

“In the Heart of the Community with the Community at Heart”



June 2011



The Biblical Counselor's Corner

For the past three months this corner has focused on the role and influence of the past in the life of the Christian. Recently I was asked to critique the following article by John Bettler in the Journal of Biblical Counseling from 1994, entitled *Counseling and the Problem of the Past*. I would simply like to summarize it and share it with you. If anyone would like a copy of his article, please contact me.

John Bettler discusses the role, influence, and problem of the past in the life of the Christian and for biblical counseling. He presents three main points: 1) The Past Can Create Problems, 2) The Past Is Important Because the Bible Says So, and 3) How to Deal with the Past Biblically.

Bettler's first major point is that the past can create problems. Every single person has a past. The past is unavoidable, and so the struggle and tension now becomes "What do we do with the past in our present life? How do we interpret and deal with the past?" The past must be faced head on and addressed because it is an unavoidable issue of life. Secondly, the past can be a problem because the sinful, unbelieving world is obsessed with the past and believes that understanding the past is the key to the present. En vogue today are theories that promote blame-shifting and victimization. Hosts of present problems are laid at the feet of parents and families, while the Bible teaches that every single family is made of sinners and being sinned against is part of living in a fallen world. In other words, disappointing families and/or parents are a normal part of life. Bettler says, "In our culture right now the past becomes the reason for today's problems: 'That's why I'm all messed up today. All these people who weren't perfect did things to me.' That way of thinking about the past is seductive." Christians buy into this theory and bring God into the picture in unbiblical ways. "Where was God when all this was happening to me? Why didn't He do something if He loves me and is powerful? He says He loves me and can help me feel good about myself and can heal the damage done to me, and so I'll call out to Him." When we move from our personal experience to God, God is always distorted. We are commanded to bring our experiences to God, but not to see God through the eyes of those experiences, but start with God and who He is, and then see our experiences through His eyes and the eyes of Scripture. First define who God is and then bring that to bear on what is happening in life. The last problem Bettler mentions about the past that can cause problems is that the past is a psychotherapeutic problem. By this he means that psychotherapy and psychoanalysis have challenged Christianity and the Bible on the issue of dealing with the past. This has happened in three ways. First of all Sigmund Freud's "hydraulic" view of the person introduced the thought that human beings are like engines in which pressures without and within drive them irreversibly to certain behaviors. Because of this people are viewed as victims to these pressures. Secondly, the idea of the unconscious as some sort of deep collection of repressed memories influences everything people do. Only a skilled analyst can probe and uncover all these secret, hidden, unconscious things deep within the person. This belief has absolutely no biblical support. Thirdly, the idea of catharsis, or letting your feelings out, often in therapy, is necessary for good mental and spiritual health. For instance, once a repressed childhood memory is recovered and it is brought to light in therapy that your relationship with your father is to blame, your feelings of anger and disappointment must be released immediately in order to move forward in life. Modern scientific research has shown that releasing your feelings in this way merely leads to more of the same feelings, and so catharsis doesn't even work!

Bettler's second major point is that the past is important because the Bible tells us so. Bettler says the place we should start in order to understand and solve the problems of the past is in the Bible, for the Bible is all about what makes people "tick." The Bible is about what matters for understanding and helping people. He presents three points on this matter. First, he presents what he thinks God wants us to remember. He wisely and powerfully points out that the unbelieving world of therapy and psychoanalysis focuses solely on negative memories of the past, but in the Bible God focuses our attention on positive memories of the past. According to the Bible, the past definitely influences the present and therefore God gives us guidance about what to remember. For instance in **Hebrews 10:32-34**, God says "Remember the former days..." Remembering what God says to remember plays a significant role in how you live, feel, and think today. The intent of these memories is to help us to be faithful today. God also tells us to remember certain people and their lives as examples for us to follow (**Hebrews 10:39-12:3; 13:7; James 5:10ff; Philippians 2:19-22; 4:9**). These memories produce joy, encouragement, and perseverance. It helps for us to even remember people in our own lives who have been a faithful example of obedience to God, in order to follow their example. Bettler draws our attention to the events that God has commanded to be remembered and He explains the benefits of remembering these events. God commanded Israel to remember the Passover and Exodus from slavery in Egypt. God commanded the Church to remember the death of Jesus in the Communion service (Bread and Cup, Love Meal, Washing of Feet). God has commanded us Christians to remember the sins of Israel in the Wilderness Wandering so that we do not repeat her mistakes (**1 Corinthians 10:1-13**). Bettler reminds that memories are not merely for nostalgia, but to teach us and to lead us to obedience and thanksgiving (**Psalms 44; 77**). Secondly Bettler discusses that fact that every person has a past and so that past is the context, or story, in which God works in each person's life. He uses Moses and Joseph as examples. Moses didn't just walk into Egypt one day and lead the Jews out of slavery. God was working in his whole life to prepare him for this event. Moses spent forty years growing up in Egypt and forty years in the wilderness herding sheep. Moses had an 80 year past before being called by God to rescue Israel from the Egyptians! Moses' past was no accident! After being sold into slavery and left for dead by his brothers, Joseph was able to say, "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good," and he loved his brothers and forgave them and reconciled with them, rather than taking revenge. How could he do this! Joseph recognized that his personal history was really His story! When dealing with problems in the past, we need to see God in the overall big picture. We must know how present problems fit into the story of life where God is working all the time. Thirdly, Bettler points out that each of us influences the past. How do we do this. We influence the past by interpreting it selectively and creatively. No person can remember every single detail of every day and every event in his life. We attach special meanings to things that happen to us and over the years we nurture those memories and dwell on them and interpret them in ways that are advantageous to our own lives. Bettler gave the example of having nothing but the very best of memories about his brother even though he knows his brother did some bad things as a sinner. He felt this way because his brother died when Bettler was only 17 and his brother was 29, and so his mind and heart cling to only the very best things about his brother. It is almost impossible for him to even consider anything negative about his brother even though there most certainly are some things. Each of us does this with our memories...whether good or bad. We use our memories to create our own stories. Bettler also mentions that after Israel left Egypt and things got a little tough their memories were very selective and creative. They were slaves in Egypt and yet when they remembered they only remembered good things; good things that didn't even really exist there! (**Numbers 11**)

In his last major section Bettler discusses how Christians should deal with the past in biblical ways that are pleasing to God. He focuses all his remaining attention on one core issue that he sees as the most important. As we address the past in our lives we need to seek to uncover what **Ephesians 4:17-22** calls our "*manner of life*." Present problems always have a history, they don't just pop up out of nowhere, and so we must discover the "*manner of life*" that has led us to where we currently are. "*Manner of life*" is the sum total of all our beliefs, behaviors, dreams, thoughts, and values that contribute to our "go to" habits of thinking and behavior to deal with the issues of life. Bettler is talking about the habits we revert to in order to deal with life. It is talking about the things we turn to again and again and again to deal with life. What are our habit? What is our "*manner of life*?" Paul says unbelievers have a futile, useless, ineffective way of dealing with life, primarily because it is not God's way. After one accepts Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin and receives eternal life, a new "*manner of life*" comes on the scene. Christians see things from God's eyes as written in the Bible. Christians interpret life presently and in the past and in the future through the eyes of the Bible. Bettler uses Jacob's life in **Genesis 25-49** to demonstrate his point. Jacob had sinful habits of conniving, deceiving, and lying to deal with the issues of life until he had a personal encounter with God that changed his habits. He is listed in the Saints Hall of Fame in Hebrews 11!

And so Bettler shows us that the past does have a place in our lives today, but only according to God's ways and through God's perfect eyes. The past isn't important because it causes us to sin or excuses our sins. It isn't important because we can somehow magically change by reliving our past. It isn't important because knowing the facts about it and then re-experiencing the feelings of it can be therapeutic. The past is important because it is God's story of our lives. The past is useful in teaching us about why our current problems exist. The past is important because it can teach us what God wants us to do or not to do in order to follow Him. David says in **Psalms 16:6**, "**My heritage is beautiful to me.**" And David says in another Psalm, "*You O Lord have given me my lot in life, and I will rejoice in it!*" The beautiful truth about God being with us in our past is that the Bible says He remains with us in our present and will continue to stay with us into our future! This is the biblical doctrine of **hope**. Hope is our memory of the future. He has promised wonderful things for us and we believe He will keep His Word and we eagerly wait with confidence for the day of His appearing. As the great hymn mightily declares, "O God our Help in ages past, our hope for years to come!" Praise His great Name!



11005 Foster Rd.
Norwalk, CA 90650

www.gracelive.com

Join us for our...
**VACATION
BIBLE SCHOOL**

June 29-July 3, 2011

6:30-8:00pm

Please sign up your
child(ren) TODAY for this exciting week.

TRAINING SESSIONS:

Sunday, June 12 - after meal

Sunday, June 26 - 5:00pm (set up)

JUNE 2011 MONTHLY EVENT CALENDAR

The ROCK

**Raising Our Children
for the King -**

Children's Ministries on
Wednesday evenings at

6:30 pm -
Kidmo room

**COME HEAR
MORE ABOUT
MISSIONS.**

College/Young Adult

Small Group

June 12th

6:00-8:30pm; Room: 6B

**DRIVEN
NEWS**

Our DRIVEN youth
ministries meet
Wednesday evenings at
6:30 pm in the
Fellowship
Hall. All youth are
welcome to attend.
Please see the DRIVEN
page for more details.

MOMENTUM

2011

July 12th -17th

Johnstown, PA

WOMEN OF GRACE

Join the Women of Grace for
their closing potluck on June
14th at 6:00pm at
Beverly Adams' home
(15416 Flatbush Ave.,
Norwalk). See you there!

Ladies Ministries

We had a marvellous time last
Saturday putting together
care packages for our troops
and eating chili dogs. Our next
meeting is set for Sept. 17th ;
more details to come.

MISSION NEWS...

WAYNE & ELLEN PATTON

BRAZIL MINISTRY UPDATE

Praise God!

We have purchased the property at Island of Cotijuba where the Johnson family lives. Our kids are able to visit with us from the USA. The evangelism teams have been going well out at the island.

Prayer Requests

That the Cotijuba leadership team can get a "Youth Outreach" organized for the 21st of May.

We need one more signature on the land we are purchasing at Cotijuba.

The title and legal work here in the city will be finished before Wayne leaves.

Plans and construction for a well, water tower, meeting area covering, storage shed and port area.

Pray for our flight back (college kids) May 28th and the rest of the family on June 6th.

Pray for us as we prepare plans and arrangements for Home Ministries in June through December of this year.

Pray for Ellen's upcoming eye surgery the 3rd week of June.

Pray for Caleb as he works out college plans and a new life in the States.

Pray the Lord will provide a car for us to use locally in the Dayton, Ohio area for June-July.

(They will be here with us on November 6.)
From *PATTON'S EMAIL*

PATTY MORRIS

FRANCE MINISTRY UPDATE

Please pray for Patty as she serves in Lyon doing administrative and outreach work.

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- (///)~

CECIL & DEBBIE O'DELL

TOKYO MINISTRY UPDATE

Please pray for Cecil and Debbie as they seek to reach the Japanese in Long Beach.

DRIVEN 2011

youth ministries

WE.CARE.2011

With 5 exciting months of outreach behind us, this year already, I think it is a good time to be reminded of the road that lies ahead. According to the Gospel of Luke, ***"If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me." Luke 9:23*** Are you willing? Willing to be committed to the cause of Christ? Willing to set aside your own desires and plans? Are you willing to do it DAILY? Are you willing to follow HIM? If you are, than PRAY & GO! Pray during the month of June (DAILY) and then GO join us on Friday, June 24th on LeFloss Ave as we fellowship and build relationships with the families of LeFloss through our Neighborhood Movie Night.

WE HAD OVER 70 PEOPLE SHOW UP FOR OUR "DINNER NIGHT @ THE HABIT GRILL" IN MAY & WE RAISED JUST OVER \$100. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

VBS TRAINING

Vacation Bible School is just around the corner and we need your help and support. If you plan to volunteer this year, then make sure you attend the VBS Training on Sundays, June 12th & 26th.



Join us for our next fundraiser event at SHAVE-IT ICE in Norwalk. 20% of all sales will go back to the DRIVEN Youth Group. Located on the corner of Firestone & Studebaker.

Month @ A Glance

DRIVEN WEDNESDAY

6:30pm – 8:00pm
Every Wednesday Night

WORSHIP TEAM PRACTICE

8:00pm – 9:00pm
Every Wednesday Night

DRIVEN LEADERSHIP TEAM

4:00pm – 6:00pm
Sunday, June 6th

FINAL GIRLS' D-GROUP

7:00pm – 8:00pm
Tuesday, June 7th

SHAVE-IT ICE FUNDRAISER

12:00p – 10:00p
Friday, June 10TH

HONOR GRADUATES SUNDAY

10:45a – 1:00p
Sunday, June 12th

"WE CARE" OUTREACH

6:00pm-10:00pm
Friday, June 24th

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL TRAINING

12:00pm
Sunday, June 26th

Important Dates

Sunday, June 12th – Final Deadline for Momentum Funds

Saturday, July 9th – Leaving for Momentum Youth Conference

May 2011

Dear Friends,

It has been a year with LOTS going on—with much more to come this summer. I thought I would send you a note a little earlier than I usually do since some of the things are happening at the end of this month...

Dana and Bekah arrived safely home back in Indiana just this past weekend. It was a great opportunity for Bekah to live in CA, work, and enjoy life on the “west coast”. She will walk with her graduating class on June 10. Her open house is the next day—the afternoon of June 11. For next year, the Lord provided in an incredible way, and she will be attending Grace College majoring in youth ministry. With some work, going to OB orientation, Momentum youth conference, and then the start of college—this summer is going to go very quickly for her.

Nick is ready to be finishing 8th grade and get to high school. He continues to excel in the academics and is one funny kid. He has an affinity for computers and video—so it will be fun to see what the Lord has for him in the future. He continues to take care of a house in Winona Lake, maintain his 55 gallon aquarium (very cool), and be a fun, free spirit. We thank the Lord for Nick and Bek and their spiritual sensitivity and good spirits.

Dana and I will be leading and traveling with an Operation Barnabas domestic team this summer. It has been five years, since 2006, that we have been away from being on one of the three domestic tours—and we felt the timing was right to get back to it. So on June 11, four hours after Bekah’s open house, we board a plane and fly to OB orientation in MD! All 16 adult leaders will be with us in Winona Lake June 7-10, then the grad stuff, and then we meet up with 100 of our closest friends. Our tour will be in DC, Virginia and PA. After Momentum youth conference, we will be in Ohio for the last week of tour. To follow us, see pictures, read daily reports, you can view it all at www.operationbarnabas.net

The reason for the early note is that on Monday May 16, I will be heading to the Central African Republic for two weeks. This will be a first—first time to Europe, first time to Africa. I will be going to Bangui to be in meetings with pastors regarding a Youth Ministry Institute. I would covet your prayers for a number of things: safety, energy after travel, presentations that will be given, preaching in CAR with a translator (another first!), and wisdom in next steps for this youth ministry initiative.

After the trip to CAR/Africa May 16-28, the summer calendar now looks something like this...

June 7-10

OB leaders orientation

June 10-11	Bekah's high school graduation and Open House
June 11	Depart for OB orientation in Waldorf, MD (for all four K's)
June 13-22	OB Orientation in Waldorf
June 22-July 26	OB tour (our team is called the National team)
July 12-17	Momentum youth conference at U of Pitt at Johnstown
July 26-27	FGBC Conference, Wooster, Ohio
August 4-10	Cross Cultural Youth Ministry class, Philadelphia, PA
August 22	Start of the fall semester!

The desire of our heart at CE National is that we want to see followers of Jesus be "on mission." Not just existing and looking for others to serve my needs—but that believers would take active steps to serve and speak the name of Jesus and to have an eternal perspective about life. We are blessed to be a part of an organization that values its leaders and employees "getting our hands dirty." Ed Lewis is my boss, and as Executive Director he is living in the toughest part of Philadelphia at the Urban Hope Training Center --and LOVING it. He is sharing his faith everyday and discipling new believers. He has never been more alive. Because of this value, Dana and I have the privilege to not just talk about ministry, or teach/train others how to do it—we get to teach and train and equip by being right there along side. We are getting older (if I make it through the summer, I will be the second oldest OB leader in the history of the program—but 49 is young, right? ;-)), but that just increases the importance for us to spend time on what really counts. Dana jokes that she is happy to lead these ministry teams—it just takes her longer to get up off the floor each morning and the size of her air mattress is getting thicker each year!

Thanks so much for your friendship, prayers, and partnership with us. We understand that we can do this ministry with CE National and Operation Barnabas because there are individuals and churches who stand with us in this endeavor. Some of you have increased your financial giving to help meet the need. Thanks so much! We are a little better financially now than at the beginning of the year because of some increases—but there are still some needs to be met. Pray with us and we know that God will supply.

With this summer schedule being so tight, there is little "margin." We covet your prayers for the effectiveness of the ministry. It is not enough to pray for just health and safety (though we appreciate that too!) In this day and age, we are in desperate need of prayer for the things that really count: to see people sharing their faith in Jesus, learning how to serve, being sensitive to the Spirit of God, and making a difference for kingdom matters.

Thanks so much for being an integral part of the ministry team. We are an incredibly blessed family. We trust you have a wonderful and impacting summer for the cause of Christ.

For the Kurtanecks, TK

JUNE 2011

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			01 Jay Patton FAMILY NIGHT: 6:30p DRIVEN/ROCK & ABS 8:00p Worship Team Practice	02 Willie Chambers	03 Leonard Jones 7:00p Parenting Bible Study – 6B; child care thr. 6th in Music room	04
05 4-6:00p DRIVEN Leadership 5:00p Worship Commission	06	07 7:00p Ladies Bible Study 7:00p Final Girls' Discipleship	08 Micky Kurtaneck FAMILY NIGHT: 6:30p DRIVEN/ROCK & ABS 8:00p Worship Team Practice	09 Judy Torres	10 Katie Ramirez 12-10:00p DRIVEN Fundraiser – Shave It	11 Andrew Cabrera
12 HONOR GRADUATES SUNDAY -Fellowship Meal - VBS Training 6:00 – 8:30p College/ Young Adult – 6B	13 Cesar Barragan Jr.	14 6:00p Women of Grace – Potluck at Beverly's	15 FAMILY NIGHT: 6:30p DRIVEN/ROCK & ABS 8:00p Worship Team Practice	16	17	18 Laura Kimsey 8a-12p CHURCH WORK DAY
19 FATHER'S DAY & BAPTISM SERVICE NO PM SERVICE	20 Kaitlyn Muir	21 7:00p Elder Board	22 Timothy Lansing FAMILY NIGHT: 6:30p DRIVEN/ROCK & ABS 8:00p Worship Team Practice	23	24 6-10:00p WE CARE – Movie Night	25 Michele Janssen Isaiah Posada
26 Max Olmedo 5:00p VBS Training (Set Up)	27 Daniel Cabrera Susan Klements Ricky Olmedo	28 Elizabeth Reynaga	29 6:30p VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL	30 6:30p VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL		