

Why Should I Care about the Hurting?

Why Should I Care?

By Various Speakers

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Faith Church

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What a delightful time of worship as we've been able to come together regardless of what's been going on in your life this week to corporately sing Alleluia to our God together. So, that you, Worship Team, for leading us and thank you for participating so passionately this morning.

I want to take a minute and just thank you for serving so faithfully during our Biblical Counseling Training Conference. I realize that many of you had your lives turned upside-down this week in order to serve and to serve well. Thank you. Thank you so much for that and let me just read one card that was given to me illustrating many that are very similar. This person said, "To Pastor Viars, A special thank you to your church for their hospitality. Your congregation is practicing what you preach and blessing all who were at the conference. Thanks for sharing your wisdom with us." Friends, there are many who feel that way as they've gone back now to their churches around the country and to a number of other countries around the world. Thank you for the way that you served.

I thought that because we had so many marvelous Christian leaders with us this past week, that I would ask a couple of them to stay a few days extra for us so that they could talk to our church family from their particular perspective about: why should I care about the hurting? So, my friend, Randy Patton, is going to come first. Randy serves with the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors, formally NANC, and has been a long time friend of this church and then one of our long term missionaries, Bill Moore, is going to speak afterwards. Randy is going to especially talk about: why should I care about the hurting and what's going on with people helpers here in the United States. Then, Bill is even going to broaden that out further and gives us a report about just how people helpers are being used of God around the world. So Randy, thank you so much for serving us. We look forward to hearing what you have to tell us from the word.

Randy Patton: Thank you. It's a distinct privilege for me to be here this morning. Please take your Bible and open to Luke 9. The ministry theme for Faith Church in 2014 is "Loving Our Neighbors." You have been blessed by recent sermons seeking to answer the question: why should I care? Why should I care about building friendships? Why should I care about the unborn? Why should I care about the elderly? Why should I care about racial reconciliation? Why should I care about the poor? Then today, why should I care about the hurting?

I'm thankful to have approximately 15 minutes to answer that question from Luke 9 and then to illustrate my answers by updating you a bit on what is happening in biblical counseling across the United States. In Luke 19:18, Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do the multitudes say that I am?" In Luke 9:20, he asks the follow-up question and it is a far more important one, "Who do you say that I am?" Each one of us has to answer that second question and your answer influences where you will spend eternity. Your answer will also influence how you live your life.

Peter answered the second question by saying, "You are the Christ of God," meaning, "You are the Savior of mankind sent from God." Many of us in this room have agreed with Peter and acknowledged not only Jesus Christ as our Savior but also as the Lord of our lives. If today, you are uncertain about whom Christ is and the significance of his life, his death, his burial, his resurrection, I would urge you to speak to one of the counselors that will be here at the front after this service concludes or the call the church this week and make an appointment. You need to get a good clear answer to that question that Christ asked.

Now, to those of us who agree with Peter and to Peter and to the rest of us who agree with him, Jesus says in verse 23, "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." Those who desire to follow Jesus must forsake or deny their personal agendas in order to completely comply with God's agenda. Self-denial was a common thread in Christ's teaching to his disciples. The kind of self-denial he sought was not a reclusive asceticism but a willingness to obey his commandments, to love and to serve others, and suffer and perhaps even die for his sake. To voluntarily and daily take up one's cross, points to the Roman practice of forcing condemned criminals to carry part of the tools of their execution to the place of their death.

Followers of Christ must not only give up their own agendas, but die to them. Christ adds this profound statement, "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it but whoever loses his life for my sake, he is the one who will save it." This is one of the anomalies of the Christian life: the way to save your life is to die to your own self-centered agenda and to live for Christ. It's like the song says, "God saved me from myself." Christ does save us from ourselves for those who take up our cross daily to follow him.

Godly Christians have always had concern for people who are hurting. This is what fueled missionary outreach in decades past. This is what has fueled the beginning and establishing of clinics and hospitals, schools for individuals who otherwise would not receive an education. This is what motivated the beginning of rescue missions, jail and prison ministries and homes for unwed mothers and orphans. Biblical counseling or intensive discipleship is one way of caring for the hurting that has really blossomed in the last 44 years. An understanding of what has happened will cause you to praise God, I think. It should also cause you to see that the life-changing help that comes to those who are hurting when people like you forsake or deny their personal agendas to get man's approval and man's applause and instead choose daily to completely comply with God's

agenda as stated in his word. As I tell the story of the advance of biblical counseling in the United States, you'll notice the strategic role that Faith Church and its leaders have played in many of the wonderful things that have happened.

The modern biblical counseling movement usually traces its flourishing back to 1970 when Jay Adams released his seminal work "Competent to Counsel." In the century prior to this book's release, ministerial students had been trained to refer and defer to professional counselors, people struggling with the problems of life and living. In 1970, there were no Bible Colleges or seminaries where you could major in biblical counseling. There was little literature available to help people who wanted to learn how to use the word of God to help people that were hurting in a personal way. There were no conferences to attend where you could be equipped to minister the word of God to hurting people and to do so with confidence and skill and compassion.

Prior to 1970 in America, there was a biblical counseling desert. "Competent to Counsel" began to change things. It contained a careful exposition of key Bible passages that talked about the need for justification and progressive sanctification in order for people to really change. Changing people from the inside-out is what Jesus Christ does through his inspired, inerrant and sufficient word. Pastors and elders are commanded to use the word to meet the deepest needs of hurting people. They are also commanded to equip their flocks to do the same. Jay Adams, a Presbyterian, challenged Christians everywhere who claimed to believe the Bible to return to using it to meet needs of people hurting and facing struggles in the common struggles of life.

Two Baptists were greatly influenced by "Competent to Counsel." Dr. Robert Smith, a medical doctor in our service this morning and Pastor Bill Goode. Both of them lived at that time, in northwest Indiana. They were trained in biblical counseling during 1972-73 by a colleague of Jay Adams. As an aside, I will mention that during this time, Pastor Goode had a family attending his church named Viars. Their son was named Steve.

In 1974, Pastor Goode and Doc Smith began teaching others what they had learned while continuing to advance in their own counseling skills and understanding.

In 1976, I attended one of the classes that they taught, an 11 Monday training program conducted at the Baptist Children's Home in Valparaiso, Indiana.

Things were beginning to change. By 1976, there were so many people claiming to do biblical counseling that there arose a need for an organization to certify both individual biblical counselors and biblical counseling training centers. The National Association of Nouthetic Counselors, or NANC, was born and Dr. Smith served as its first Executive Director.

In 1977, Faith Biblical Counseling Ministries began when Pastor Goode assumed the pastorate of this church and Dr. Smith left his medical practice in northwest Indiana and moved to Lafayette and they continued the training and expanded Faith Biblical Counseling Ministries.

In 1982, I was asked to join the training staff because they had a waiting list of 13 people and they just couldn't seem to get it knocked down. Hurting people looking for answers that they wanted to help.

In 1985, the first Missionary Training Conference began with 42 in attendance. That's now called the Biblical Counseling Training Conference, the conference we just finished this past week with 1,930 people attending from 14 countries and with people listening from, I think, 18 additional countries around the world. The landscape has changed.

In 1988, Pastor Goode was named the Executive Director of NANC. Steve Viars, then his new Assistant Pastor here at Faith Church, functioned as the Administrator of NANC. Steve's wife, Chris, became NANC's first secretary and they can tell you stories about mailing NANC mailings and sorting them on their living room floor.

It was in 1997 that Pastor Goode died unexpectedly to us and I was later named his successor and became NANC's first full-time Executive Director. By God's grace and through the efforts of many hard-working people, NANC's membership of certified biblical counselors continued to grow as thousands of people across the country were trained in various venues in how to use the Bible to help hurting people. The number of places where people could get quality training in biblical counseling has continued to grow. You'll notice the concentration of biblical counseling training centers in the midwest. That is the fruit of people being trained here at Faith Biblical Counseling Ministries and going back to their places of ministry and training others who then turned around and trained others.

The growth was sustained by several significant churches that chose to support the organization that I was serving with, NANC, in very, very generous ways but also there were interested laymen who appreciated the practical, clear teaching and equipping they were receiving and who gave strategic gifts to help advance the cause. Laymen in all kinds of places gave of their time, talent and treasure to advance the cause of biblical counseling. For example, Mike Hynes, a member of this church, for 17 years voluntarily served as NANC's bookkeeper, paying our taxes, paying our bills and keeping our records in good order. Hundreds of thousands of people were trained as a result of what happened.

Let me step away from the hundreds of thousands that were trained and tell you about one couple to illustrate what has happened across America. This is Tony and Lisa Anderson. They live in Jacksonville, Florida and they are members of the Christian Family Chapel Church. Tony is a lawyer by profession. In 2006, they came to the Biblical Counseling Training Conference and sat in track 1 in this room. Tony tells the story that Lisa's request for her Valentine's gift that day is that he would take time off work and go to this conference with her. He came thinking he was being a good husband, he says, little realizing that God was getting ready to turn his life upside-down as he sat through the training. There were nine other people from their church that came that year and they made a strong commitment to endorse biblical counseling, to study it and work

it out in their lives. As a result of what they did in following through, that church now that averages about 1,000 Sunday morning worship attendants has 15 ACBC certified counselors who provide over 45 hours of free counseling to hurting people in the greater Jacksonville area every week. I checked yesterday and they have a waiting list of 40 people. Because of that, they have expanded now and just began their first training program. They have 114 people coming from 30 different churches in the greater Jacksonville, Florida area.

Not only are we seeing the multiplication of efforts as we've seen like with Tony and Lisa and the good folks at Christian Family Chapel, but the movement is continuing to expand as God is raising up new, young visionary leaders. This is Dr. Heath Lambert, who recently became the Executive Director of ACBC, formally called NANC. Here is something that is amazing: ACBC's offices are now located on the campus of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. This is absolutely amazing. 44 years ago, there was no school where you could go to study biblical counseling and now the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, a school with 3,000 students, has invited ACBC to be on its campus to help influence their students.

Other organizations besides ACBC are also equipping Christians to help hurting people using the Bible. The newest organization is the Biblical Counseling Coalition, the brain-child and the vision of Pastor Viars and other key leaders to help bring together some of these organizations so that there might be a synergy that we might accomplish more as we work together to produce robust resources and good relationships.

The biblical counseling landscape in America has been transformed in the last 44 years because Christ's followers have taken seriously his commands to minister to the hurting using the Bible. I want to remind you, again, of verse 24 which says, "Whoever loses his life for my sake, he is the one who will save it," and sometimes in our efforts to minister to somebody else, we find ourselves being helped.

I'll close with a personal illustration: in 1974, at the age of 25, I became a pastor of what in ministerial circles is called a rescue work. A church that at one time had averaged 120 morning attendants but through two splits not being handled biblically, the church dwindled to where the 17 voting members left and they're averaging 38 in Sunday School the two months before I was called to pastor. God blessed our efforts but there was a lot of discouragement and I hadn't learned as much as I need to learn about how to handle the problems of life and living but I was trying to help people.

I had a dear lady in my church named Dorothy, a grandmother, who shared with me her sadness over learning that her three year old granddaughter living in Brazil with her missionary parents, had been bitten a poisonous snake and had died. She later shared with me a personal letter that was intended just for the immediate family to describe what had happened and one night sitting in my office, wallowing in self-pity, feeling about how rough I had it, I read the story of this missionary couple who had resigned from a career in business to follow Christ into full-time vocational ministry. They are in Brazil ministering to Yanomami Indians and the story told about their daughter, Sharon, being

bit, three years old, by a poisonous snake and dying and then the missionary standing at her graveside and preaching Christ crucified and resurrected and the one who can give hope after death and I was so convicted as I realized that they didn't pack up right away and came home and God used my efforts to reach out to a grieving grandmother to, in effect, save me from myself.

I want you to meet that missionary. Here is one of my heroes, a dear friend, one of your missionaries, Dr. Bill Moore.

Dr. Bill Moore: Thank you, Randy. Well, I see Randy gave me one minute more than he did the last time so I'm really – wow.

First of all, in case you don't know it, I am born again by the Spirit of God. Fifty years ago on interstate 94, listening to Billy Graham in my car, I became a Christian. There were radical changes that took place in my life in such a specific way that it changed the direction of my life forever. When I found myself later on in New York City, going there for the wrong reason, for fame and for the dollar, I met a missionary from Bolivia and that missionary had something that I didn't have. I had salvation, he had salvation but he had something I didn't have and it was a calm, pleasant, peaceful spirit and I asked him about that and this is a verse that he shared with me, "Awake to righteousness and sin not for some have not the knowledge of God. I speak it to your shame." I knew what my sin was, it was materialism. I went to New York for the wrong reason and God made another radical change in my life in a new direction for me.

Can I tell you that just two years ago, I visited that Yanomami Tribe in the headwaters of the Amazon on the Venezuela border and I went for two reasons: there are now 40 Christians in that village. Hallelujah! Amen! Forty Christians in that village after many years. But I went for another reason: the second reason, I wanted to see the grave of my daughter where we buried her. Over the years, the jungle had taken up the space of her grave and I no longer knew where it was at and I searched for it and I looked around and I could not find it but I came to the place where I thought that maybe I was within 10-15 feet of where she was buried.

Now, I share that with you today because I was hurting a number of years ago and it was the sufficiency of God's word that came and met my need. Today, I would like to talk to you about why Bill and Nancy Moore are involved in biblical counseling. First of all, we notice that the Bible says, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations," and as you think about that, discipleship really is what? It is actually biblical counseling; that's what we're involved in. And what is biblical counseling? Well, biblical counseling is actually biblical counseling in the area of targeted discipleship. There are people that come and they have various problems in their life and you can't solve them all. In fact, it's not even for us to solve their problem, it's us to connect them to the solution of their problem. So, I call that targeted discipleship where you're meeting that person and you're helping them to face, deal with and endure problems in their life from a biblical perspective. That helps us understand what God has for each of us as we're involved in ministry whether we're in a vocational ministry or whether we're laypeople involved in a local church.

I'd like to answer a few questions today: 1. what is biblical counseling? The next one is: where do we do it? And when do we do it? Not only when and where we do it but who are we involved with? Then, how do we accomplish that? Then, why do we go? First of all, I'd like to talk to you specifically about the "what." The "what" is very important because this is a motivating factor. When I think of the "what" in biblical counseling, I think of how structured God really is and first of all I think of his plan. His plan is perfect and powerful. He also has a program that we ought to be involved in as it facilitates the functioning of that plan but there is also a process and what really motivates us is understanding his purpose.

So, I'd like to take each one of those items and talk to you a bit about that. First of all, let's look at God's plan. It's very simple. It's the last words of Jesus when he departed from the earth. He said, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and all of Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth." Now, for me, here's what that means: we are his witness of hope to those who are hurting. Now, if we think about Lafayette, we think of the fact that this church is ministering to people who have difficulties, people who are hurting, they don't know where to find a solution. We also see that in our state there are people multiplied in the same situation and then throughout the United States and then, of course, to the ends of the earth and that's where God has taken us.

Now, when I think of witness, I also bring in another word and I want you to think about this word. You cannot witness without being with the person so I bring the two together: with-ness and witness. It's impossible to witness of the gospel of Jesus Christ without being with that person so we have those opportunities. So, the witness is to come alongside as we are with them in their difficulty.

What about the program? Well, the program is very simple. In fact, it's so simple that folks miss the program and here's what the program is: Jesus said, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." Now, the emphasis and the imperative is on making disciples but when you think of the goal, the goal is a present participle in reality, "While you are going, make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit." Now, notice with me that the baptizing actually implies evangelism. We are to be involved in evangelism. Now, many folks, they like to separate discipleship and they say, "Well, this is evangelism and this over here is discipleship." Can I say to you today that they both go together? In the counseling room it's called pre-counseling where you are counseling that individual and before you can actually counsel them and they are not a Christian, you must evangelize them and that's the pre-counseling that goes on in the counseling room.

Now, there's a process involved. The process, again, is very simple: "Teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you and surely I am with you always to the end of the age." So, what does that involve? Indepth discipleship. What's indepth discipleship? It's more than just a Bible study; it's where you're involved with a disciple

or counselee and there is accountability between the two of you. I also call this indepth discipleship, biblical counseling. That's exactly what you're doing; you are counseling that individual. Then as you do that, you target areas in their life where they are having struggles and difficulties and you help them to face it, to deal with it and to endure it from a biblical perspective.

Now, let's talk a little bit about hardware here. Now, everybody is impressed with a Mac Book Pro, isn't that the truth? When I go to the airport, these guys, they like to open that lid up so that you can see that apple they have right there. It seems to be a status symbol but can I tell you something? The Mac Book Pro has no value without a program. You can spend as much money on hardware as you want to but if you don't have a program, it's not going to function. Well, I look at the Christian life that way. God's program for us is his word; it's his sufficient word that will never come back void, it will accomplish it's purpose. Then we have the hardware and who is the hardware? Well, we're the hardware. So, we are the hardware and the processor is the person of the Holy Spirit that connects the program with the hardware and then the hardware becomes a teacher and also the discipler, the counselor and hopefully, his friend.

So, as we look at that, it brings us to another area. Let's think about our purpose: what is the purpose of a counselor? What is it that we want to accomplish? Well, notice then, here's what Paul said in the book of Colossians, "He is the one we proclaim in admonishing, warning, teaching everyone with all wisdom so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ." So, that means completing Christ. Well, again, let's look at the structure that God gives us. Notice what he says "admonishing, warning," which actually means counseling that individual and then also in the area of teaching, instructing them and then the instruction, you are imparting instruction to them from God's word. Then, the ultimate purpose. Notice what Paul says to the church at Rome, "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son."

Let's look at another aspect that we're talking about here. Let's talk about the when and where. Well, in 1971, Nancy and I went to Brazil and we served there as career missionaries during 32 years. The area of South America, the population of South America is 386 million people but can I tell you today that 200 million of the 386 million are in Brazil? There are actually more people that speak Portuguese in South American than Spanish. Then, as we retired from the country of Brazil and came back home, and by the way, I don't like that word "retired," we just changed ministries. So, for the last ten years, we have been involved in a world ministry and I've had the privilege to visit five continents in ten nations presenting biblical counseling and indepth discipleship.

Now, let's look at some of those nations. Our home base is the United States. We've been in Peru, Chile, of course, Brazil, France, Portugal, Togo, Uganda, India and Hong Kong. God has broadened my vision. It's not longer just Brazil but he's broadened my vision.

Now, let's look at an aspect here that I find very interesting. Brazil is actually larger than continental United States and here is what that has done for me: that has challenged me to work in a very specific way on various trips through Brazil each year and I've had the

privilege of working in several cities in the southern part of Brazil, in seminaries, Bible schools, churches and other areas of that country, working through the central part of Brazil up into the west side and then back over to the east side of Brazil up into the northeast part of Brazil and then moving into Manaus and Boa Vista. In a couple of weeks, I'll be back up there in Manaus at the headwaters of the Amazon and moving on up into the area of Boa Vista.

Let me mention this to you: the United States is the largest missionary agency in the world. No question about it. But maybe you don't know this: Brazil is now the second largest missionary agency in the world. Now, there is a great distance between the United States and Brazil but because of their economy that has improved and the teaching of God's word, Brazilians are moving throughout the country. In fact, their moving into other parts of the world and when I was in Uganda two weeks ago, I met a Brazilian couple that worked with the African Indian Mission and it was a blessing to me to be able to see them.

Let's go back to our thought here: who do we get involved with? What is our target? Well, it's Christian leaders but where do we go to find those leaders? Well, we go to find them in the local church. We're going to find pastors, we're going to see lay leaders and then we're going to see missionaries that are sent by those churches. Then, some of those folks become what? Professors and teachers in seminaries and we focus on them and their students. So, every time I go to various places of the world, this is the area that we target.

In thinking about that, let me finish with these quick thoughts: first of all, how do we do it? Well, we need good material. The strategy then is, translation. When I first went to Brazil there were very little materials in the Portuguese language. Today, we have dozens of good excellent books that have been translated from English to Portuguese. Many of the books that you have over here in the Resource Center, we've had the opportunity to see those translated into Portuguese. Then we do the teaching of that material; how to use that material on a local church level and seminaries and various other places.

Now, training. Most people when I talk about training, they think training and teaching is the same thing and I'd like to demonstrate to you what training is so I'm going to ask my brother to come here beside me. Now, I'm a trainer and since I'm a trainer now, I'm not only your teacher from up front but now I'm going to walk with you and I'm going to walk with you and demonstrate to you what God has done in my life and how he can do the same thing in your life and how you can pass that on to others. Thank you, I'll pay you later. Okay, very good.

To finish our thoughts here: the transfer is important. That's when you pass the baton. That's when you're passing it on to the other individual and now you are looking at it this way: no longer is it my ministry, it is our ministry and I've now passed that ministry to you and you're to include others in your ministry. Probably one of the most important aspects of all of this is the transition. That's when you leave it and I had the opportunity to leave that with Pastor F. He and I were the co-founders of the Association of Biblical Counselors in Brazil and F. is doing a fantastic job. In fact, he was here all last week and

we had the opportunity to spend Friday afternoon with Dave Salvey where we talked about our strategic plans for the rest of this year in Brazil and going onto the next year. So, Dave Salvey has been a tremendous help to us.

So, the transition period is extremely important. That's when they become responsible to doing the ministry in their area and then tracking. I like to stop with the tracking. I had the privilege two weeks ago to be in Uganda and I've never been on a safari and I thought, "Man, I'm going to try a safari out." I don't like jungle. I don't like the bush, but I had to try a safari and I learned about the importance of tracking. We wanted to find some rhinos. Have you ever seen a white rhino? Well, I wanted to see one in their environment and so I had a driver and two trackers and we got into the car and we're bouncing around and rolling around in that four-wheel drive vehicle and then we get close to where the rhinos are and the two trackers, they lead us in. We're walking in very slowly and we're watching and looking around and one of those trackers points, "There they are." There were three male rhinos, a mother rhino and also a baby. Now, why would I tell you that? That's what I'm involved in today, tracking. The tracking is important and can I tell you the reason behind the tracking? To strengthen and encourage those who have come to the conclusion that God's word is sufficient for meeting the needs of man.

I'd like to take this opportunity and thank personally Pastor Randy Patton for introducing me to biblical counseling in 1983. He drug me all the way down from Fort Wayne over here to 18th Street to a class of 17 people and can I tell you, I wasn't impressed? Seventeen? But can I tell you something else? It was in that classroom when Randy was teaching the four rules of communication that my good marriage went to a better marriage. Can I tell you today that after 58 years of marriage that I'm still working on excellency in my relationship with my wife? I want to thank this church for the opportunity that's been extended to me to be an extension of this church around the world. God bless each one of you.