The making of an evangelist

Jarrott, Reginald Edward

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This chapter deals with counselling techniques in the follow-up of those making a decision for Christ.

You see in these days the word 'counselling' can have different meanings for different people, and not necessarily have any real connection with what this chapter is all about.

This chapter is simply advice given to the newly-born Christian to help that person grow strong in the Lord. Besides showing how to deal with the new converts or inquirers, the chapter will also touch on how to keep adults, children and special types of enquiries.

There have been many types of help given across the years. I will set out for the reader a method used by the late evangelist J.C. (Jock) Sloan, who was a great evangelist in his day. He was a personal friend of mine and gave me permission to use his 'Helps for young converts' in any way I cared to.

His outline was meant to be stuck in the front of a believer's Bible, to be a reminder to the believer of his obligations to God, and to be a handy weapon in personal work.

The 'helps' cover five areas:

1. How do I know I am saved?
2. Can I keep myself saved?
3. Must I confess Christ as my Saviour?
4. How can I get daily cleansing.
5. What are the secrets of a happy Christian life?

How do I know I am saved?

God says so, and I believe it. Where? In the following and many other Scriptures:


Can I keep myself saved?

No! But God can keep you. How do I know? God says so and I believe — and that settles it.

2 Timothy 1:12; 1 Peter 1:5; Jude 24; Philippians 1:6; John 10:28; Psalm 37:24; Micah 7:8.

It is my part to do the trusting. His to do the keeping.

Must I confess Christ as my Saviour?

Yes. Why? The consequences of neglecting to confess Christ — Matthew 10:33; Mark 8:38.
The reward for open confession - Matthew 10:32;  Romans 10:9-10;  Mark 7:24;  Mark 5:30-34.


Remember! Where one person reads the Bible, 99 read you and judge Christianity by what they see in your life. Be out and out for Christ, labour for God and live for eternity.

How can I get daily cleansing?


What are the secrets of a happy Christian life?

Keep short accounts with God. Confess sins at once, do not leave them till they grow mountains high. Confess Christ openly as your Saviour. Surrender to Him as your Lord and Master. Seek first the Kingdom of God in every part of your daily life. Constantly strive to bring others to Him. Feed on the Word of God and follow-out Philippians 4:6-7 (R.V.).

(Excerpts taken from 'My Decision to Counsel', a training course by Rev. R.E. Jarrott. Used by permission of Reg Jarrott Evangelistic Association.)

When we decide to do the work of a counsellor, it can be a task which is wide enough to embrace many situations, or confined more to the area of soul needs. It is to this latter area that these studies limit themselves. After commitment to Christ has been made by the inquirer, most of the stabilising work is done in the counselling room with the post-natal care studies.

The areas we will seek to cover are as follows:

Introduction

1. What do we mean by counselling?
2. The importance of counselling.
3. Attitudes towards counselling.
4. The counsellor's dress and manner.
5. The counsellor's method.
6. Children's counselling.
7. Special areas of counselling.
8. The advisor's and counsellor's role.
9. The counselling materials (and the decision card).
10. The invitation and the enquiry room.
11. The follow-up procedures.
12. You can be a counsellor.

The great commission, as found in Matthew 28:18-20, divides naturally into two parts:

Evangelism - 'Go making disciples, baptising them'.
Follow-up - 'Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you'.
This is the pattern and command given from the one to whom all authority has been given in heaven and on earth.

1. What do we mean by counselling?

In these studies we are talking about the establishing of:

(a) The new convert (or inquirer).
(b) Those who need assurance of their salvation.
(c) Those who need to rededicate their lives, or who have failed.
(d) Those who desire a deeper allegiance or fuller consecration.
(e) Those who desire to serve in a full-time capacity.
(f) Those with problems or other needs.

Counsellors can be a great help by sharing what they know, and praying for and with the person being counselled, so that their needs will be met. All this involves a trust in the Lord to work through the counsellor, and to seek prayerfully and trustingly His guidance. In James 1:5-7 we read, 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given unto him. But let him ask in faith without any doubting ... for let not that man (the doubter) expect that he will receive anything from the Lord'.

2. The Importance of Counselling

As has been pointed out, most of the real work of establishing the new convert is done in the counselling room.

Today in the world the terrible malady, called spiritual and biblical illiteracy, affects people from all walks of life. Even people who have great ability in the secular world have been known to be just like children when it comes to the understanding of God's Word. In the New Testament too, Nicodemus, the Doctor of Laws, when speaking with Christ, showed his great ignorance of the 'new birth' and real spiritual things (see John 3:1-17).

Counselling should be taken seriously, and counsellors equipped so thoroughly that people are helped to maturity. Because we deal with a soul's future this is essential. Carelessness here could have disastrous and far reaching effects but God can guide us and help us guard against these things.

3. Attitudes towards counselling

Because there are various views held when it comes to counselling, it becomes important that counsellors should be chosen carefully.

(a) Some people feel unworthy or unable. However, God has promised wisdom and understanding, and the Saviour has said that He would 'make us to become fishers of men'.

(b) Some feel they need to prepare. Actually, counsellor training is really Bible study along special lines, with a special purpose in view. Second Timothy 2:15 has a great bearing on this. 'Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth'.

(c) Some have wrong motives. They counsel because it gives them a sense of importance. Others are over-confident and forget that 'apart from Christ we can do nothing' (John 15:5).

Ó 3. The counsellor's dress and manner

The counsellor is often the inquirer's first contact at close quarters, therefore it is most important that the first contact should be very pleasant and memorable. The old saying, 'First impressions are lasting impressions', can be quite true in this case too.

It is essential that personal cleanliness and appearance be a priority. Bad breath can be overcome by sucking a peppermint a little before counselling. Personal freshness is essential too.

The manner of approaching the person needing help is very important. The Bible says that a Christian should 'be courteous', 'kind hearted', 'humble in spirit', 'sympathetic' (compare 1 Peter 3:8), and of course it goes without saying that all things told in confidence should be kept that way. Sometimes we may have to listen without comment at all.

Ó 4. The counsellor's method (adults)

The counsellor can best remember some things about leading a person to Christ by noting the six steps as outlined below. For convenience, each step commences with the letter 'D'.

(a) Determine to win (the lost friend to Christ).
(b) Diagnose the case.
(c) Direct to the Scriptures.
(d) Decipher (rightly divide) the Scriptures.
(e) Decision for Christ.
(f) Discipleship (including Bible reading, prayer, witnessing, service, etc.).

Let us examine each of these six steps.

• (a) Determine to win

We need to have an aim. Remember our purpose is to truly win. There is a need to be courteous at all times. Love should be the driving force. Tact must moderate our zeal. Our life must be right, since to try and lead others to do what we are not doing is hypocritical.

Seek the Holy Spirit's guidance. He will unerringly direct you and help you. Depend upon Him to help you 'fish' and to teach you how to 'catch men' to use a scriptural phrase.

• (b) Diagnose the case

Find the need before applying the cure. This is not only basic but urgent. Sometimes counsellors 'treat' people without determining the person's need. They assume instead of being sure. So be careful to secure the right diagnosis.

Never take anything for granted. Watch for 'nominal Christians'. You may have to go back from scratch, although they have made a decision.
If the person is vague, ask questions along the following lines:

(i) Have you ever made a decision for Christ before?
(ii) Was it real? did it satisfy your heart's longing?
(iii) If the answer comes that a decision was made, was real and satisfying but no longer is, then ask 'What has happened? Is there known sin in your life? Have you neglected to read the Bible and pray regularly? Are you witnessing and serving the Lord and His church?'.
(iv) Could it be that God is calling you to deeper allegiance or fuller consecration?
(v) Is your call to 'full-time' service?
(vi) Are there other reasons perhaps that God is speaking to you?

Having made a satisfactory and accurate diagnosis, begin to apply the correct cure.

•(c) Direct to the Scriptures.

This is most important. Much counselling fails because this is neglected. How often have you heard the reply when a person is asked how he knows he is a Christian: 'Because I feel it'. This may be true or it may not. The Bible does not necessarily say that we will feel anything. Surely there will be some people who feel themselves to be saved when they are lost. One friend of mine, used greatly of the Lord in soul-winning, was fond of saying, 'How do I know I'm saved? God's Word says so and I believe it!'. In fact, 'That settles it'. And well we may trust His Word, for it is the word of our God who cannot lie. Mark your Bible, make your own chain reference.

So, after discussing the case, direct to the Scriptures for 'the word of God is sharper than a two-edged sword' and much more important than men's words.

“Diagnosis A”

If this is a first time decision, point out the need for being saved (Romans 3:23). Jesus died for the seeker (Isaiah 53:6 and John 3:16,17). We must repent of sin (Acts 17:30,31 and Isaiah 55:6,7) and accept Jesus Christ by faith (Revelation 3:20, 1 John 5:11-13 and John 1:11-13), then commit our life to Him as Saviour and Lord (Romans 10:9). (Remember 'God's Word says so and I believe it! That settles it'.)

There will always be some doubts arising with those making first-time decisions. Reassure them with answers similar to these:

'I don't feel saved' - Remind them it is faith in God's Word, not feeling.

'I have sinned too deeply' - Jesus says, 'All manner of sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven (1 Timothy 1:15; Luke 19:10; Isaiah 1:18).

'I'm afraid to come to the Lord' - Jesus said, 'Whosoever cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out' (John 6:37).

'I'm good enough' (Romans 3:19-23).
'I work for the church' - Salvation is the free gift of God and cannot be earned (John 3:16; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8,9; Romans 9:16; Titus 3:5; John 1:12,13).

'I'm not ready' - (2 Corinthians 6:2; Ecclesiastes 12:1; Luke 12:19,20; Proverbs 29:1).

'You can't be sure of salvation' - (2 Timothy 1:12; 1 John 5:10–13; John 3:17–21).

'I have too much that I would have to give up' - (Philippians 3:6–9; Matthew 10:38–39; 2 Corinthians 8:9; James 4:4).

The above passages should be marked in your Bible. Make out your own chain reference system under each heading.

Ú Û”Diagnosis B•

Unsatisfying decision - not sure of salvation. Much the same as for Diagnosis A. Go through the same steps and keep stressing 'God's Word says I'm saved and I'll believe it'. Remind them God cannot lie and therefore what He says can be believed.

Treat this as though the person had never been really converted. (Watch in this area for those who are 'nominal' Christians and who think they are Christians).

Ú Û”Diagnosis C•

The person who once had a satisfying experience, but now has lost the joy of the Lord and has no power to live the victorious life. Psalm 51 describes a similar case with David. Perhaps lead them through this Psalm as a prayer verse by verse. 1 John 1:7–9 tells us we need to come back to the place from which we fell (1 John 2:1 gives us an aim).

This person may need to put something right with others (consider the story of Zacchaeus in Luke 19:8–10). when we confess He forgives us. He has promised He would and He never lies. Forsake sin and yield all to God and He will fill all (Ephesians 5:18. See also Psalm 32:3–5).

Christ is able to give power to overcome (Philippians 2:12,13; Galatians 2:20; John 8:36). He is able to keep you from falling (Jude 24).

Ú Û”Diagnosis D•

Deeper allegiance and fuller consecration. God's calling is God's enabling (Philippians 4:13) and He is our helper (Hebrews 13:5–8). Remember that in the true believer's heart dwells the Living Christ. He is our life, our strength, our guide and our Redeemer. No one will be able to do a worthy work in further fields until useful and faithful here. Trust Him to set you wholly apart, an act that necessitates complete and full surrender. (Some other interesting and helpful passages to mark in the bible - Romans 8:26; Romans 8:31,32; Romans 8:35–39; 2 Corinthians 9:8; Romans 12:1–2).

Ú Û”Diagnosis E•
Full-time Christian service. 'The fields are white unto harvest but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest ...'. So pray, seek guidance from God's Word. He never speaks to hearts contrary to His Word. Consider qualifications: spiritual, physical, mental, emotional, etc. Watch for open doors. Do the job at hand whilst waiting on God. Keep praying. Consider each obstacle(?) in the light of Scriptures and prayer. Ask God to settle your heart before Him.


\[\text{"Diagnosis F•}\]

Some other reason or need. Try to discover what it is. If unsuccessful, ask a more experienced counsellor to help. Remember no one can be helped unless the diagnosis is correct. Do not exercise yourself in matters too great; but on the other hand, do not dodge a fairly difficult problem as this will help you to develop too.

Remember, the Lord is our helper. Always seek His guidance.

•(d) Decipher (rightly divide) the Scriptures.

To help others we need to understand our 'tools'. Study the Scriptures with a concordance or marginal reference Bible. Then, having understood basic outlines, teach others. Unravel their misunderstandings (2 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Timothy 2:15).

Listen carefully - they may really be making a decision for something else.

\[\text{"Decision for Christ•}\]

Make sure that the decision is for Christ. This may be unnecessary, but it isn't. Some people are 'converted' to all kinds of things, or persons - a church, a society, a group, a girlfriend or a boyfriend, the minister, etc. In other words, they do this because it is the right thing to do they think. Make sure they clearly understand that all commitments are to Jesus Christ.

\[\text{"Discipleship•}\]

This must be a daily walk. The word discipleship and the word discipline are related. A disciple's life is a disciplined life (this needs to be stressed these days). Discipline involves daily reading of the Bible, daily prayer, daily walking in fellowship with God and with man, and daily witnessed by life and word of mouth. In short, it is a daily living for the Lord Jesus and His church.

\[\text{"Some vital points in counselling}\]

If the ask is too difficult to handle then call someone more experienced ... but first of all:

1. Ask the Saviour to make you a 'fisher of men' ... He has said 'I will make you become fishers of men'.

\[\text{\(\square\)}\]
2. Depend on the Spirit of God to guide you 'into all truth' and this includes counselling too.

3. Remember when counselling - after having found out why they responded, and what is their area of need, then tell them it is impossible for God to lie to us and this is what He says in His Word. It is vital to make sure that they have the assurance of salvation, forgiveness, peace or whatever.

4. Keep praying as you go and make sure they understand how to use the counselling material. Keep in touch with them.

Ú Ø“Suggested reading •

Ú Ø“Sixty-Five Questions on Soul Winning • (Moody Series)
Ú Ø“How to Follow up with New Christians • (Moody Series)
Ú Ø“Helps on Soul Winning • (Moody Series)
Ú Ø“Handbook on Children's Evangelism • (Moody Series)
Ú Ø“The Art of Fishing for Men • (Moody Series)
Ú Ø“You can win Souls • (C.C. Autrey)
Ú Ø“Here's how to win Souls • (Gene Edwards)

If these are not available, the Christian bookstores will have similar books. Just ask for themes similar to the above.

Ú Ø“The counsellor's method (children up to 13 years) •

Counselling children is not the work of anybody and everybody, but needs special care and special attention. We must be careful with children.

1. Remember that you are counselling children.

2. Assess their age potential. That is, his 'age' of understanding (a 10 year old may have the mind of an eight year old and an eight year old may have the mind of a 10 year old).

   (a) Ask their age.
   (b) See what category they fall into (five to six years old or seven to eight years old need a far simpler approach than 12-13 year olds. The R.J.E.A. counselling is designed to reach various age groups).

   (i) Note that they have a limited vocabulary.
   (ii) Note they have a limited knowledge and ideas.
   (iii) Note that they must have things repeated again and again.
   (iv) Note they have a tendency to answer 'yes' because they are afraid or desire to please.

Use simple words and short sentences and every-day ideas that a child can understand.

For example, if you said to a class of six year olds that 'The automobile was travelling at an extremely accelerated rate of speed', he will be pardoned for misunderstanding. He would rather you say, 'The car was going very fast' or that it was 'Going like the wind'.

3. Ask why they came (diagnose their need).
(a) Have you ever given your heart to Jesus? If the answer is 'yes' -
(b) Did you know He came into your heart? If the answer is 'yes' -
(c) Have you ever done something wrong and Jesus is sad? Have you stopped reading God's Word, the Bible? Have you stopped praying (talking to Jesus). Have you tried to tell someone about Jesus lately? (d) If an older child - could be interested in baptism or in rededicating his/her life.
(e) If a child says he wants to be a missionary or a minister, just tell him he needs to wait until he grows older to apply and meantime to read about missionaries, study hard at school, pray for missionaries, give to missionary work and try to win other boys and girls to Christ, for nobody can be a missionary overseas who is not a missionary at home.
(f) If there is another reason, perhaps a fear, or a Bible problem or some real difficulty and it is beyond your help, treat the matter seriously, get a more mature, kindly, tactful, childrens' counsellor.

4. Tell them the Bible is God's Word and God cannot lie, so they can believe every word with all their heart.

Start something like this:

Q: Do you think that Jesus ever tells a lie?
A: No.
Q: If you know someone who always tells the truth you would believe him wouldn't you?
A: Yes.

Listen to what He says (see Revelation 3:20). 'Behold (or look or listen) I stand at the door (of your heart, of your life) and knock and if any man (anybody) hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and sup with him and he with Me'.

Now Jesus says, 'If you open the door of your life and ask Him in, He will come in!'

(i) Now you open the door by praying and asking Him into your life.
(ii) You must be willing to let Him make you good.
(iii) You must ask Him to forgive you for any wrong you have done and He will.
(iv) If you open the door and ask Him to come in, He will come in because He says so!
(v) Now you have opened the door, did He come in?
(vi) Did you ask Him in? Did He come in? (They usually say 'yes' and you can ask why? Many often say 'because He said He would'.

Then...

I would like to show you two more texts.

1 John 5:11-13: 'this is the record [God's Word] written to tell us that we have eternal life'.

'He that hath the Son hath life ...'.

'Have you the Son [Jesus]? - Yes!'
What kind of life? - Eternal life! Isn't that what you want? Life that never ends?

If they are not sure whether they have the Son, say, 'You have asked Him into your life, didn't you? He came, so He is there, isn't He?'.

Ú Ú"Now another text:•

John 1:12: 'To as many as received Him' - You received Him (Jesus) didn't you?

A: Yes! 'To those who receive Him He gave a right to become a son or daughter of God. If God is your Father and He is a King, what does that make you?
Boy's Answer: A prince.
Girl's Answer: A princess.

Isn't that wonderful? Shouldn't you go and live like a good prince or princess? You must try not to do wrong things, but if you do, ask Jesus to forgive you, and ask Him to help you not to do it again. He wants to help you.

Ú Ú"Note!•œ For the rest of counselling, use the text for adult sections under the Diagnosis, but always remember the age, thoughts and ideas of the children.

It is absolutely essential to be loving, kind, patient and careful to see the child really understands.

Always ask God to guide you and bless you as you counsel, for from converted children have come some of the great saints of the centuries.

Ú Ú"7. Special areas of counselling•œ

When we come across cases which can be involved, such as alcoholism, drug addiction, Satan worship, the occult, intellectual difficulties of some depth, nerve problem cases, etc., we may need help.

For those not experienced in counselling, the Bible has something which should help. Psalm 131:1 reminds us no 'to exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me'.

This problem brings us to your next section:

Ú Ú"8. The advisor's and the counsellor's notes.•œ

In the difficult cases mentioned, it may become necessary to turn to some very experienced Christian counsellors who are able to cope with special areas of counselling. These are called advisors. They can be specially trained people such as the evangelist, pastor, doctors, social workers, university lecturers, etc. or Christian who have had wide experience in many types of counselling. There needs to be someone standing by ready to help.

•Duties of an advisorœ

(a) The chief advisor should see that enquiry rooms and literature tables are prepared before each meeting.
Are there adequate stocks available with chairs arranged in pairs and materials set out on one of the two chairs?

The advisors should be in the counselling room in case needed for special counselling or in case some more materials are needed.

After the counsellor has concluded, he or she should bring the counselled person and introduce the person to an advisor who will then check on the counselling to make sure that all is clear to the inquirer.

(b) Advisors should at all time co-operate with the pastor and chief advisor.

(c) All butts of decision cards should be handed to the advisor or the pastor. These should have been filled in with necessary details.

9. The counselling materials and the decision cards.

It is important to become very familiar with the materials because the counsellor is actually the teacher of the materials.

Both the materials and the decision cards should be read and re-read to achieve a working knowledge of them. This takes time but it can pay a rich reward in souls.

When you are counselling the person, get them started in the materials so that they can go on with the studies themselves. (The counsellor will need to study the counselling materials right through in order to help in this way).

10. The invitation and the enquiry room.

What happens here is the start of all we have studied previously.

When the invitation is given by the evangelist, listen carefully to what he guides the counsellors to do.

Whatever type of invitation is given, the evangelist will ask for counsellors, and the pastor or chief advisor or counselling chairman will arrange for the counsellors required for counselling.

Usually these are paired off with someone of approximately the same age and sex. This, of course, depends on the number needed, but where possible it should be done.

The counsellor will go with the inquirer to the enquiry room and will go to the chairs set out, and use the material set out ready for them.

(a) The follow-up procedures.

When a baby is born into a family that is when it needs much care. The first few hours and days are vital and care should be taken by the counsellor to keep in contact - within 24-hours and after that from time to time.

Follow-up involves:
Feedingœ (Jeremiah 3:15) - 'Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you in knowledge and understanding'.

Protectingœ (1 Peter 5:8) - 'Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the Devil, prowls about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour'.

Trainingœ (Colossians 2:6-7) - 'As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude'.

Have a plan for follow-upœ

Pray for them. Be a 'big brother' or 'big sister' to them. Remember, personal help should be given. This should be both immediate and continuing. Seek to involve new Christians in fellowship and those who have rededicated in some service. Seek to encourage them to join into the church fellowship.

Don't forget in helping themœ

1. Tell them why.
2. Show them how.
3. Get them started.
4. Keep them at it.

'Finally, it is important to point out to them their responsibilities as a Christian - morally, socially and in a Christian witness.

Besides the counsellor follow-up the church should follow-up too. The card handed to the pastor and the information on it will decide the course of action.

12. You can be a counsellorœ

After all this you may feel that you couldn't possibly do the job adequately. However, remember that the Apostle Paul felt that way. He said in 2 Corinthians 2:16, '... and who is sufficient for these things' and then in 2 Corinthians 3:5 he answered, '... our sufficiency is of God'.

Every experienced counsellor had to make a start. Every preacher of the Gospel was a 'raw recruit' once.

If God is calling you He will enable you. Be willing to obey His call, and then ask Him to work through you as you set about the task in dead earnest, with perseverance and dedication.

May God bless you and give you the great joy of shepherding others.

Remember what Hudson Taylor said, 'I base my life and life's work upon three facts, namely that:

1. There is a living God.
2. He has spoken in the Bible.
3. He means what He says and will do what He promised.'.
*Please don't forget*: While techniques are good and useful, we must always remember it is God who gives the increase when the seed of His Word is sown, and watered with prayer.