

INTRODUCTION - EQUIPPING THE SAINTS FOR SERVICE

“And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for **the equipping of the saints for the work of service**, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:11-13)

“Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these *things*, **he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.**” (2 Timothy 2:20-21)

The church is tasked with many functions. One of these is to help Christians experience God through corporate and private worship, for much spiritual joy is awaiting those who learn to worship God in the Spirit. Another function of the church is to carry out “The Great Commission” of sharing the Good News of God’s offer of salvation through Jesus; however, we can only offer effective service in this work if the church provides a very important ministry to us. It must prepare Christians to be effective workers for the Lord. There are at least two dimensions in this preparation, and they are the development of the following:

1. Knowledge and skills in the performance of ministry activities.
2. Personal maturity, healing and restoration to transform us into a vessel worthy of the Master’s use.

Although gaining knowledge and skill in ministry will probably occur from reading the “Counseling to Faith” series, the primary intention of this project is to help facilitate personal maturity, healing and restoration so we can be vessels worthy of the Master’s use. We are not sinners because we sin; we sin because our fallen nature has polluted us all the way down to the core of our being. In essence, we have the disease of sin, and we sin because we are sinners by nature. Sin has been defined as anything about us that falls short of the glory of God. “There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.” (Romans 3:22-24 NIV) From the point of our conception in our mother’s womb, we are damaged because of sin. “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” (Psalm 51:5 NIV) This book is about God’s recovery program for us, so we can obtain deliverance from the power of sin and the damage to ourselves because of sin.

I have come to believe that the Bible is the infallible Word of God, and now, my heart's desire is to show you what it says about my profession of counseling and rehabilitation. If you are looking for human research into my profession, you will not find much of it here; however, you will find Biblical research. I am very familiar with the human research into my profession, and I am confident that I will not present anything that is not or cannot be proven by human research. One of the current human research findings is the effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) approaches in counseling. This essentially affirms that to change behavior, we first need to change our thought process. Anybody who has ever taken Romans 12:2 to heart and practiced it would have been practicing CBT without even realizing it. "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." If we renew our minds to think in the manner God has revealed in the Bible, we will be able to act according to God's will. What Behavioral Science has discovered and hailed as the new and best approach has been in written form for nearly 2000 years. Surely, Ecclesiastes 1:9-10 is true. "So there is nothing new under the sun. Is there anything of which one might say, 'See this, it is new?' Already it has existed for ages which were before us." For the behavioral research professionals who read this, my challenge to you is to test what the Bible says through your research activities, for I am convinced that you will find the Bible to be reliable.

From the beginning of my time as a Manager/Director in the Drug and Alcohol Treatment profession, I have had to create what is called a "Philosophy of Treatment" document. This was needed by the organization to keep us on target of what we claimed to believe about Drug and Alcohol abuse and addiction. This was also required by agencies and organizations that regulated our professional activities. For the purpose of this book's introduction, I am going use the model that I used, and it will give you a general picture of what this book is attempting to accomplish in presenting a detailed Biblical Philosophy of Treatment for humanity.

The Philosophy of Treatment included:

- Program's view of the disorder of Drug and Alcohol abuse and addiction.
- Treatment model utilized
- Goals of treatment

For those readers who would be interested in reading an example of a Drug and Alcohol Philosophy of Treatment, see appendix A.

Summary of the Biblical Philosophy of Treatment

(This information is presented here as a summary of the purpose of this book. Don't get bogged down trying to completely understand it at this point, as this will be the topic of the rest of the book.)

Bible's View of the Disorder- All human beings are born with a sin nature that infects all areas of our being, which include the following:

- A **spirit** that is dead to God. “For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their **foolish heart was darkened.**”(Romans 1:23) “The heart is more deceitful than all else and is **desperately sick;**” (Jeremiah 17:6)
- A **will** that is bent toward independence from God. This is referred to as rebelliousness in the Bible and as “self will” in the 12-step recovery programs of Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. “Son of man, **you live in the midst of the rebellious house,** who have eyes to see but do not see, ears to hear but do not hear; for they are a rebellious house.” (Ezekiel 12:2)
- **Emotions** that can become hardened to God, hostile toward others, and are very changeable. In addition, emotionally painful memories from past trauma can arise and haunt us. “A fool is hotheaded and reckless.” (Proverbs 14:16)
- A **mind** that can be very masterful at using self-deception to avoid facing the truth about God, ourselves and the world in which we live. “There is a way which seems **right** to a man, but its end is the **way of death.**” (Proverbs 14:12) “The folly of fools is **deception.**” (Proverbs 14:8)
- A **body** that seeks pleasure with powerful appetites that fight to dominate us. “**lovers of pleasure** rather than lovers of God,” (II Timothy 3:4)

Treatment Model utilized - Jesus' teaching in what is called the Parable of the Sower is used as Biblical assessment and treatment model, and in this parable, four types of conditions are identified. They are Hardened Soil/Soul, Rocky Soil/Soul, Thorny Soil/Soul and Good soil.

For your review, I have included the comparison table from “Counseling To Faith Volume I – Learning the Ways of the Wonderful Counselor.”

	Beside The Path	Rocky Places	Soil Full of Thorns	Good Soil
Spirit	Weak, Running from Truth	Aware But Weak	Strong Moments, but mostly Weak	Self-Aware and Strong
Soul				
<i>Will</i>	Prideful, Self-Will, Rebellious	Surrendered to God and His Word, but Weak	Undisciplined, Wandering, Distracted	Surrendered, Committed, Focused
<i>Emotions</i>	Bitter, Angry, Hardened, Dull/ Deadened	Changeable with Painful Emotions and Memories	Fear Breakouts, Lust/Desires	Motivated by Heart Emotions of God
<i>Mind</i>	Avoidant of Truth, Deliberately Dishonest, Emotional Blind Spots	Recognizes God's Truth, but thought process is clouded by emotions, and/ or has Blind Spots Caused by unresolved emotions	Recognizes God's Truth, but Distracted and Sidetracked	Renewed Mind and Trained to Think in the Ways of God
Overall Soul Theme	Rebellious, self as god	Emotionally Wounded	Undisciplined	Single-minded and focused on the Lord and His word.

Goals of Treatment - The goals of treatment would be to transform each of the 3 damaged soil/souls into the dynamics of Good Soil. The specific restorations are as follows:

- A **spirit** that is alive to God as a result of our salvation experience and is strong in faith. “The spirit of man is the **lamp of the LORD**, searching all the innermost parts of his being.” (Proverbs 20:27)
- A **will** that is initially surrendered to God upon salvation and repeatedly surrenders on at least a daily basis. “He went away a second time and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.’” (Matthew 26:42)
- **Emotions** that provide us the ability to feel the passions within the heart of God and within our own soul. They are to be managed under the control of

the will and understood by the intellect. In addition, God has also promised us His peace in helping to control our emotions. “Peace I leave with you; **My peace I give to you**; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.” (John 14:27)

- A **mind** that gives us the ability to analyze information, is under the control of the will, and needs to be trained to think in the ways of God by the Holy Spirit and the written Word of God. “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the **renewing of your mind**, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:2)
- A **body** that is the spirit’s instrument in the physical world, which needs to be in subjection to the surrendered will. “I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.” (I Corinthians 9:27)

Because of sin, we are a fouled up machine. This world is fallen, and we are inflicted with a constant barrage of afflictions and problems. Our main challenge is not the problems themselves but our damaged capacity to deal with them. The gospel of Jesus and the ministry of the Holy Spirit are the avenues in which this fouled up machine can get its needed tune up. Once tuned up, we can achieve the overcoming faith that Jesus promised in John 16:33. “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”

In summary, I want to make a few more points in this introduction. Even though I am a professional counselor with 35+ years experience, my hope is that, with the help of the Holy Spirit, the average Christian will be able to understand this material. “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God.” (I Corinthians 2:12) I am not a professional writer, and I present this book with much humility. The material is magnificent because it is the word of God, but I am a very limited instrument. I pray that my limitations do not hinder you from receiving this very needed revelation. Throughout the book, I refer to personal restoration projects such as my first car, the rehabilitation of our rescued dog, my personal life restoration and examples from my professional career. As you move into reading the book, I hope that you get in touch with your own restoration experiences, because this mindset will help you to be open to see yourself and others from God’s viewpoint as the Master Restorer.