

Adding Cure to Care: A Biblical Counseling Tool for Chaplains

Presenter: Chaplain John Woodward

Introduction

As Christian chaplains we represent Jesus to those in need. The manner and extent of biblically-informed spiritual care depends on the needs and receptivity of those to whom we minister. In our chaplaincy role we don't judge, push, indoctrinate, or impose our beliefs.

For example, we can share the gospel when a person expresses their need of salvation and are receptive to the good news. But this sharing should be done in a winsome, sensitive way.¹

There are cases where we act as "spiritual paramedics," supporting and guiding those in need of hope, wisdom, comfort, and solutions.

When necessary, we refer persons with chronic problems to qualified helpers such as pastoral counselors, professional therapists, or psychiatrists.

However, there is a large spectrum of persons struggling with mental, emotional, behavioral, and relational problems who are not candidates for professional counseling but could benefit from some basic counseling by chaplains.²

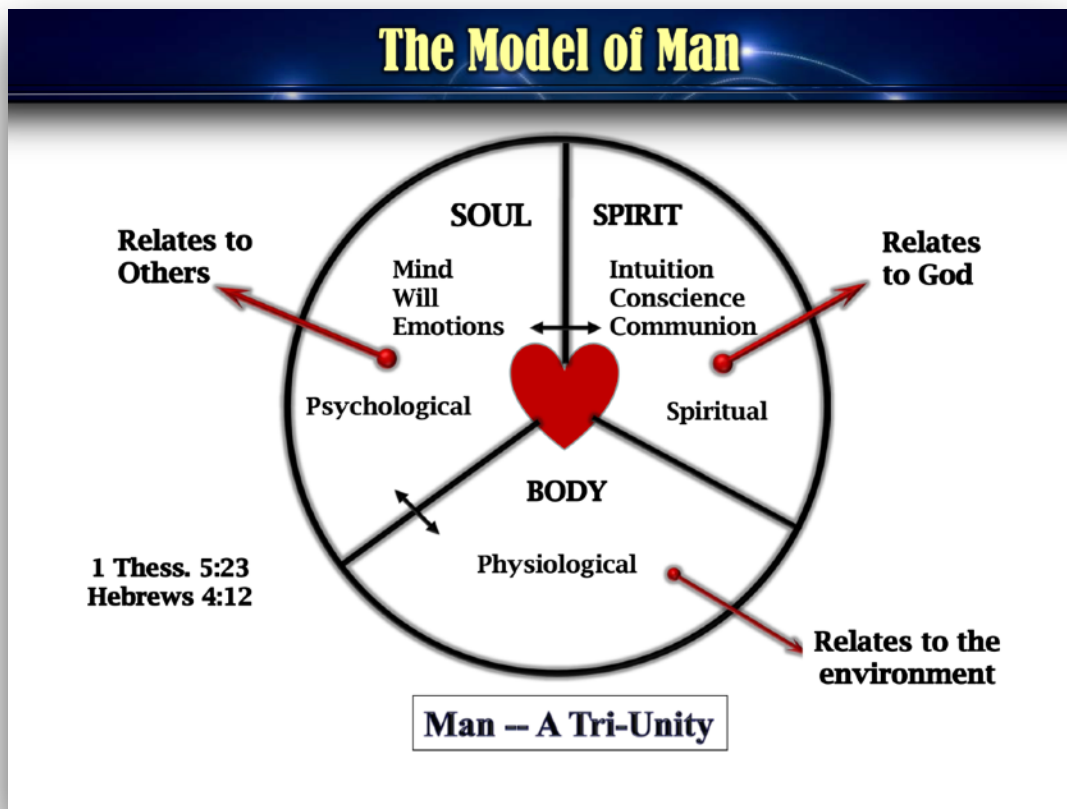
Ministering to this population can enlarge the scope of assistance that Christian chaplains can offer: adding potential "cure" to demonstrated "care" (Luke 4:18; Isaiah 61:1).

This breakout session explains Dr. Charles Solomon's "Wheel Diagram" — a practical tool for basic Christian Counseling that is:

- Biblically based
- psychologically informed
- Christ centered
- grace oriented
- heart focused

The Wheel Diagram: A Discipleship Counseling Tool ³

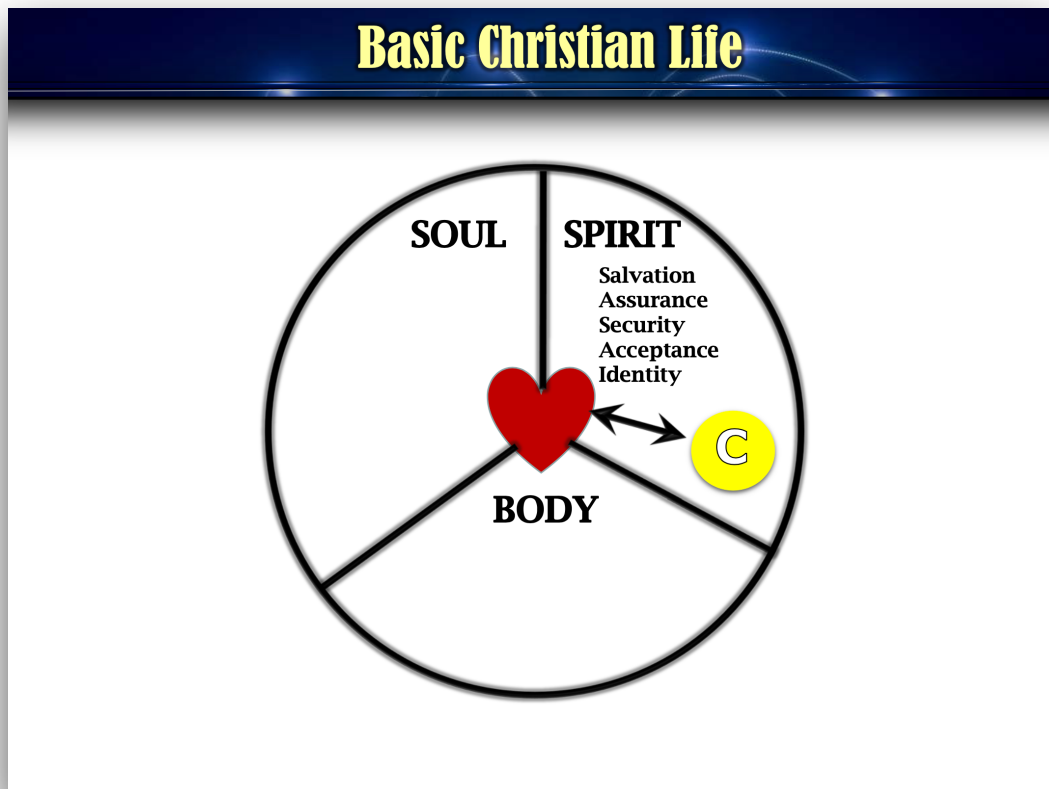
The Wheel Diagram depicts man as a three-part being consisting of spirit, soul and body (1 Thess. 5:23). With the body, through the senses, we relate to our material surroundings. The soul (the seat of personality) consists of the functions of the mind, will, and emotions. The soul enables us to relate to one another. The human spirit has the faculties of intuition (the ability to perceive spiritual realities), conscience (awareness of morality), and communion (the need for a personal relationship with God, who is Spirit - John 4:24).



Our spirit is either related to Adam (in Satan's family) or to Christ (in God's family). We are born into the world as descendants of Adam and partakers of his fallen nature. That means that our spirits initially are dead to God (Eph. 2:1-3; John 8:44). In salvation the spirit is regenerated through the new birth (John 3:3; Titus 3:5,6).

In this diagram the heart represents the seat of our reflection, motivations, and affections. An essential heart issue is, What is a person's functional source of life?

The Basic Christian Life



Note five blessings that the believer experiences when he/she is born again.

1. *Salvation*. When a person repents and receives Christ Jesus as personal Lord and Savior they are saved from hell and given the gift of eternal life. Through Christ's finished work on the Cross and His resurrection, the believer is totally pardoned and transferred into God's kingdom (John 1:12; Col. 1:13,14).

2. *Assurance*. Since salvation is by grace through faith, children of God can be assured of salvation. We can know that we have eternal life (John 5:24; 1 John 5:13). Although feelings may vary, God's promises are trustworthy.

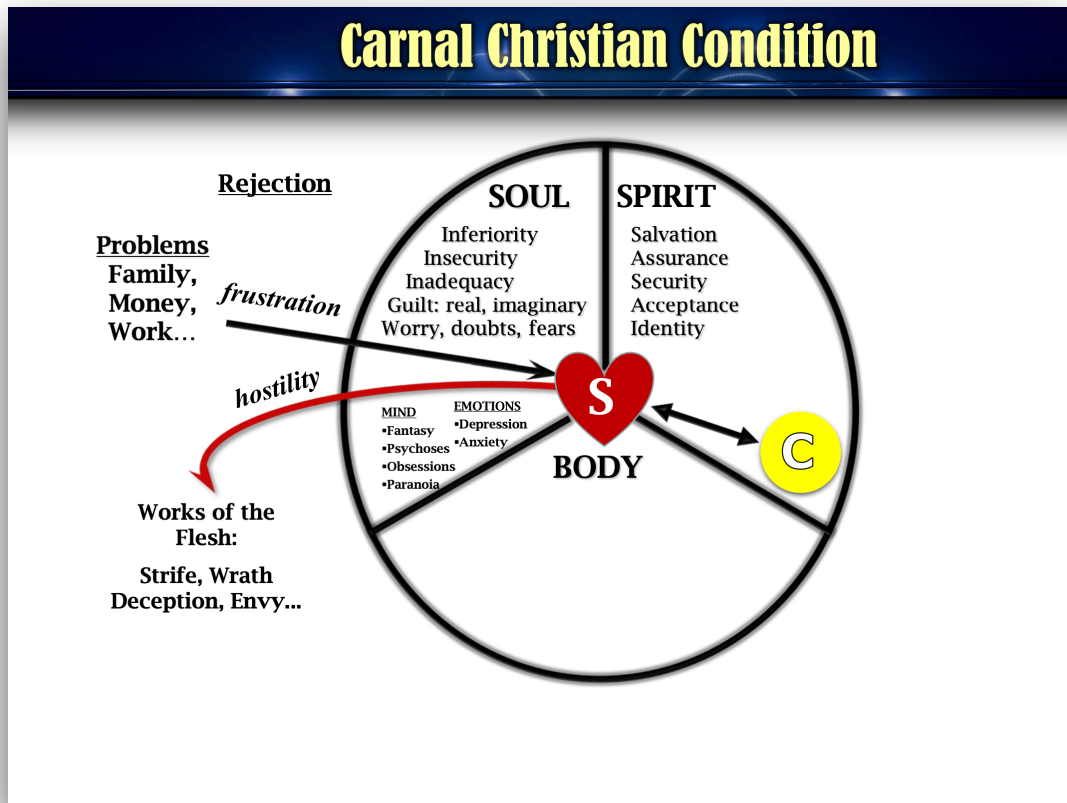
3. *Security*. The born again believer can also have security in Christ. This relates to the future. The Lord will never leave us or forsake us (Heb. 13:5). We are sealed by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13).

4. *Acceptance*. When a person is saved he/she is welcomed into God's family (1 John 3:1-3). We are accepted in the Beloved (Eph. 1:6).

5. *Identity*. Through regeneration the believer becomes a new creation. In the spirit, old things have passed away and all things have become new (2 Cor. 5:17). Our identity is not based on what others have said, or our own opinion.

Rather, our essential identity is based on what God has declared about us since we are "in Christ."

Carnal Christian Condition: Psychological Symptoms



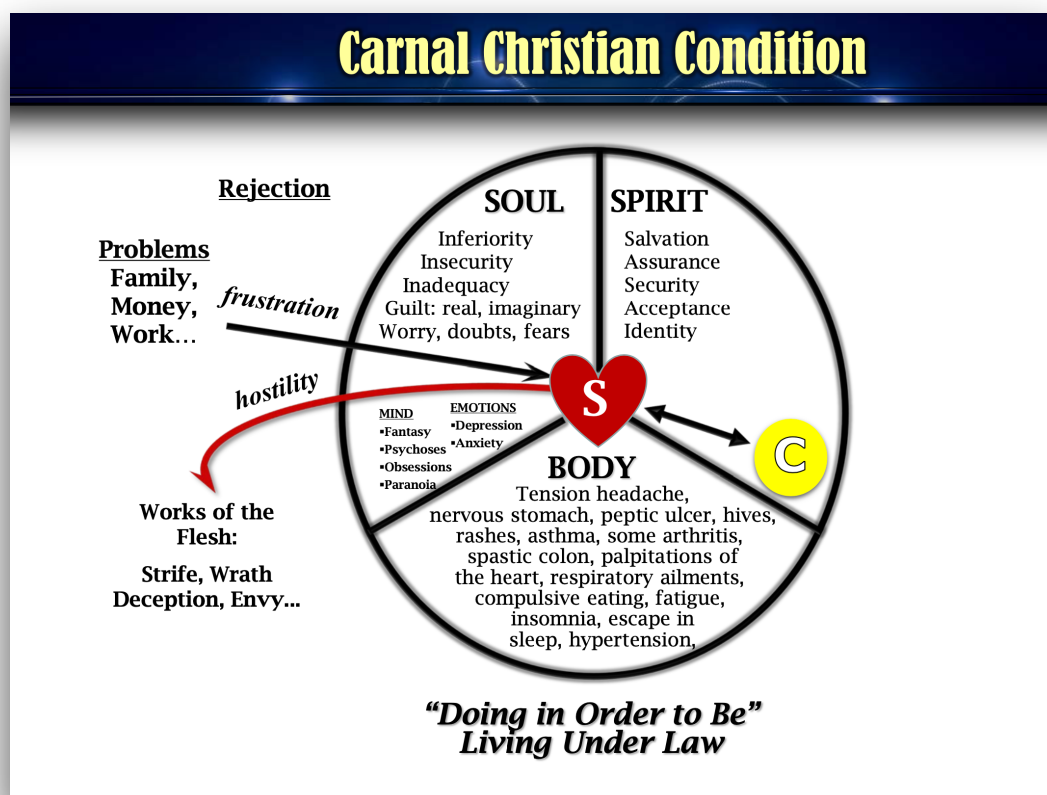
The apostle Paul identifies believers who are not living according to their new identity in Christ as "fleshly" or "carnal" (1 Cor. 3:1-4). We lapse into a carnal condition whenever we "walk after the flesh," depending on ourself to live life with the attempt to be in control (Gal. 5:16,17; James 4:1). This diagram illustrates common symptoms in the soul (whether the person is saved or unsaved).

We can be new in our human spirit, yet miserable in our soul simultaneously.

Note common psychological symptoms that occur due to rejection and other disappointments of life in this fallen world. *Inferiority* is the feeling that I don't measure up. *Insecurity* is the feeling that I am unsafe. *Inadequacy* is the feeling that I am unable to be successful. When I try to get my needs met independently of God I sin, which violates my conscience and registers emotionally as *guilt*. Real guilt is for sins of commission or omission. Sometimes there may be false guilt (feeling guilty even though I'm not).

In addition to baggage from the past, we have pressures and problems in the present. Family conflicts, financial stress, difficulties at work, major loss, and other circumstantial problems cause *frustration*. "S" in the center represents fleshly *Self*. Our independent ego gets frustrated when things don't go our way. This typically results in hostility which can be vented externally or stuffed internally. Suppressed frustration causes secondary emotional and mental problems. *Depression* and *anxiety* worsen and the mind looks for a way of escape through *fantasy*. Mental confusion can escalate into *psychosis* (a break from reality), *obsessive thoughts* and *paranoia* (irrational fears).

Carnal Christian Condition: Physical Symptoms

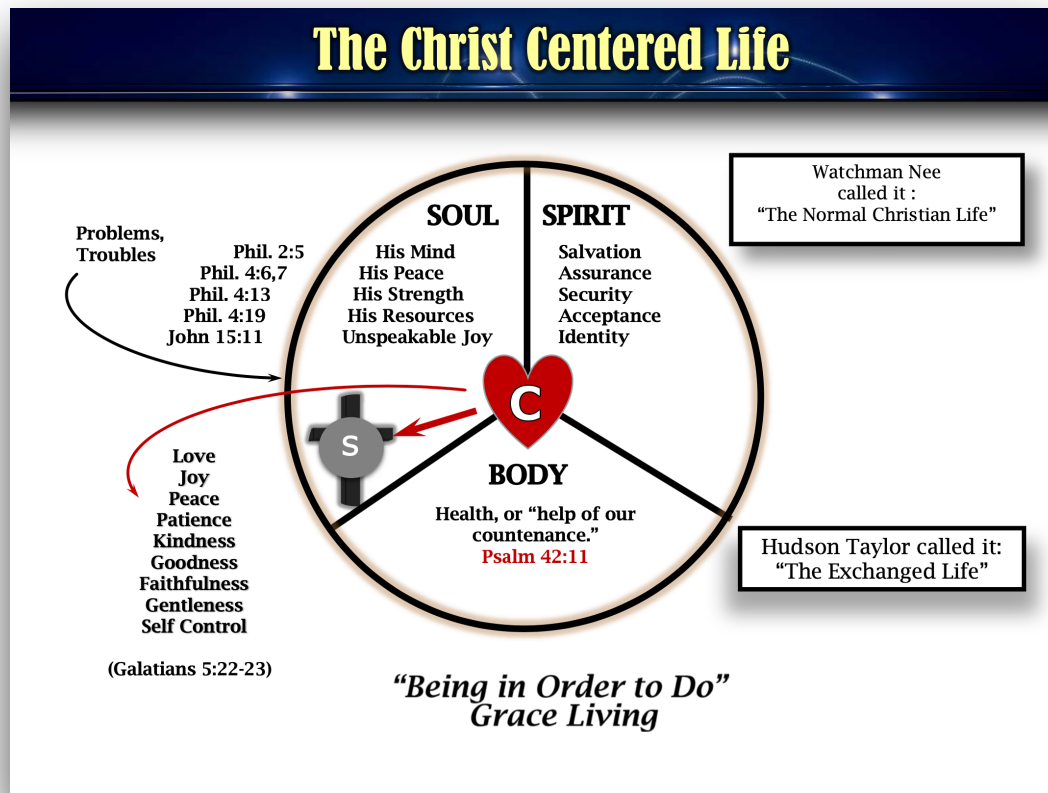


The medical community confirms a person's mental and emotional condition has a major influence on one's physical condition. The more conflicts one has in the soul area, the more likely this turmoil will cause stress-related health problems. This does not mean that all illness is caused by spiritual and psychological conflicts, but these soul problems are usually significant factors in physical health problems.

Note that the core issue is not the soul, circumstances, or physical issues but that fleshly *Self* is in the center (Gal. 3:3). This person is living (intentionally or unintentionally) with flesh as his/her functional source of life. This person is

not unsaved (the natural person, 1 Cor. 2:14), nor functioning as a spiritual Christian (1 Cor. 2:15), but reacting in carnal manner (1 Cor. 3:1-4).

The Christ-Centered Life



This diagram illustrates the importance of the Christ Centered condition. This believer has recognized his/her carnal condition, repented, surrendered to God, and claimed by faith their identification with Christ (Rom. 6:3-14; 12:1,2). The Holy Spirit then "restores the soul" —suddenly or gradually—as the mind is renewed with truth, the will remains yielded, and the emotions calm down in response to a new source of life. This abiding life is not sinless perfection or a one-time breakthrough. Rather, it is a discovery, or return to, God's provision for abundant life in Christ (John 10:10).

Positive results of inner restoration include cultivating:

- The mind of Christ (instead of mental confusion)
- The peace of Christ (instead of emotional turmoil)
- The strength of Christ (instead of inadequacy)
- The resources of Christ (instead of self effort)
- The joy of Christ (instead of depression)

The "S" on the Cross represents appropriating the revelation of Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

The "C" in the center symbolizes the believer abiding in Christ, yielding to Him, and trusting in Him as one's source of living (John 15:4,5; Col. 3:1-4; Matt. 11:28-30). The Holy Spirit represents and manifests the life of Christ in the believer (Col. 1:27; 1 Cor. 6:19,20). "Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:17,18).

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your *souls*. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30).

"For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the *death* of His Son [redemption], much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved [self-centeredness] by His *life*" [transformation] (Rom. 5:10).

¹ Sample resources for con-frontational sharing of the gospel include Gospel of John booklets (www.ptl.org), Gideon New Testaments with plan of salvation and topical helps (www.friendsofgideons.org), and GodTools app.

² For example, The International Critical Incident Stress Foundation offers a course to equip helpers titled "Peer Paracounseling."

³ Adapted from *Handbook to Happiness* by Charles R. Solomon (Tyndale, 1971, 1999).

Biblical quotations: *The Holy Bible, New King James Version* © Thomas Nelson

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