

Helping Hurting People Session 1 – Student Notes

Welcome to Helping Hurting People. Our aim for this class is to equip you with scriptural guidance and caregiving skills to help those in need around you.

To begin with, let's consider the Christian vision for community. To do this, I've selected three main biblical texts.

Romans 12:9-16

Colossians 3:9-17

1 Corinthians 12:24-27

Each of these passages expresses the importance of loving one another. We are a family and God equips us to minister to each other. Although, some situations warrant a professional help, most of the time we can meet each other's needs.

Topics we are planning to cover in this class include:

1. listening to and counseling with people
2. depression, suicide
3. anxiety
4. marriage issues, divorce
5. visiting the sick
6. caring for the elderly
7. death
8. addiction
9. giving financial help
10. praying for one another

It's important to know what the bible teaches in these areas. It's so easy to have good intentions but give bad advice when we don't know what God says on an issue. Satan is the god of this age (2 Corinthians 4.4). Is there any wonder why our culture so often promotes anti-biblical standards? Sometimes our common sense on an issue is more shaped by our culture and personal experience than Scripture. Each week we'll begin by examining what the Bible has to teach us on a particular issue before delving into developing the skills you need to provide care in that situation.

As you put into practice what you learn in this class, it's important that you rely on God. So often a situation is not black and white. So often we need God's wisdom to know how to say something or when to keep quiet. This is why prayer and trusting God's leading are keys for helping people.

Lastly, we look to Jesus as the supreme example for serving hurting people. He spent time with the prostitutes, tax collectors, sinners. He healed the leper, the blind, and the lame. He preached to the poor and gave them hope. As we go through, we'll look to Jesus' teachings and example when it intersects our topic of interest.

ASSERTIVENESS QUOTIENT

Some of us take initiative very easily in reaching out to those in need, and others are a bit more hesitant. An honest assessment of our assertiveness helps us use our strengths or overcome our timidity. Take this inventory and answer the questions at the end of the assessment.

Indicate the frequency with which you are assertive in each of the following situations by writing the number which best represents you:

- 1 Never
- 2 Rarely
- 3 Sometimes
- 4 Usually
- 5 Always

- ___ 1. When a person is blatantly unfair to you, do you say something to him/her?
- ___ 2. Do you say what you feel, even at the risk of a confrontation with others?
- ___ 3. Do you involve yourself socially without fear of doing or saying the wrong thing?
- ___ 4. If a friend betrays your confidence, do you tell him/her how you really feel?
- ___ 5. If your boss asks you to work overtime when it is inconvenient, do you tell him/her?
- ___ 6. When a clerk in a store waits on someone who has come in after you, do you call the clerk's attention to the matter?
- ___ 7. Are you willing to ask a good friend to lend you a few dollars?
- ___ 8. If someone has borrowed five dollars from you and seems to have forgotten about it, would you remind him or her?
- ___ 9. If a coworker wants to chat when you would rather be working, do you tell him/her so?
- ___ 10. If a person's persistent teasing bothers you, do you express your annoyance or displeasure?
- ___ 11. When you enter a crowded auditorium, do you look for a seat up front rather than standing in the rear?

- ___ 12. If someone keeps kicking the back of your chair, would you ask him or her to stop?
- ___ 13. Do you confront coworkers when they don't do their share, rather than "just grin and bear it"?
- ___ 14. If an acquaintance starts talking to someone else right in the middle of your conversation, do you express your irritation?
- ___ 15. If you order a medium steak in a plush restaurant and find it too rare, would you ask the waiter to have it cooked until it's the way you wanted?
- ___ 16. Do you protest doing work when you feel it is unfair?
- ___ 17. Would you return a faulty garment you purchased a few days ago?
- ___ 18. If someone you respect expresses opinions with which you strongly disagree, would you express your own point of view?
- ___ 19. When a close friend calls you on the phone when you'd rather be doing something else, do you say so?
- ___ 20. Would you remind your boss of an overdue raise?

Add the numbers for items 1 through 20 for your Assertiveness Quotient (AQ).
 Locate your AQ on the scale below.³⁰

___ Total

- 20-39 You aren't very assertive. You need to work on clarifying your opinion and speaking out.
- 40-59 You may be assertive in certain circumstances, but you are hesitant in others. You need to identify the recurring situations that cause you to be fearful so you can take steps to be bold and clear.
- 60-79 You are usually confident and assertive.
- 80-100 You are unusually assertive. In fact, you may benefit from honest feedback from those who have experienced your forthrightness. If you can combine grace, truth, and courage, you can help a lot of people.

What does this survey tell you about your ability to be appropriately assertive with people you want to help?

What do you need to work on? How does this apply to the blend and balance of compassion and setting healthy boundaries?

Answer the following questions as best you can. A suggestion is to get a journal or notepad and start writing answers and thoughts. You may need to ponder some of these this week.

1. What do you believe constitutes effective caregiving?
2. What does being a Christian mean to you personally?
3. What does it mean to you to be a caregiver as a Christian?
4. What experiences have you had that are help to you in working with people?
5. Why do you want to be a caregiver?
6. Is your life at a point where you think you are able to be of help to others? If so, elaborate, if not, please elaborate.

Adapted from Tan, Siang-Yang, Lay Counseling, Equipping Christians for A Helping Ministry

Helping Hurting People Session 1 – Student Notes

The mission of our BEC class is to develop Scriptural responses to minister to others struggling with difficult circumstances and to develop caregiving skills to enable a believer to come alongside others to support them in times of difficulty.

We are beginning a 7 week Biblical Education Class that will spiritually, intellectually, and emotionally assist you to come alongside others as a brother or sister in Christ to be a sounding board, a stable friend, and one who speaks the Word with wisdom. We will cover topics that will help you to not only identify needs, but to be a catalyst (facilitator) that is a provision of assistance and guidance in resolving personal, social and emotional difficulties by depending on Yahweh and Christ. We will show you skills that will enhance your ability to minister/pastor/love others in a godly way. We will also be able to discern when to direct those in need to appropriate professional resources.

With the privilege of working with people comes the responsibility of learning how to do it as best as we can. Caregivers, lay ministers, lay counselors, or helpers, that are successful have certain basic characteristics about themselves that enable them to be aware of, open to, and available for interaction with other human beings. This caregiver also is valued for his or her capacity and desire for personal growth and development that continues throughout life. From a biblical perspective and a sound behavioral perspective these are some of the qualities necessary to learn and maintain.

1. Spiritually mature and committed to Yahweh and Christ - Gal. 6:1 *brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.*
2. Psychological Stability
3. Love for and an interest in people
4. Some life experience
5. Training to facilitate the conversations
6. Availability and teach-ability
7. Ability to maintain confidentiality

Adapted from Tan, Siang-Yang, Lay Counseling, Equipping Christians for A Helping Ministry

What we cannot expect is to be perfect in every situation, but we can learn how to “do no harm.” We cannot help everyone either. People have to want to change and grow by accepting the Scriptures and compassion from others, with humility and meekness. An old adage is that “We can lead a horse to water, but we can’t make him drink.”

We need one another in the body of Christ to help each other to live a faithful Christian life.

Weariness

“Come unto Me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28

If you find that Christianity exhausts you, draining you of your energy, then you are practicing religion rather than enjoying a relationship. Jesus said that a relationship with Him would bring rest to your soul. Your walk with the Lord will not make you weary; it will invigorate you, restore your strength, and energize your life.

Helping Hurting People Session 1 – Student Notes

Hard work or lack of sleep can make you tired. This fatigue can usually be remedied by a good rest. But there is a deeper fatigue that goes beyond physical tiredness. There is an emotional exhaustion that comes from experiencing heavy burdens and draining crises. There is a tiredness deep within your soul that comes from carrying the weight of the needs of others. You can go on a vacation, but your soul will not be restored. This condition can only be rectified by finding rest in Christ.

Some zealous Christians want to do all they can to serve Christ, and they exhaust themselves in the process. It was to these that Jesus extended His invitation to go to Him and learn from Him. Jesus spent most of His earthly ministry surrounded by needy multitudes. He faced relentless opposition, He often prayed throughout the nights, and He rarely had any privacy; yet He always received the rest and strength that came from His Father. It was not that Jesus did not work hard but that He knew the path to spiritual rest. Are you weary? Go to Jesus and let Him give you His rest. His rest will restore your soul as nothing else can.

Blackaby, H., *Weariness*, Experiencing God Day by Day, p. 349.

When caring for others the way Christ teaches us, we actually grow as much or more than those we are caring for. Helping others to find godly answers to their problems pushes us to do the same.

Counselors and people that care for others are many times dubbed “Wounded Healers.” This is an unfortunate statement to my way of thinking. The blind lead the blind into a ditch (Matt. 15:13-15). We all have a sin nature, but we do not have to be practicing sin. If I have worked on the problem and have overcome it and am quite aware that I cannot do this behavior and do not succumb to it anymore, then I have a place of strength to help another person through this struggle. If the problems are too close to home for me, then I have to get others to help. Counselors refer people all the time for that very reason. Some situations just cause us to not be able to be objective and helpful, but pour on to the other person’s pain, our own pain and sin. None of us want to do that.

What are my responsibilities so that I can become a great caregiver?

1. To have self-care; know yourself, know your strengths and weaknesses.
2. To be able to answer the question: Why do I want to be a caregiver?
3. To understand the process of caregiving and develop skills.