



Homework in the Counseling Process

Why assign homework?

- 1) Extends the counseling session.
- 2) Allows the real counselor to do work in the counselee's heart.
- 3) Speeds up the process of restoration and recovery.
- 4) Leads to good habits for Christian living. (promotes Independence vs Dependence)
 - 1) Bible reading
 - 2) Bible Meditation
 - 3) Prayer
 - 4) Service
- 5) Allows the counselor to gauge progress and motivation.
- 6) Allows the counselor to discover real issues vs presenting problems.

Examples of homework

- 1) Bible reading first and foremost.
- 2) Scripture memorization.
- 3) Praying for issue or people.
- 4) Service to others.
- 5) Other books specific to nature of sin or issue.
- 6) Journaling. Anger log, temptation log.
- 7) Inspirational stories that mirror counselee's story. (I am second)
- 8) Write a letter to spouse asking for forgiveness.
- 9) Meet together once a week for conference time with your spouse.
- 10) ECT.

Homework qualities

- 1) Specific, not abstract. (Ex. To love your wife more vs take out the garbage, pick up your clothes, take your wife on a date, kiss your wife hello, compliment your wife 3 times a day, buy your wife a bouquet of her favorite flowers, etc..)
- 2) Must be able to be accomplished by the counselee. Not too much at one time.
- 3) Always lead them back to the gospel and obedience to God.

Review of homework at the start of the next session.

- 1) Shows the counselee that you value the time they spent on homework.
- 2) Shows if you have a counselee. (Professional Counselee)
- 3) Shows the counselee level of understanding of their issues.
- 4) Allows you to see how the Holy Spirit is working in their life. Gives insight.
- 5) Opens the door for further exploration of topics.

Summary: *"Homework, then, is of the essence of good counseling. The counselor who perfects his ability to give good homework soon will see the difference in his effectiveness in helping people. Learning how to give good homework, homework that is biblical, homework that is concrete, and homework that creatively fits the situation, takes time and effort, but is worth both."* **Jay Adams, "The Christian Counselor's Manual" (pg. 343)**

Exercise

Case study

Tom and Sue are seeking counsel with you. They have been married for 15 years and have had a rocky relationship to say the least. They both attend Church on a regular basis and occasionally are involved in other Church related activities. Both tell you that they are Christians. Sue complains that Tom never talks to her about important issues. Tom appears beaten down and rarely looks you in the eyes as he speaks. Sue complains that Tom only wants to lay on the couch and watch TV. He appears depressed to her. They fight constantly about money issues and Tom is constantly going behind Sue's back to buy things that they cannot afford. Sue has lost trust in Tom and his leadership. She is very opinionated about this and tells you during a counseling session directly that he is a poor leader and a husband and doesn't know if she can stay married to him. Sue reports to you that she has caught Tom viewing pornography and suspects him of having an affair.

What are some of the presenting issues?

What type of homework might you prescribe to this couple?