mental disorders.

ACA 2014 Code of Ethics

Counselors must recognize religious and spiritual issues in assessment

▸ ACA Code Section E.8. Multicultural Issues/Diversity in Assessment

Counselors **select and use with caution assessment techniques** that were normed on populations other than that of the client. **Counselors recognize the effects of** age, color, culture, disability, ethnic group, gender, race, language preference, **religion, spirituality,** sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status on test administration and interpretation, and place test results in proper perspective with other relevant factors. (*Emphasis added.*)

Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC)

▸ ASERVIC is an organization of counselors and human development professionals who believe spiritual, ethical, and religious values are essential to the overall development of the person and are committed to integrating these values into the counseling process.

▸

Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC)

▸ ASERVIC has developed a list of competencies designed to assist the helping professional best address the spiritual and religious issues in counseling.

▸ The Competencies for Addressing Spiritual and Religious Issues in Counseling are guidelines that complement, not supersede, the values and standards espoused in the ACA Code of Ethics. They are endorsed by the ACA.

Culture and Worldview

▸ 1. The professional counselor can describe the similarities and differences between spirituality and religion, including the basic beliefs of various spiritual systems, major world religions, agnosticism, and atheism.

▸ 2. The professional counselor recognizes that the client's beliefs (or absence of beliefs) about spirituality and/or religion are central to his or her worldview and can influence psychosocial functioning.

Counselor Self-Awareness

▸ 3. The professional counselor actively explores his or her own attitudes, beliefs, and values about spirituality and/or religion.

▸ 4. The professional counselor continuously evaluates the influence of his or her own spiritual and/or religious beliefs and values on the client and the counseling process.

▸

Human and Spiritual Development

▸ 5. The professional counselor can identify the limits of his or her understanding of the client's spiritual and/or religious perspective and is acquainted with religious and spiritual resources and leaders who can be avenues for consultation and to whom the counselor can refer.

▸ 6. The professional counselor can describe and apply various models of spiritual and/or religious development and their relationship to human development.

▸

Communication

▸ 7. The professional counselor responds to client communications about spirituality and/or religion with acceptance and sensitivity.

▸ 8. The professional counselor uses spiritual and/or religious concepts that are consistent with the client's spiritual and/or religious perspectives and are acceptable to the client.

▸ 9. The professional counselor can recognize spiritual and/or religious themes in client communication and is able to address these with the client when they are therapeutically relevant.

▸

Assessment

▶ 10. During the intake and assessment processes, the professional counselor strives to understand a client's spiritual and/or religious perspective by gathering information from the client and/or other sources.

Diagnosis and Treatment

▶ 11. When making a diagnosis, the professional counselor recognizes that the client's spiritual and/or religious perspectives can a) enhance well-being; b) contribute to client problems; and/or c) exacerbate symptoms

▶

Diagnosis and Treatment

- 12. The professional counselor sets goals with the client that are consistent with the client's spiritual and/or religious perspectives.

- 13. The professional counselor is able to a) modify therapeutic techniques to include a client's spiritual and/or religious perspectives, and b) utilize spiritual and/or religious practices as techniques when appropriate and acceptable to a client's viewpoint.

- 14. The professional counselor can therapeutically apply theory and current research supporting the inclusion of a client's spiritual and/or religious perspectives and practices.

AACC Code of Ethics (Y2004)

▸ *1-330 Consent for Biblical-Spiritual Practices in Counseling*

▸   Christian counselors do not presume that all clients want or will be receptive to explicit spiritual interventions in counseling. We obtain consent that honors client choice, receptivity to these practices, and the timing and manner in which these things are introduced: prayer for and with clients, Bible reading and reference, spiritual meditation, the use of biblical and religious imagery, assistance with spiritual formation and discipline, and other common spiritual practices.

▷

AACC Code of Ethics (Y2004)

1-331   Special Consent for More Difficult Interventions

▸ Close or **special consent is obtained for more difficult and controversial practices. These include, but are not limited to: deliverance and spiritual warfare activities; cult de-programming work;** recovering memories and treatment of past abuse or trauma; use of hypnosis and any kind of induction of altered states; authorizing (by MDs) medications, electro-convulsive therapy, or patient restraints; use of aversive, involuntary, or experimental therapies; engaging in reparative therapy with homosexual persons; and counseling around abortion and end-of-life issues. These interventions require a more detailed discussion with patient-clients or client representatives of the procedures, risks, and treatment alternatives, and we secure detailed written agreement for the procedure. [Emphasis Added]

Five Primary Values: The RRICC Model

▶ Thomas Plante has developed a model of ethics based on the primary values he found in all mental health ethics codes in the U.S.A. and throughout the world. He has applied these values to the issue of integrating spirituality and counseling:

▶ **Respect**—for rights, beliefs, and dignity. (In the past, "highly religious or spiritually minded persons usually were pathologized by professional psychology and individual clinicians" (p. 894)

▶ **Responsibility**—to become aware of the role religion and spirituality plays in clients. This includes collaborating with clergy and religious leaders.

   ▶ Plante, T. G. (2007). Integrating spirituality and psychotherapy: Ethical issues and principles to consider. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 63*(9), 891-902.

▶

Five Primary Values: RRICC

▸ **_Integrity_**—being honest, fair, and just, monitoring boundaries so as not to assume expertise in, for example, spirituality, if we have not been trained.

▸ **_Competence_**—most counseling programs ignore training in spirituality and religion; counselors are challenged to get adequate training and supervision.

▸ **_Concern_**—for well-being and welfare of others; recognizing when religious beliefs and behaviors cause harm

> ▸ Plante, T. G. (2007). Integrating spirituality and psychotherapy: Ethical issues and principles to consider. _Journal of Clinical Psychology, 63_(9), 891-902.

Four Ethical Pitfalls in Integrating Religion and Counseling (Plante)

▸ 1. **Integrity issues**: Blurred Boundaries and Dual Relationships—clergy as counselor role conflicts, counseling fellow church members

▸ 2. **Respect Issues**: Spiritual and Religious Bias—Awareness of bias toward own faith tradition

▸ 3. **Competence Issues**—A Member of a Faith Tradition Does Not Make One an Expert—may not be an expert in that tradition or on integration, unless trained

▸ 4. **Concern Issues**: Destructive Religious Beliefs and Behaviors—may need to act when religious beliefs put people at risk

   ▸ Plante, T. G. (2007). Integrating spirituality and psychotherapy: Ethical issues and principles to consider. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 63*(9), 891-902.

Models for Integrating Spirituality in Counseling

▸ Models are being developed for integrating spirituality into counseling.

▸ Example: Spiritual Awareness Guide (SAG)

   ▸ Miles Matise, Jeffery Ratcliff & Flavia Mosci (2017): A Working Model for the Integration of Spirituality in Counseling, *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health*, DOI: 10.1080/19349637.2017.1326091

Spiritual Awareness Guide (SAG)

Spiritual Awareness - *Decision-Tree*
(1= *No* Absolutely; 5= *Yes* Definitely)

Counter-transference

1 **2** 3 4 5

(Proceed)

Yes/Maybe   No

Stop
Do Not
Discuss

Knowledge of
clients religion/
spirituality

1 2 **3** 4 5

(Proceed)

Consult
supervisor

No/
Not at all familiar

Yes/Some to much
understanding of concepts

Stop
Do Not
Discuss

How important is
It for client to discuss?

1 2 **3** 4 5

(Proceed)

Not
Important

Important

Stop
Do Not
Discuss

Is client inviting
your point of view?

1 **2** 3 4 5

(Proceed)

No-
Not sure

Yes-
have asked directly

Stop
Do Not
Discuss

Are client's beliefs or
behaviors causing harm to
themselves or others?

1 2 **3** 4 5

(Proceed)

Yes   No

Assess
for types
of abuse

Assess spiritual
stage of
development

Report as
mandated

Apply S.A.G.
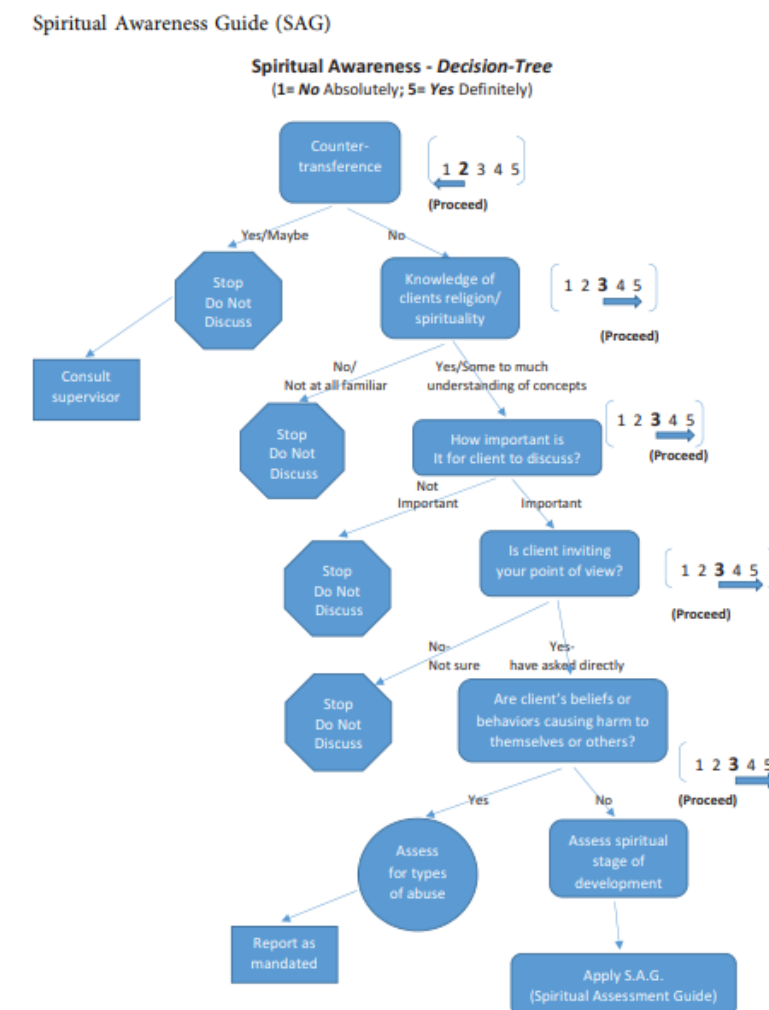(Spiritual Assessment Guide)

Figure A1. Spiritual Awareness: Decision-Tree.

Spiritual Awareness Guide (SAG)

Spiritual Awareness - *Decision-Tree*
(1= *No* Absolutely; 5= *Yes* Definitely)
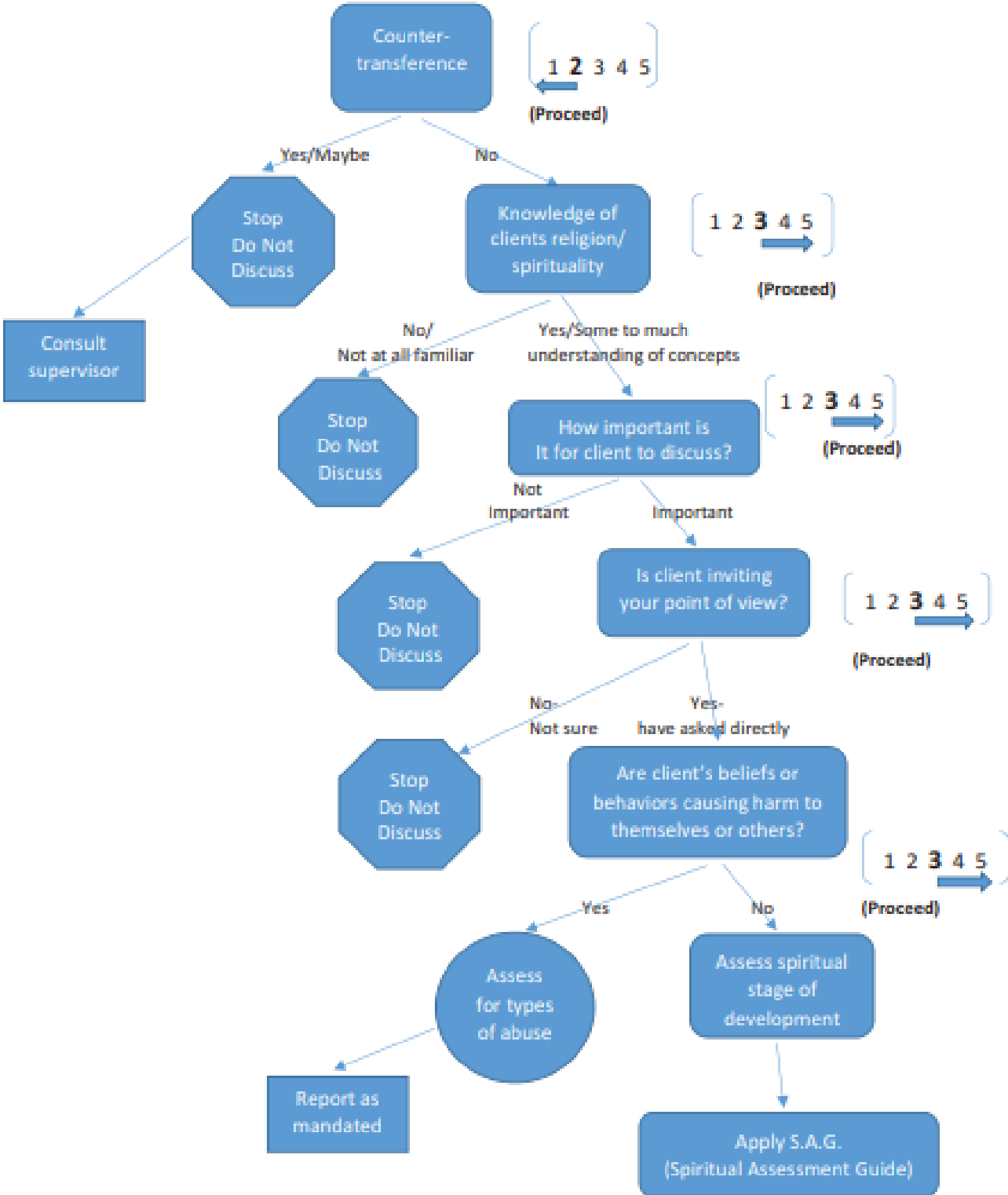
Figure A1. Spiritual Awareness: Decision-Tree.

Nine-step Decision-making Model for the Integration of Religion and Spirituality into Counseling (Barnett & Johnson, 2011)

▸ Stage 1: Respectfully assess the client's religious or spiritual beliefs and preferences

▸ Stage 2: Carefully assess any connection between the presenting problem and religious or spiritual beliefs and commitments

▸ Stage 3: Weave results of this assessment into the informed consent process

▸ Stage 4: Honestly consider your countertransference to the client's religiousness

▸ Stage 5: Honestly evaluate your clinical competence in this case

▸

- ▸ Stage 6: Consult with experts in the area of religion and psychotherapy

- ▸ Stage 7: If appropriate, clinically indicated, and client gives consent, consult with client's own clergy or other religious professional

- ▸ Stage 8: Make a decision about treating the client or making a referral

- ▸ Stage 9: Assess outcomes and adjust plan accordingly

Examples of Spiritual Resources and Practices in Counseling

Definition

- Influencing with spiritual interventions means using uniquely Christian resources to benefit the counselee

Major Functions of Spiritual Interventions

▸ To help counselees find spiritual resources

▸ To help counselees apply God's word and grace to their problem

▸ To help counselees trust in God

▸ To help counselees to draw closer to God and to walk with Him

▸ To help counselees grow in spiritual maturity

Category	Discipline	Richard Foster Disciplines (1988)	Dallas Willard Disciplines (1988)	Tan & Gregg Disciplines (1997)	John Ortberg Disciplines (1997)	Bass, et al. Practices (1997)	Worthington et al. (1988)	Ball & Goodyear (1991)	Moon et al. (1991 1993)	Jones et al. (1992)	Richards & Bergin (1997)
Cognitive	1. Meditation	Inward		Solitude	Guidance		1		2	1	2
	2. Listening			Solitude	Guidance						
	3. Scripture				Core		4	1	2	2	2
	4. Study	Inward	Engagement	Solitude	Guidance		1	1			1
	5. Prayer	Inward	Engagement	Solitude	Guidance		2	1	4	2	3
	6. Discernment					Practice			1		
Behavioral	1. Simplicity	Outward			Service				1		
	2. Frugality		Abstinence			Practice					
	3. Fasting		Abstinence	Surrender	Celebration				1		1
	4. Chastity		Abstinence								1
	5. Body Care					Practice					
	6. Saying no/yes					Practice					
	7. Slowing				Core						
	8. Sabbath				Celebration	Practice					
	9. Solitude	Outward	Abstinence	Solitude	Slowing				1		
	10. Silence		Abstinence	Solitude					1		
	11. Secrecy		Abstinence		Core						
	12. Service	Outward	Engagement	Service							1
	13. Servanthood				Core						
	14. Sacrifice		Abstinence								
	15. Suffering				Core						
	16. Dying well					Practice					
Interpersonal	1. Confession	Corporate	Engagement	Surrender	Core		2		1		1
	2. Repentance			Surrender					1		1
	3. Forgiveness					Practice	3	1	1		1
	4. Submission		Engagement	Surrender							
	5. Humility				Servanthood						
	6. Worship	Corporate	Engagement	Surrender	Guidance				1		1
	7. Eucarist					Practice					1
	8. Singing					Practice					1
	9. Celebration	Corporate	Engagement		Core						
	10. Fellowship		Engagement	Service							1
	11. Community					Practice					
	12. Hospitality					Practice					
	13. Healing				Confession	Practice	1	1	1	1	
	14. Witnessing			Service							
	15. Testimony					Practice					1
	16. Intercession			Solitude			1	1	1		
	17. Guidance			Solitude	Core						

#'s indicate the number of sub-categories for a spiritual discipline that was identified by a researcher.
A blank indicates that the discipline was not incorporated in the study.

Figure 1.
39 Spiritual Disciplines and Practices

Eck, Brian E. (2002). An exploration of the therapeutic use of spiritual disciplines in clinical practice. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity, 21* (3), 273.

		Richard Foster Disciplines (1988)	Dallas Willard Disciplines (1988)	Tan & Gregg Disciplines (1997)	John Ortberg Disciplines (1997)	Bass, et al. Practices (1997)	Worthington et al. (1988)	Ball & Goodyear (1991)	Moon et al. (1991 1993)	Jones et al. (1992)	Richards & Bergin (1997)
Cognitive	1. Meditation	Inward		Solitude	Guidance		1		2	1	2
	2. Listening			Solitude	Guidance						
	3. Scripture				Core		4	1	2	2	2
	4. Study	Inward	Engagement	Solitude	Guidance		1	1			1
	5. Prayer	Inward	Engagement	Solitude	Guidance		2	1	4	2	3
	6. Discernment					Practice			1		

		Richard Foster Disciplines (1988)	Dallas Willard Disciplines (1988)	Tan & Gregg Disciplines (1997)	John Ortberg Disciplines (1997)	Bass, et al. Practices (1997)	Worthington et al. (1988)	Ball & Goodyear (1991)	Moon et al. (1991 1993)	Jones et al. (1992)	Richards & Bergin (1997)
Behavioral	1. Simplicity	Outward		Service					1		
	2. Frugality		Abstinence			Practice					
	3. Fasting		Abstinence	Surrender	Celebration				1		1
	4. Chastity		Abstinence								1
	5. Body Care					Practice					
	6. Saying no/yes					Practice					
	7. Slowing				Core						
	8. Sabbath				Celebration	Practice					
	9. Solitude	Outward	Abstinence	Solitude	Slowing				1		
	10. Silence		Abstinence	Solitude					1		
	11. Secrecy		Abstinence		Core						
	12. Service	Outward	Engagement	Service							1
	13. Servanthood				Core						
	14. Sacrifice		Abstinence								
	15. Suffering				Core						
	16. Dying well					Practice					

Interpersonal		Richard Foster Disciplines (1988)	Dallas Willard Disciplines (1988)	Tan & Gregg Disciplines (1997)	John Ortberg Disciplines (1997)	Bass, et al. Practices (1997)	Worthington et al. (1988)	Ball & Goodyear (1991)	Moon et al. (1991 1993)	Jones et al. (1992)	Richards & Bergin (1997)
	1. Confession	Corporate	Engagement	Surrender	Core		2		1		1
	2. Repentance			Surrender					1		1
	3. Forgiveness					Practice	3	1	1		1
	4. Submission		Engagement	Surrender							
	5. Humility				Servanthood						
	6. Worship	Corporate	Engagement	Surrender	Guidance				1		1
	7. Eucarist					Practice					1
	8. Singing					Practice					1
	9. Celebration	Corporate	Engagement		Core						
	10. Fellowship		Engagement	Service							1
	11. Community					Practice					
	12. Hospitality					Practice					
	13. Healing				Confession	Practice	1	1	1	1	
	14. Witnessing			Service							
	15. Testimony					Practice					1
	16. Intercession			Solitude			1	1	1		
	17. Guidance			Solitude	Core						

Example: Spiritual Practices in Addiction Recovery

‣ Spiritual practices that have helped with addictions include "fasting, prayer, and meditation, and religious and meditative practices that have in their roots the establishing and strengthening of self-control. These practices to establish and strengthen self-control are focusing attention, maintaining forced silence, repetitive chanting, and contemplation; the practices that often result in dramatic epiphanies." (p. 42)

  ‣ Sharon Cowan, Spirituality: An Important Component of Recovery from Addiction, *Family Therapy, 13*(1) (January/February 2014), 41-42.

Example: Spiritual Practices in Addiction Recovery

▸ Studies report that "spiritual people are less depressed, less anxious, and less suicidal than non-spiritual people. They also cope better with traumatic events, such as illness, divorce, and bereavement. Further, the more people report incorporating spiritual practices into their daily living, the more frequently they report positive emotions and an overall sense of satisfaction with life (Paul, 1995). Research also found higher levels of spirituality predicted more optimistic life orientation, higher perceived social support, higher resilience to stress, and lower levels of anxiety (Pardini, Plante, Sherman, and Stump, 2000)."

   ▸ Sharon Cowan, Spirituality: An Important Component of Recovery from Addiction, *Family Therapy, 13*(1) (January/February 2014), 41-42.

Example: Don't Be Anxious—But How?

- Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- ⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. (Philippians 4:5-8 NIV)

How Not to Be Anxious (Philippians 4:5-8)

- Not ignoring but reappraisal—shifting focus and worldview
- "Negative emotions do not vanish by being banished. When they are not fully processed, they linger, and the Zeigarnik effect takes over. Our thoughts dwell on these emotional injuries"
  - Gottman, J. M. (2011). *The science of trust: Emotional attunement for couples*. New York: W.W. Norton, p. 212.

How Not to Be Anxious (Philippians 4:5-8)

- Emotional connection to our Creator
  - "Research suggests that emotion serves as a central organizing process within the brain. In this way, an individual's abilities to organize emotions— a product, in part, of earlier attachment relationships— directly shapes the ability of the mind to integrate experience and to adapt to future stressors"
    - Siegel, D. J. (2012). *The Developing mind: How relationships and the brain interact to shape who we are*, 2nd ed. Guilford Press, p. 9.
- Embracing a biblical worldview ameliorates anxiety
  - Paul's situation (story) is directed by and is part of a larger (God) story of promise and eschatological hope.
  - "I've got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward—to Jesus. I'm off and running, and I'm not turning back." (Phil. 3:14 The Message)

How Not to Be Anxious (Philippians 4:5-8)

- Rather than ignoring his situation, Paul is processing it through a particular worldview or perspective—a reframing or reappraisal

  - "one of the main jobs of consciousness is to keep our life tied together into a coherent story, a self-concept. It does this by generating explanations of behavior on the basis of our self-image, memories of the past, expectations of the future, the present social situation, and the physical environment in which the behavior is produced"

    - LeDoux, J. (1996). *The emotional brain*. New York: Simon & Schuster, p. 33.

- **Emotional Strategies Influence Anxiety**

  - New research findings suggest that the way emotions are regulated can influence if or how much a person may suffer from anxiety. **Those who engage in an emotional regulation strategy called reappraisal also tended to have less social anxiety and less anxiety in general** than those who avoid expressing their feelings. *(Emotion,* published online May 13, 2013)

The Power of Gratitude (A Christian Virtue & Emotional Disposition)

- More frequent church attendance and stronger God-mediated control beliefs are associated with positive changes in gratitude over time.

    - Krause, N. (2009). Religious involvement, gratitude, and change in depressive symptoms over time. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion, 19*(3), 155-172.

- Gratitude related positively to religious practices (church attendance, prayer), spiritual self-transcendence, feeling closer to God.

    - Emmons, R. A., & Kneezel, T. T. (2005). Giving thanks: Spiritual and religious correlates of gratitude. *Journal of Psychology & Christianity, 24*(2), 140-148.

- Prayer increases gratitude (nationwide longitudinal study of older adults).

    - Lambert, N. M., Fincham, F. D., Braithwaite, S. R., Graham, S. M., & Beach, S. R. H. (2009). Can prayer increase gratitude? *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, vol. 1*(3), 139-149.

What One Word would You Use to Describe Jesus?

- Love? Holy? Lord? Teacher? Healer?
- Dallas Willard: "Relaxed"
  - In the midst of all the turmoil, he remained relaxed:
  - In constant submission to God's will and direction (John 6:38, 12:50)
  - Praying without ceasing (John 11:42 [1 Thess. 5:17])
  - Dependent upon and filled with the Holy Spirit (limitless in power and presence) (John 3:34)
  - Blessing those who curse him (Luke 22:24)
    - William Gaultiere, **"One Word to Relieve Anxiety,"** *Biblical Counseling and Spiritual Formation Network Quarterly E-News, Vol. 5*(4) (November 2009)

The Message (Phil. 4:5-8)

▸ Philippians 4:5-8 (The Message)

▸ 4-5 Celebrate God all day, every day. I mean, *revel* in him! Make it as clear as you can to all you meet that you're on their side, working with them and not against them. Help them see that the Master is about to arrive. He could show up any minute!

▸ 6-7 Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. **It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life.**

▸ 8-9 Summing it all up, friends, I'd say you'll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse. Put into practice what you learned from me, what you heard and saw and realized. Do that, and God, who makes everything work together, will work you into his most excellent harmonies. (The Message)
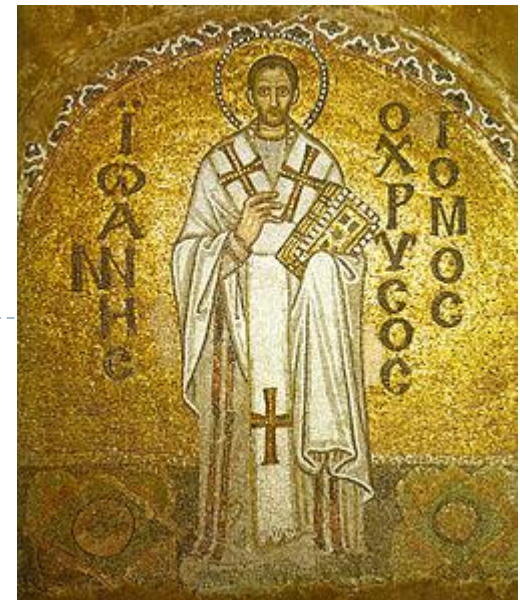
Something to Smile about: God's Consolation

▶ When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy. (Ps. 94:19, NIV)

▶ When my anxious thoughts multiply within me, Your consolations delight my soul. (Ps. 94:19, NASB)

▶ When I was upset and beside myself, you calmed me down and cheered me up. (Ps. 94:19, The Message)

Chrysostom (ca 349-407)

▸ The feelings with which Chrysostom went into his first and second exile, he well describes in a letter to Bishop Cyriacus:

▸ "When I was driven from the city, I felt no anxiety, but said to myself: If the empress wishes to banish me, let her do so; **'the earth is the Lord's.'** If she wants to have me sawn asunder, **I have Isaiah for an example**. If she wants me to be drowned in the ocean, **I think of Jonah**. If I am to be thrown into the fire, **the three men in the furnace suffered the same**. If cast before wild beasts, **I remember Daniel in the lion's den**. If she wants me to be stoned, I have before me **Stephen, the first martyr**. If she demands my head, let her do so; **John the Baptist shines before me**. Naked I came from my mother's womb, naked shall I leave this world. **Paul reminds me**, 'If I still pleased men, I would not be the servant of Christ.' "

▸ Philip Schaff, "Prolegomena: The Life and Work of St. John Chrysostom," in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series: Saint Chrysostom: On the Priesthood, Ascetic Treatises, Select Homilies and Letters, Homilies on the Statues*, ed. Philip Schaff, vol. 9 (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1889), 14.

Spiritual Activities

- Prayer, Healing Prayers
- Scripture Reading and Meditation
- Devotional Readings
  - Poetry, Inspirational Books
- Religious Literature
- Rituals, Spiritually-Meaningful Actions
- Listening to Music (Inspirational, Meditative)
- Worship Services, Bible Studies
  - Audio & Audiovisual Aids
- Missionary Service—Helping Others

Lectio Divinia (Divine Reading)

▶ The Benedictine (6th Century) practice has four separate steps:

   ▸ *Read*

   ▸ *Meditate*

   ▸ *Pray*

   ▸ *Contemplate*

▶ Christian meditation is the process of deliberately focusing on specific thoughts (such as a bible passage) and reflecting on their meaning in the context of the love of God.

- ▸ Prayer in Counseling
- ▸ Various types of prayer are found in Scripture, and some are germane particularly to a counseling context.
- ▸ *Prayer as Practicing the Presence of God*
  - ▸ Brother Lawrence, the 17th Century Carmelite lay brother, suffered from depression for ten years before finding peace through practicing the presence of God.
  - ▸ He experienced the most profound joy in prayer, not while engaging in the formal daily devotions, but while doing his chores as a cook
  - ▸ "The time of business does not with me differ from the time of prayer," said Brother Lawrence.
  - ▸ "And I make it my business only to persevere in His holy presence, wherein I keep myself by a simple attention, and a general fond regard to God, which I may call an *actual presence* of God; or, to speak better, an habitual, silent, and secret conversation of the soul with God, which often causes me joys and raptures inwardly, and sometimes also outwardly, so great that I am forced to use means to moderate them, and prevent their appearance to others."

- *Prayer of Thanksgiving*
  - Prayers of thanksgiving for the work of God can be offered in counseling (Ps. 50:23). "Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving" (Col. 4:2). As we are blessed with God's healing in counseling, we need to be careful always to give a prayer of thanks and praise to God. Of the ten lepers who were healed by Jesus, only one returned to thank Him and receive His blessing: "Stand up and go; your faith has made you well" (Luke 17:11-19).

▸ *Prayer of Confession and Pardon*

   ▸ Through prayer, we can confess our sin, which lies at the root of our failings (Luke 18:13). "Against you, You only, have I sinned," said David, confessing his adultery with Bathsheba. "Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Ps. 51:4, 10).

- *Prayer of Blessing*
  - Prayer can invoke a blessing of peace and protection (Num. 6:22-27).
- *Prayer of Petition, Intercession, and Supplication*
  - Through prayer, we can present our requests to God (1 Sam. 1:17, Matt. 6:11-13, Luke 1:13). We can intercede for others (2 Cor. 9:14), as Jesus does for us (Luke 22:32, 23:34, John 17:1-26, Heb. 7:25). We can pray for clients who are sick (James 5:14-16), and for freedom from bondage for Christians who suffer for their faith (Acts 12:5). We can offer a prayer of supplication or entreaty for an urgent need (1 Tim. 5:5, Heb. 5:7). We can even pray for those who wish to harm us (Prov. 25:21-22, Matt. 5:44, Luke 6:27-28, 35).

▸ *Prayer for Right Words and Opportunity*

  ▸ Paul asked for prayer on his behalf that he might have the right words to say in proclaiming the Gospel (Eph. 6:19) and for open doors of opportunity (Col. 4:3). Have you ever been in a counseling session when you are caught for a loss of words? Pray when you need an immediate answer in a situation, such as when Nehemiah was asked by King Artaxerxes why he was so disconsolate (Neh. 2:4), or Peter's cry of help when he was sinking (Matt. 14:30).

- *Prayer of contemplation and listening*
  - Prayer is not a monologue. It is a two-way street, but a primary component is the importance of listening to God. Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." (John 10:27). Like Samuel, we should approach God with an attitude of "Speak, for Your servant is listening" (1 Sam. 3:10).
- *Prayer of protection*
  - Vigilance and prayer are needed to protect us from the temptations of this world (Mark 14:38).

- *The Power of Prayer*
  - Counseling without prayer is like running without oxygen. Through prayer, God communicates to us hope and confidence, guidance and assurance, love and presence.
  - Tertullian (ca. 160-225) said that prayer "amplifies grace" as it nurtures and illuminates our faith and understanding. Such prayer provides the means "to transform the weak, to restore the sick, to purge the possessed, to open prison-bars, to loose the bonds of the innocent. Likewise it washes away faults, repels temptations, extinguishes persecutions, consoles the faint-spirited, cheers the high-spirited, escorts travelers, appeases waves, makes robbers stand aghast, nourishes the poor, governs the rich, upraises the fallen, arrests the falling, confirms the standing. Prayer is the wall of faith: her arms and missiles against the foe who keeps watch over us on all sides. And, so never walk we unarmed."
    - Tertullian, "On Prayer"

Communicating with God: Continuous Conversations with your Creator

▸ Keep your focus; don't be distracted by:

   ▸ "Self" concerns: what you are going to say next; feeling of (in)competence; worries about how you are coming across to others

   ▸ "Other" concerns: the beliefs, affect, and perceptions of the counselees

      ▢ "…don't worry beforehand about what you should say, but say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you that will be speaking, but the Holy Spirit" (Mark 13:11, Williams). (Context: Facing difficult situations, while defending your faith under the direction of God)

Learning to Communicate with God in Counseling

▸ The Bible has no specific rules, procedures, or gestures we must follow in prayer. Pray can occur while:

- ▸ kneeling (Acts 21:5, Eph. 3:14)
- ▸ Lying prostrate (Matt. 26:39)
- ▸ Standing (Mk 11:25)
- ▸ Raising hands (1 Tim. 2:8)
- ▸ At morning, noon, or night (Mk 1:35; Ps 55:17).

▸ We are to pray at all times "in the Spirit" and not lose heart or be discouraged (Eph 6:18, Lk 18:1, 1 Thess 5:17).

Effective Prayer in Counseling

- Sincere and humble (Luke 18:9-14)
- Based on faith/belief that God will hear and answer (Matt 21:22)
- From a pure heart of confessed sin and forgiveness (Jn 9:31; 2 Tim 2:22; Matt 6:14-15, Mk 11:25)
- Persistent and persevering (Lk 11:5-10, 18:1-8)
- Not repetitive babbling or empty entreaty (Matt 6:7)
- Prayed in and through the powerful name of Jesus (Jn 14:6, 14:13-14, 15:16; Eph 5:20; Col 3:17)
- Under the direction of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:26-27)

Engaging Spiritual Intervention

- Assess client's location regarding spiritual beliefs
  - Listen carefully and respectfully
  - Identify spiritual themes and past spiritual experiences
- Explore beliefs about God, particularly in relationship to his or her current condition and situation
  - Examine any expectations for spiritual intervention or change
- Examine affective or emotional issues regarding spiritual matters
  - Note type and intensity of feelings
- Encourage spiritual conversation
  - Identify possible areas of previous godly intervention and direction
- Provide information on spiritual resources for recovery
  - Church, faith-based support groups (e.g., Celebrate Recovery)
- Connect client with spiritual support systems