

A Christ-Centered Approach to Helping Others

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Scope of this Presentation

The purpose of this presentation is to outline a number of specific and doable things that the Body of Believers can do to support and encourage others. This includes:

- Specific things to do AND not to do when trying to help someone who is struggling.
- Ways to help our church to become even friendlier and reach out to others more.

- Specific attitudes and actions that help and hinder relationships within the church.
- The goal is to help each other glorify God in this world by being Christ-like.

Theme Verses

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

--John 13:34-35

1. Recognize We Are Designed To Be Different from Each Other...

Romans 12:4-6 "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith."

I Corinthians 12:18 "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body."

2. We Are To Be Unified by Christ

- *Ephesians 4:3-6* "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."
- *Romans 15:6* "That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."
- *Philippians 1:27* "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."

3. Help Each Other Identify and Use Spiritual Gifts

- God has provided each Believer with spiritual gifts for the purpose of strengthening the Body of Believers and glorifying God. (1 Cor. 12:1-31; Eph. 4:7-13; Rom. 12:3-8)
- *Ephesians 4:7-8* "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men."
- *Ephesians 4:11-12* "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

Determining Your Spiritual Gifts

1. Read about spiritual gifts in the Bible
2. Take a spiritual gifts inventory (a helpful packet called “Identifying and Developing Your Spiritual Gifts” is available through ACCFS)
3. Talk with people who know you well and get their feedback
4. Use what you have been given. Practice it, develop it, and glorify God with it!

4. Dealing with Differences

- **Preferences** – Personal opinions and choices
- **House Rules** – Customs, rules, norms, and traditions set by members of a “House.”
- **Organizational Norms** – Guidelines, standards of conduct, and principles set out by businesses, social organizations, churches, etc.
- **Biblical Absolutes** – God’s moral law that is explicitly stated in Scripture. True for all people, all places, at all times.

When Differences Occur In...

- **Preferences:** Agree to disagree
- **House Rules:** Live according to your conscience before God *AND* respect that others may choose differently
- **Organizational Norms:** Respect authority and be submissive
- **Biblical Absolutes:** Don’t compromise

5. Refuse to be a “Respecter of Persons”

- Respect of persons is a sin.
 - **James 2:9** “*But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.*”
- God doesn’t “play favorites” with us.
- We are all of equal value in his eyes.
 - **Romans 2:11** “*For there is no respect of persons with God.*”

6. Be Sure to do Your Part

- Ask yourself, “What am I doing to make our church more friendly, warm, safe, caring, encouraging, and growth-producing?”
- “Am I being part of the solution or am I simply pointing out what I think isn’t working right?”
- Think of this quote: “Denouncing evil is a far cry from doing good.”
- Watch out for the tendency to point out what other people should be doing
 - **John 21:21-22** “*Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.*”

1 Thessalonians 5:14 “*Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.*”

1 Corinthians 12:26-27 “*And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*”

7. Being a Vessel: You are One Part of the Solution... Not the Solution

1 Corinthians 3:6-9 "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one; and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building."

8. Become Prevention Focused

■ *2 Corinthians 2:11* "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."

■ *Proverbs 27:12* "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished."

■ Most people think prevention is a great idea; however, very few actually act as if they believe it.

Brief List of Areas for Prevention

- Premarital counseling
- Taking care of your physical health
- Marriage enrichment
- Godly, healthy sex education
- Create a safe Internet use plan: Read Guidance on Internet Use to learn how
- Studying the Word to understand what you believe and why you believe it
- Budgeting and finances

9. Relationships: The #1 Tool

Think about when someone gives you:

1. Advice or direction
 2. Correction or admonishment
- What things make it harder or easier for you to take in what they said to you?
 - Having a solid relationship with someone "establishes your credibility" to speak to them.

Seek Out Key Relationships

1. Paul (Mentor) – An older and wiser Christian person who can give you advice, perspective, direction, and corrective feedback.
2. Barnabas (Accountability Partner) – A peer who is in the same life-stage as you. Good for support, encouragement, and accountability.
3. Timothy (Person that you Mentor) – Someone who is younger than you that you can help learn and grow.

10. We All Struggle

- Accept that everyone struggles at one time or another.... Even good Christians!
- Avoid the mindset that struggle is automatically a sign of a spiritual weakness.
- Avoid the extremes of:
 - (A) Denial
 - (B) Everything everywhere is bad and falling apart.

■ **1 Peter 5:8-9** “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.”

■ **2 Timothy 3:12** “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution .”

11. Balance Grace & Truth

- **Grace:** God’s unmerited love, favor, and strength
- **Truth:** God’s holiness, perfection, and righteousness
- Grace and Truth cannot be separated: A Biblical concept of God contains both without violating the other.
- Grace without Truth isn’t Grace: It is license
- Truth without Grace isn’t Truth: It is judgmentalism and condemnation

Two Inseparable Concepts

■ **John 1:14** “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”

■ **John 1:17** “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”

■ **Colossians 1:6** “Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth.”

12. God’s Family Extends Beyond Blood Relationships

■ **Mark 3:31-35** “There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him. And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.”

■ Earthly families are important to God. However, don’t minimize the importance God places on the “Family of God.” It is eternal.

Invite People to Join Your Family

■ Try to have the type of caring family atmosphere that makes the church a place where people feel like they can safely share their struggles.

■ **Proverbs 18:24** “A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly; and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.”

■ Look for opportunities to invite people who may not have a place to go on holidays, weekends, etc.

■ Don’t assume it is someone else’s job!

13. Be Authentic

■ Jesus was exactly the same on the inside as He was on the outside. No one ever had to wonder where He stood. We need to be growing more like Christ both inside and out!

■ **Philippians 2:5** “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”

■ **“Surface Community”** occurs when the members of a group all relate to each other in a superficial way.

■ **Get Past the Surface.** Purpose within yourself to deepen your conversations with others. Ask God for wisdom and courage.

- Deepen your relationships so that *when* (not *if*) you are struggling, others are close enough to notice and help.
- We are members one of another.
- Identify the people in your support network.
- Ask for feedback from others.
- Give people permission to ask you about certain issues in your life.

14. Listening IS Doing Something

- Sometimes a listening ear is all another person needs. They don't need you to come up with a solution.
- **Proverbs 18:13** *"He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him."*
- Active listening takes effort.
- "Reflect back" what you heard the person say.
- Listening is a gift you give to others.

15. Don't Underestimate the Importance of the "Ministry of Presence"

- "Being there" is often the most important thing that you can do for someone who is struggling.
- We often feel powerless to fix situations that occur in life. This is often because there is either no good solution to the problem or the solution is out of our control.
- **Remember:** Most often people won't remember what we say, however, they will remember how we made them feel.

Say Less in Visitation Lines

- After someone dies, their family needs love and support.
- Because we want to be helpful to them, we often feel like we have to say something profound or special.
- Unfortunately, this increases the chances of saying things that are hurtful and not helpful.
- **Examples of Appropriate Responses:** "I am praying for you." "I love you." "Your dad (or mom), was very special to me. S/he was very kind to me."
- **Examples of Inappropriate Responses:** Saying to someone who just lost his/her spouse "God knew you could handle it." Saying to parents who lost a child, "God just needed another little rosebud in His garden."

16. Timing is Everything

- Use Scripture in context and with appropriate timing.
- You want the person you are trying to support to be able to hear and internalize your support.
- For example: **Romans 8:28** *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."*
 - Roman's 8:28 is a powerful verse of comfort.
 - However, if you use it at an inappropriate time, it can lead to misunderstandings about God and can cause a struggling person to feel invalidated and hurt.

17. Don't Give "Clichéd" Support

- **Proverbs 25:20** *"As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon nitre, so is he that singeth songs to an heavy heart."*
- **James 2:15-16** *"If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?"*

18. Meet Others At Their Level

- **Romans 12:15** “Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.”
- What is your first response when you see someone crying?
- What is your first response when you see someone who is excited about something?

19. Bearing Burdens: When to Help

(Cloud and Townsend)

- **Galatians 6:2** “Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”
- **Galatians 6:5** “For every man shall bear his own burden.”
- “Burdens” in Verse 2 is referring to heavy weights that someone cannot carry alone – like a boulder.
- “Burden” in Verse 5 is referring to cargo or a person’s daily load or napsack – personal responsibility.

20. Stop Trying to “Fix” Others

- Don’t assume that you can “fix” another person’s problem(s).
- Trying “to fix” another person’s problems will lead to you feeling over-responsible for how the person is doing.
- You are responsible **TO** others and **FOR** yourself.
- Often, unless you are very familiar with the person, you may not know all of the issues they are facing.
- It can also lead you to be judgmental and uncaring.

21. When Things Come up in Your Life....

- Be proactive
- Search the Scriptures
- Share with people that are close to you
- Deal with issues directly
- Seek counsel
 - **Proverbs 15:22** “Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.”
 - Don’t be afraid to talk with your elder, mentor, or a counselor about struggles you are having.

Apostolic Christian Way of Purity

- Apostolic Christian Way of Purity (ACWP) is a 60 lesson Biblically-based accountability program for individuals struggling with sexual temptation, pornography, compulsive masturbation, etc.
- Each participant is assigned to a mentor who provides support, feedback, and guidance.
- The participant completes daily Bible study lessons and e-mails the lessons to his mentor.
- Anyone wanting to enroll in the ACWP program needs to get the approval of their home Elder.
- If you have questions about the program, call ACCFS or send email to acwp@accounseling.org.

22. Be Accountable

- We were **not** designed to go through life in isolation.
- **Proverbs 27:17** “Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.”
- **James 5:16** “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

23. Care Enough to Speak Up

- **Ephesians 4:15** “But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.”
- “Speak the truth in love” to one another, even if it is very hard to do.
- **Proverbs 27:6** “Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.”
- Remember that having a relationship with the person is the key.
- Correction without relationship will most often be received as you being judgmental.

24. Confront and Stop Gossip

- **Proverbs 17:9** “He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.”
- Gossip destroys trust.
- Don’t let Satan take advantage of the interconnectedness of the Body of Believers.
- Don’t accept gossip in yourself OR in those you are around.

25. Humility is Key

- Remember that Christ is more interested in a humble awareness of our need for His help than in self-sufficient independence and good looks.
- Read the parable found in Luke 18:9-14

- 9 And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:
- 10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.
- 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.
- 12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.
- 13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.
- 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.**

26. Avoid Emotional Perfectionism

- Remember that Christ died for your imperfections and that His grace is what makes you whole.
- Perfectionism is sometimes an attempt to gain the unattainable goal of never being wrong or never needing help from others.
- Unfortunately, perfectionism is a trap that leads to feelings of failure and beliefs that one does not measure up or deserve compassion.
- Perfectionism is sometimes mistaken for spiritual devotion. Unfortunately, perfectionism is harmful, not helpful, to our spiritual lives.
- We are complete in Christ, not in ourselves.

27. Step Back... Get Perspective

- Remember that each of us needs time to step back, relax, and regain perspective.
- Many times, depression, anxiety, and stress-related illnesses result because people forget to take care of basic things in their lives.
- “You can’t fill another person’s cup if yours is empty.”
- Getting burned-out can lead you to have less compassion for others.
- “Sometimes the good things in life can be the worst enemies of the best things in life.”

28. Have a Grateful Heart

- Having an attitude of entitlement (e.g., thinking that “I deserve...”) is not Christ-like.
- Say thanks for the small things in life.
- Work to be appreciative of the people who work ‘behind the scenes’ who sometimes never get noticed.

29. “Church” Names

- Many of us are blessed with a generational heritage in the Apostolic Christian Church.
- Over time, family names become associated with being a “church” name.
- The goal of our church should be to have an ever expanding list of family names that come to our church.
- When meeting people that don’t have a “church” name, it is rude and offensive to tell them that they don’t have a “church” name.
- It can have the subtle effect of telling someone that they do not belong.

30. Don’t Pronounce Judgments

- As human beings we like to make sense of life experiences; that is normal and natural.
- However, we must be careful not to become overly certain in our beliefs about why bad things happen in life, especially to others.
- **“Belief in a Just World” (BJW):** Is a common, but distorted, way to view life. It says, “Good things happen to good people and bad things happen to bad people.”
- BJW has some truth to it (Galatians 6:7 says people will reap what they sow). However, **NOT** all things in life are the result of our sowing (See the book of Job)

31. Don’t Assume

- Don’t assume that visitors or converts/members new to our church understand the order of events, where they should go, or why certain things are happening.
- Don’t assume it is someone else’s job to go up to visitors to meet them and make them feel welcome (this is called “diffusion of responsibility”).
- Don’t assume that the ministers “just know” when someone is in the hospital, sick, struggling, etc. Sometimes we are the LAST to know.

32. Work on Forgiveness

- Don’t let Satan have an advantage with you by allowing lack of forgiveness to poison your life.
- If you haven’t been able to work through a relationship problem with someone, seek counsel; don’t let it slide.
- If you are harboring resentment and can’t seem to get it worked through, seek counsel.

33. God Redeems Our Hurts

- Those who have gone through a struggle have an opportunity to reach out to others who are struggling.
- **2 Corinthians 1:3-6** *“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.”*

Example: Learning from Job's Friends

A Case Study of Grief & Loss

Job 2:11-13

- 11 Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him.
- 12 And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven.
- 13 So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.

What Job's Friends Did Well

1. They heard about Job's situation and went to him.
2. They determined to mourn with him and comfort him (they wept with those that wept).
3. They sat with him in silence (i.e., the ministry of presence).

Job 3:1-5

1. After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day.
2. And Job spake, and said,
3. Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived.
4. Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it.
5. Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it.

Job 4:1-9

1. Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,
2. If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved? but who can withhold himself from speaking?
3. Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands.
4. Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees.
5. But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.
6. Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways?
7. Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?
8. Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.
9. By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed.

What Job's Friends Did Poorly

1. They observed Job's grief-stricken behavior (**Job 3:1** "After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day.") and judged him by it.
2. They decided they knew the reason why all of this had befallen Job.
3. They reasoned that the problem was due to sin or being impure before God.
4. They confronted him with it while he was in the middle of his grief.

Apostolic Christian Counseling and Family Services

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- Find information about mental health issues and relationship problems.
- Information on the Crown Financial Ministries materials.
- Access the information whenever you need it.
- Learn how to find help for yourself or others.
- Learn about ACCFS and the services we provide.
- Download and/or order materials.
- New information is being added regularly.

Counseling Services at ACCFS

- Clinical counseling is offered to address issues such as depression, anxiety, adjustment difficulties, marital problems, and childhood behavior problems.
- Discipleship counseling is offered to give biblical instruction, direction, and encouragement.
- These counseling services are offered to individuals who can travel to the counseling center located at 73 E. Queenwood Road, Morton, IL 61550.
- Clients are primarily members and people who attend the Apostolic Christian Church. However, counseling services are also offered to others not affiliated with the church, as resources allow.

Consultations with a Counselor

- ACCFS provides consultations with a counselor to people who are seeking information or help with mental health issues, spiritual issues, relationship problems, etc.
- Consultations are done via telephone and/or email.
- Callers include elders, ministers, family members, and friends of struggling individuals.
- While these consultations often consist of a single call, in some situations, ongoing consultations over many months may be provided.

Counseling Referral Information

- ACCFS provides referrals for those seeking counseling in their local area.
- ACCFS maintains a database of clinical counselors located around each of our churches nationally.
- The ACCFS referral database includes counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, specialty clinics, and support groups.
- Our goal in providing this service is to help individuals find mental health professionals located near their home area who have strong clinical skills and good credentials, and will be respectful of their religious beliefs and faith backgrounds.

Education

- **Presentations:** ACCFS counselors can provide presentations to churches or smaller groups (ministers, young groups, etc.).
- Presentations provide a Christian perspective on mental health issues and/or relationship problems.
- Presentations on biblical financial stewardship are also available, either as a separate study or in conjunction with the Crown Financial Ministries program of Small Group Bible Studies.
- **Print Materials:** ACCFS has print materials available covering a wide variety of health issues and relationship problems; these have been screened by staff and/or counseling elders.

Mentoring & Mental Health Forum

- The clinical counselors at ACCFS provide mentoring to individuals interested in going into the mental health field as a career, and fellowship to those who are already working in a mental health-related field.
- Our goal is to offer guidance and encouragement to members and friends of the church, while promoting spiritual safety and accountability.
- The frequency of contacts we have with individuals ranges from one-time phone calls (or visits to the ACCFS office) to long-term mentoring relationships that continue for a number of years.
- The **Mental Health Forum** is an online resource that is used to connect members and friends of the church who are going to school or working in mental health-related fields.

Apostolic Christian Way of Purity

- ACWP is a 60-lesson biblically-based accountability program for individuals struggling with sexual temptation, pornography, compulsive masturbation, etc.
- Each participant is assigned to a mentor who provides support, feedback, and guidance.
- The participant completes daily Bible study lessons which he e-mails or faxes to his mentor.
- Anyone wanting to enroll in the ACWP program needs to get the approval of their home elder.
- If you have questions about the program, call ACCFS or send an e-mail to acwp@accounseling.org.

Financial Stewardship

- ACCFS provides biblically-based instruction on God's way of handling money and possessions.
- One option is a 10-week Bible study course using Crown Financial Ministries materials specifically modified for our church.
 - These Bible study materials are available through AC Publications (www.acpublications.org)
- Another option is financial counseling for individuals and families, to help them make wise choices in areas such as saving, spending, budgets, debt, and credit.

Funding

- ACCFS is a ministry of the Apostolic Christian Church of America.
- The only charge for services is for direct counseling. A sliding fee scale based on family size and annual income is used.
- No one is refused services based on inability to pay.
- There is no fee charged for telephone consultations.
- The remainder of funding is from individuals and churches who want to support the work of ACCFS.
- Our annual budget is approximately \$525,000. Donations from individuals and churches account for **75%** of this amount.