

**Xenos Christian Fellowship**  
**Christian Leadership 2**  
**Pastoral Counseling**  
**Week 2 - Introduction to Love Therapy**

**Introduction**

The biblical basis for Love Therapy

The biblical principle that the key to solving most emotional problems is the development of "victorious love output."<sup>1</sup> See Jn. 13:17 for one biblical statement of this principle. (This is not just for the person up on blocks emotionally. It forms the crux of the lifestyle toward which all Christians should be striving.)

Remember that the context speaks of two "things" we should know and do--Jesus' love for us and us loving others in the same way. Connect this to last week's Biblical Model. Without this, Love Therapy can be applied like the moral model.

This position is in accord with many other authors, including Larry Crabb. However, Love Therapy goes further practical application of this insight.

Love therapy actually attempts to define the main aspects of biblical love and associated problem areas.

After carefully defining love, love therapy uses the definition as a yardstick by which to measure or identify various deficiencies in a person's relational life. This in turn provides positive corrective direction for the person, in the power of the Spirit.

The key to success in one's emotional life

In love therapy, the key to success in one's emotional life is giving victorious mature love *output*, rather than getting love *input*. No matter how those around us behave, we are always able to employ biblical principles of love, and in non-clinical cases, this will eventually result in emotional health.

This is the antithesis of not only the victim mentality that pervades our culture today, it's also the way we all tend to view our life and problems. – "I did what I did BECAUSE of how they treated me" – implying therefore it wasn't wrong; I couldn't help myself.

Therefore, love therapy sees the client's problems as a result of, or caused by their OWN failure to *victoriously* deal with others in all situations (compare with Freud and Rogers). Stated positively, we are called to respond in a loving manner in all relationships and situations, regardless of the provocation. What a great vision for growth!! Our sanctification is not dependent on how others treat me. It is only dependent on me appropriating the power of God to love others in the situation.

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<sup>1</sup>The system of personality evaluation and counseling known as *Love Therapy* owes its definition to Dr. Ralph Ankenmann.

Naturally, we are not advocating a perfectionism, but rather a gradual progression of significant sanctification through the transformation of OUR character.

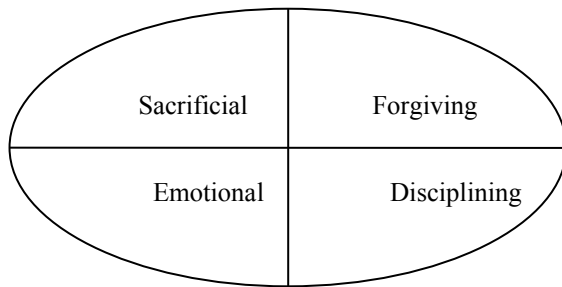
**Goal for this evening**

1. First, we'll define ideal biblical love.
2. Next, we will study various common love deficiencies in relationships.
3. Finally, we will examine some typical strategies for victorious love development for various types of people.

**Biblical Love Defined**

**Biblical/Christian Love defined: A commitment to give of one's self in every area for the good of another.**

Put differently, "**mature love**" in love therapy includes four aspects. These aspects can be conceived as parts of the whole as the following diagram shows.



**The Sacrificial Aspect**

**Definition:** commitment to give of one's self for the good of another

The *sacrificial* aspect of love is based on passages such as **Jn. 3:16** and **Mark 10:45**. See also **Jn. 15:13,14**--where Jesus tells us that love lays down its life for its friends, and then calls on us to love one another the way he has loved us.

**Key Elements to Sacrificial Love**

1. *Sacrificial love involves initiative.* This love does not require that the other person request help. After all, "no one seeks for God," "but while we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly." (Rom. 5:6)

Put differently in 1 John 4:19, "We love because he first loved us." This means that the idea of positive servitude is an active, rather than a passive concept. The lover is not *responding* to love demands; he/she is *seeking* ways to serve and meet needs.

It also means that biblical lovers won't complain that, "no one has called me on the phone," or that, "It's always me who has to do the asking," etc. To the Christ-like lover, initiative is always viewed as an opportunity, not as a burden. The creativity and work needed to come up with new ways to initiate love giving are part of the sacrifice of love.

2. *Sacrificial love involves waiving all personal rights within a personal love relationship.* Christ certainly had basic human rights such as justice and equality. Yet, these were voluntarily waived when he allowed himself to be crucified while innocent. He did not complain that "It isn't fair" as the nails were driven into his hands.

Mature Christ-like love, then, rejects the idea that "I have a right to be treated in such-and-such a way," and instead, has not only accepted the unfairness of life, but sees self-sacrifice as more important than fairness. Self-sacrificial servanthood is probably the most central theme in biblical ethics.<sup>2</sup>

QUALIFICATION: Fairness is still a useful concept to mature lovers, because some relationships should be governed by fairness rather than self-sacrifice (e.g., business dealings, crime and punishment, and a just war). Most of these relationships are not love relationships, and deal more with social ethics than with individual ethics.

3. *Sacrificial love is rooted in decision and action rather than in emotion.* Although biblical love is certainly compatible with affection (see below), it is primarily the action of serving another (see John's definition of love in 1 John 3:17, where love is seen less as a feeling and more as action).

Therefore, sacrificial love can be rendered whether feelings of direct affection are present at the moment or not. Because giving love is a matter of willing commitment rather than the presence of a feeling, our definition of love begins with the phrase "commitment to give of one's self . . . "

## The Forgiving Aspect

**Definition:** laying down the right to make an offender pay for the wrong done to you

Jesus emphasized the need to forgive others (Mt. 6:14,15; **18:29-35**). Therefore, bitterness, ruminating over wrongs and retributive acts are excluded from our understanding of authentic biblical love. See also **1 Cor. 13:5**.

God's insistence that we forgive others is based on the fact that he has forgiven us. Just as his forgiveness covers all sin, our forgiveness should be complete and without exception (see **Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13**).

Therefore, Christians who relate to God on the basis of his forgiveness, while at the same time insisting on the right to refuse forgiveness to others, are fundamentally hypocritical. Stated positively, the recognition of our own sins and the depth of God's forgiveness provide motivation to voluntarily forgive others.

What do you need to see from the other person in order to forgive them? Groveling? Tears of repentance? A clear articulation of their error? How does this compare with the way God forgave us?

Unresolved anger and resentments involving current or past wrongs can be highly disruptive to relationships.

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<sup>2</sup>See definitive passages here such as Phil. 2:1-11; 1 Jn. 3:13-4:21; 1 Cor. 13; Rom. 13:8-10.

Resentment and hate are terrifically draining emotionally, and these are sure to follow when we fail to forgive from the heart.

The depression and hostility resulting from lack of forgiveness can manifest itself in other relationships as well as in our functional lives, rendering us unable to complete demanding tasks and reducing our reliability.

However, forgiveness does not imply passivity in the face of evil . . .

## The Disciplining Aspect

**Definition:** correcting through verbal confrontation and (when needed) consequences, for the good of the other

According to many biblical passages, real love includes the responsibility to discipline, admonish, rebuke, or oppose others *for their own good* (**Mt. 18:11-14; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:5-7; 2 Cor. 7:8-12; Gal. 6:1; Col. 1:28; 3:16; 1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:6,14; 1 Tim. 5:1,2; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; 3:16,17 Titus 1:13; Heb. 12:5-12; 3 Jn. 9,10**).

Because people are fallen and deceived, what we want and what we need may be completely different.

When dealing with Christians, we should be guided in the application of discipline by the goal of seeing others conformed to the image of Christ. Christians are also called to grow up to "the fullness of the stature of Christ" Rom. 8:29; Eph. 4:13-15.

When dealing with non-Christians, we still have a basis for discipline, mainly focusing on general principles of relating which we can negotiate with others for the common good.

### **Discipline in love must be carefully differentiated from any principle of justice or fairness.**

- The point in discipline in love is not to punish fairly for wrongdoing, but to help the other person change for the better. Therefore, the believer is free to be "unfair" in the sense that more grace may be shown than would be warranted by the other's attitude or actions.
- Likewise, different people can be treated differently even though their actions are identical. When practicing discipline in love, our focus is toward the future (seeking redemptive change), whereas the focus of justice is on the past (matching the punishment to the crime).
- Discipline in love is never the product of an angry loss of self-control. Discipline is a carefully measured response to observed behavior or attitudes. Anger may be incorporated into a disciplinary discussion for the sake of emphasis. However, such anger would be an "anger without sin" (Eph. 4:26) because it is not a selfish reaction to the violation of one's personal rights. Like Jesus, who demonstrated anger when cleansing the temple, we may realize that some people will listen only when we demonstrate a certain level of indignation. (site example...)

## The Emotional Aspect of Love

**Definition:** serving legitimate emotional needs when possible and appropriate

The emotional needs of other people are important as well as their practical needs (thus the phrase "in every area.") Therefore, if we serve others in a cold and unfeeling way, we are loving sub-biblically. There is abundant biblical support for this aspect of biblical love.

Jesus felt compassion for the sheep of Israel who had no shepherd (**Matt. 9:36**), and wept over Jerusalem's unrepentance (**Luke 19:41**) and at Lazarus' tomb (**Jn. 11:35**), Paul expresses emotional encouragement, disclosure, empathy and compassion in his letters.

Scripture calls on all Christians to be "kind and tender-hearted" (**Eph. 4:29**), to "show affection to one another in brotherly love" (**Rom. 12:10**), and to "greet one another with a holy kiss (Rom. 16:16).

On the one hand, biblical love does not insist that we constantly *feel* strong sensations of affection, sorrow, or ecstasy for another. Rather, it calls us to *express* these emotions based on the truth. Therefore, emotional expression can and should go beyond the immediate feeling of the one expressing it.

The larger context of the relationship may dictate that I express affection and care, even when I do not feel spontaneously compelled to do so. Such expression would not be manipulation because what I express is actually true, and because I am expressing it in order to give, not to take. In fact, expressing nurturing emotion often more truly reflects the truth about a relationship than would a lack of such expression. (Communicating appreciation for your friend's involvement in your life, love for them, etc.)

In theory, as we learn to express emotions, the present experience of those feelings becomes more frequent and enjoyable. As in other areas of life, Christians can find their feelings coming into line with what they know to be true.

For this reason, we might find it appropriate to take loved ones to task for their lack of emotional expression, but only if such confrontation is for their own good. Anyone who cannot express caring emotion has a problem that will inhibit close relationships. Therefore, we may be moved by the principle of discipline in love to approach others with their need to change lest their own relationships (perhaps including the ones with us) suffer.

On the other hand, those who are already strongly emotional may need to consider *how* they express emotions as well.

Negative emotional expressions should be controlled. If we feel justified in "venting" our feelings, even though they are not edifying or even destructive to others, we are practicing a selfish form of love alien to the Bible (see Gal. 5:20, Prov. 17:14 The beginning of strife is like letting out water, So abandon the quarrel before it breaks out.).

Expressing positive emotions, but also demanding the desired response is closer to manipulation than sacrificial love. Likewise, if we demand that others express certain emotions in certain ways (e.g. demanding others appreciate us) we violate the concept of sacrificial love mentioned above. These are love demands, which are antithetical to the notion of self-giving.

## Love Defects--*How We Love*

In addition to the question of love spheres (who we love) love therapy defines patterns in the area of love defects. These are deficiencies or distortions in the way we love.

### The Work Substitute

**Definition:** "Work substitute" describes a love deficiency in the area of emotional giving.

The work substitute replaces emotional giving with accomplishment. This syndrome is commonly found in men in western culture, although a very small number of women also manifest the syndrome.<sup>3</sup>

It is not that the work-substitutes don't feel emotion or can't express it. They can usually feel and express anger, enthusiasm about a sporting event or getting a promotion, etc. The main problem is with expressing affection, encouragement, etc. He is guilty of substituting the enjoyment of goal attainment at work or home for the fulfillment of deep love relationships. Likewise, he replaces expressions of love with "doing things" for others. Overt emotional statements and actions seem mushy, ridiculous, and unnecessary to the work substitute.

**Most common love deficiency:** The work substitute commonly cannot understand what others want from him in the area of emotion. He is aware that his wife and others complain that he is unloving, but finds this confusing. He points out that he brings home the pay check, that he bought his wife a new car, and that he spends time with the family, unlike a lot of husbands who run around all the time.

**Impact on spiritual development:** When seeking an emotional component in relationships, the work substitute often replaces positive nurturing emotional expressions with negative emotional relating (EXAMPLES: "pig-tail pulling" by pinching wife or poking fun at his child; sarcasm).

It is imperative that the work substitute learn how to express sincere and positive emotion to his loved ones, and that his pig-tail pulling be curtailed substantially.

### The Work-For-Love

The work for love is deficient in the disciplining aspect of love. Instead of disciplining the loved one, work-for-loves will perform loving service and/or sacrifice to "remedy" the problem or keep things running smoothly.

The work-for-love defect is a deficiency that nearly always afflicts women. She is by definition tribalistic, and usually kind, emotional, and sacrificial. Their selfless giving is motivated by heartfelt affection and duty, but there is a catch.

The work-for-love eventually begins to feel resentment about the fact that her family doesn't appreciate her enough. As these feelings of resentment arise, the work-for-love reacts by working harder than ever. Hence, the term work-for-love. She actually works and serves those in her family, not in an authentically sacrificial way, but in order to buy love from them.

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<sup>3</sup>Generally, women who seem to be work substitute are in fact correctly found to be infantile.

Because she is actually bribing her family to love her, she finds it impossible to appropriately discipline. She is vulnerable to manipulation by others at the same time that she is guilty of manipulating them through "guilt trips," martyr complex, etc. This failure to discipline ironically leads her tribe to take her for granted.

Later in life, when the children leave home, the work-for-love reaches a serious crisis in her life. Her husband (who she has not disciplined), who is often a work substitute, cannot meet her emotional needs, and she has failed to build other deep relationships outside of the family. She usually has not built skills and interests in the functional area either, other than cooking, sewing etc. for the kids. As a result, she may become increasingly depressed, neurotic and extravagant in her efforts to attract attention from her uncaring family.

Work-for-love Christians, with their zeal for service and encouragement, can be a great resource to the Body of Christ. But they often run into trouble with discipleship when loving confrontation is necessary.

This love defect appears to be diminishing today. Postmodernism, feminism and the media have worked hard to reject the ethic of the serving spouse and mother.

## **The Infantile**

The infantile is usually deficient in both the sacrificial and forgiving aspects of biblical love. Infantiles are more focused on what they want/how others are affecting them rather than on how they are affecting others.

This term is used in Love Therapy to refer to a stage of emotional development typical of children. Children feel deeply for others existentially, but there is also a very strong self-centeredness in their feeling. They tend to take their parents' efforts and sacrifices in raising them for granted. They can't understand why they shouldn't be able to gratify all of their desires immediately. If they meet with limitations or frustrations, they may cry or throw a temper-tantrum. Children will sometimes be very giving, but they also expect to receive, and feel that they are being treated unfairly when they don't receive what they think they should. When children quarrel with one another, they cannot understand the perspective of the other child, and continue to feel that their own view is correct and that they have the right to use force if necessary to get their way. Unfortunately (and increasingly in western culture), many of these features are also found in adults.

Those who are close to infantiles complain that they are never satisfied. They have difficulty appreciating the extent of the sacrifice others make on their behalf.

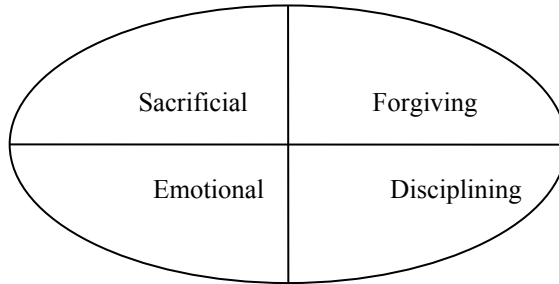
They may exhibit explosive tantrums, or withdrawal tactics similar to the child who be to confront.

The most devastating deficiency of the infantile is lack of forgiveness. The infantile will usually feel that to simply overlook a wrong done by another, or to forget it permanently is a betrayal of justice. Conversely, they are often shocked when people don't easily forgive their sins!

On the positive side, sanctified infantile people are often enjoyable to be around for a variety of reasons. They are often more emotionally expressive than others.

It would be a mistake to think that the infantile love defect is any worse than the work-for-love or work- substitute love defect.

### Summary of Love Defects



### Love Spheres - Who We Love

Love spheres refers to our pattern of choices regarding *whom* to love. Two terms are used to describe this area: the tribal love sphere, and the diffuse love sphere. Qualification: We are describing extremes for the sake of clarity.

#### The Tribal Love Sphere

**Definition:** Tribalistic people are comfortable with only a small circle of relationships. Those outside their own families and/or very close friends are usually limited to a superficial level involving business or diplomacy.

The term "tribalistic" comes from oral cultures where members of other tribes are often viewed as sub-human. Tribes commonly use the same word for both the name of their tribe and for "human being."

Tribalistic people prize “**permanent love values.**” "Permanent love values" refer to the sense of security and relaxation that some people feel when sitting around their parent's or their own house in a familiar chair, with family members around them, etc. Tribalistic people associate "permanent love values” with love.

Tribalists have little interest in relating to members of other "tribes" on a personal level. People outside the tribe are treated virtually like symbols rather than actual people. Their needs are something less than real because they don't affect the tribe. Meanwhile, relationships within the tribe are expected to completely meet all relational needs. Such expectations are really love demands, and other family members feel burdened and suffocated because they can never fulfill such demands.

Such people usually selfishly cling to old relationships because they find the process of building new relationships burdensome or even frightening. Some people form relatively few relationships and remain in those relationships as long as possible, even if they are destructive. In extreme (though not unusual) cases, some people's circle of relationships is no larger than the nuclear family.

## Features of tribalism

Narrowness in relational life is often connected to a general narrowness or rigidity in most areas of life. Tribalism in non-relational areas of life is called “functional tribalism.” The functionally tribalistic person derives a sense of security from "sameness." Although the status quo may not be particularly satisfying, it is better than changing to something new.

Therefore, tribalistic people tend to live with a great deal of routine in their lives.

The same schedule every week and every day will tend to be comforting to the tribalistic person, while not knowing what is going to happen next causes anxiety. The diffuse person would feel trapped by the same routine that makes tribal people feel secure.

The tribalist's insistence on a strict routine may interfere with the need to adapt to new conditions at work or elsewhere. In extreme cases, the tribalist may eventually lose the ability to function in any but one way. (Movie – Pleasantville)

Control is a key word for understanding the tribalistic love sphere. The tribal person is very controlling in order to keep their world intact. Various phobic complexes can result from the inability of the tribalist to control some aspects of the environment. Anxiety can come to play an increasing role as the tribalist worries that he/she may lose control of the situation or of the future.

For functionally tribal people, messiness is very disturbing, while a diffuse person often has no problem with messiness. This characteristic rigidity may extend into all areas of life, reflecting a desire for structure and predictability.

This desire for predictability may lead to a form of relating based on controlling loved ones. The tribal person may interpret another's submission to their control as love. Yet, as the love feelings resulting from control of, let's say, the other's schedule wears off, the tribal lover feels the need to exert further control in other areas just to keep up the same feelings.

Ironically, tribalists often end up with quite alienated relationships even within their own tribe.

In marriage, this desire for control may also result in a variety of sexual dysfunctions. These could range from the need to have sex in only one way, to complete frigidity or impotence when the person feels unable to enter into an intimate, yet uncontrollable situation requiring improvisation and vulnerability.

Those within the tribe may end up jumping through incredible hoops to avoid punishment. Family members who realize that they are expected to meet all of the needs of the tribalist often feel repelled.

The in-grown environment breeds relational ill health, in-fighting, and simmering resentments. Hysterical episodes sometimes afflict extreme tribalists who feel they are losing control.

When tribalistic people need to form new relationships (perhaps because one's tribe is gone), this often results in depression or other emotional problems.

### **Impact on Fellowship:**

Tribalistic Christians often have difficulty getting incorporated into fellowship, reaching out to the lost with God's love, using their gifts in ministry, and accepting change in the church.

## **The Diffuse Love Sphere**

**Definition:** Diffuse people tend to be fragmented relationally, investing in many people at once, but few or none deeply.

The diffuse person is the opposite of the tribalistic. Diffuse people demonstrate a tendency to become quickly involved in a new relationship, and to immediately feel "close." However, they typically fail to invest sufficiently in the relationship--especially after the initial enthusiasm wears off. Relationships tend to become "boring." As relational problems arise, the diffuse person often finds it easier to form a relationship with someone else than to resolve problems in existing relationships. The result is usually a series of superficial relationships.

Diffuse people prize "**present love feelings.**" "Present love feelings" refer to the stimulation of things like intense romantic attraction, high-risk sports, drug intoxication, public acclaim, etc. Diffuse people tend to falsely equate present love feelings with actually being loved. Anything else in their mind is a dissatisfying imitation of the real thing.

Present love feelings are evident when people first "fall in love." Such feelings are tangible sensations of excitement, which generally cannot be maintained over a long period of time to the abject disappointment of the present love feelings oriented person.

In extreme cases, diffuse people may never actually form any relationships at all. They may simply meet people and interact on a sub-relational level, seeking stimulation, which they interpret as love.

### **Features of diffuseness**

Just as the tribalistic individual desires structure and control in life, the diffuse person desires stimulation and freedom. Lack of stimulation leads to boredom, restlessness and often resentment toward loved ones. Diffuse people may find stimulation in either the functional area (video games or job changes) or in the relational area (moving from one romance to another). Apart from sanctification, this tendency tends to develop assorted emotional disorders as time goes on.

Typical types of disorders are drug addiction, alcoholism, obesity, and inability to succeed at a job, finish school or complete other complex tasks. This is because the failure to build deep relationships results in a sense of boredom, emptiness or void that demands solution. The diffuse person typically reacts to such feelings by seeking greater stimulation.

**Impact:** In marriage, a diffuse person may refuse to invest in a relationship now considered "old hat." Diffuse spouses may struggle with constant feelings of dissatisfaction in the marital sexual relationship because it isn't as stimulating as

other immoral relationships, or even as the married relationship was at the beginning. Their spouses often complain that they are never home.

Divorce is more common among diffuse people for the obvious reason that their spouses are dissatisfied with the level of involvement in the marriage, and/or the diffuse one becomes convinced that another person would be more rewarding than the present spouse.

For the same reasons, diffuse people are prime candidates for adultery.

Diffuse Christians are often good at evangelism, but poor at follow-up and discipleship. They also tend to have a low ability to endure suffering and a shallow understanding of theological issues.

## **Balanced Love Spheres**

Love Therapy does not seek to eliminate tribalistic or diffuse tendencies. Rather, it seeks to achieve a relative *balance* between them. A mature biblical lover should be able to build and enjoy a tribal framework, while also possessing both the ability and the desire to establish new relationships and care for those outside the tribe.

### **The scriptural mandate for such a balance is clear.**

Jesus critiques extreme tribalists in **Matthew 5:46**, where he rejects the idea of "loving only them that love you."

Likewise, the Pharisees' attempt to evade responsibility to love outsiders was rebuked by the example of the Good Samaritan (**Luke 10:25-37**). Jesus was constantly challenging his disciples' (tribalistic) prejudice against non-Jewish people.

All of the passages that call for outreach to the lost (cf. **Matthew 28:19**) are also, by implication, against excessive tribalism.

Paul's call for deep love relationships, such as a marriage envisioned in **Eph. 5:25-29**, are antithetical to a diffuse lifestyle.

The principle of "remaining in that condition in which you were called," (**1 Cor. 7:20**) is also antithetical to excessive diffuseness.

The author of Hebrews calls for both "love of the brethren" and "love of strangers" (hospitality) in **Heb. 13:1,2**. Paul calls for the same balance in **Col. 3:12-16; 4:5,6**.

### **Balance can be enhanced by two means:**

- Learning to appreciate the missing love sphere
- Recognizing and limiting excesses in the preferred love sphere

We will consider practical ideas for both of these later

## **Continuums and Practical Strategies**

**Let's just discuss this and get comfortable using the above concepts. You will not be tested on this next section.**

The following pairs of terms describe important complementary components in an aspect of love relationships. A mature lover would be competent in both components, although he would usually feel more comfortable in one of these areas than the other. Put differently, if the two terms represent relational extremes in a continuum, the mature lover would be somewhere in the middle of that continuum.

Generally speaking, we want to help people...

- ...build biblical convictions that both aspects of the continuum are important--especially the aspect they tend to neglect.
- ...identify where they are on the continuum,
- ...move toward the middle by minimizing the excesses of one extreme and building competence in the complementary area. (In other words, this provides practical steps for Stage #4 in our biblical model of pastoral counseling.)
- ...build vision for change based on truth: In helping people in these areas, bear in mind that after coming under conviction they often feel very fatalistic about change. We will need to remind them often that God has made them new creatures, and that he is willing and able to empower change over time. We will also need to point out and praise small steps in the right direction, especially in the early stages.

## **Emotional – Functional**

### DESCRIPTION

"Emotional" refers to nurturing emotion, and caring feelings, rather than anger or outrage. Examples of nurturing emotion would be being moved to tears relatively easily, or having little or no problem "sweet talking" others. The one who feels uncomfortable with emotional expressions of affection is demonstrating relatively less emotional orientation, while the one who has his/her feelings hurt easily is demonstrating more.

Sexual relationships should be viewed as an exception because they may involve emotional and physical expressions of affection from any personality type. However, people at the emotional end of the spectrum will typically be interested in sex within marriage more often than others, assuming there are no complicating tensions in the marriage.

Emotional people tend to be infantile or work-for-love.

"Functional" refers to one who tends to approach life from a thinking and acting, rather than a feeling direction. This person has difficulty understanding why people can't function because of their feelings. He feels like it is a waste of time to sit and talk about feelings, including his own. He often has difficulty articulating his own emotions. When you ask him how he feels about something, he will often answer in terms of what he is doing.

Functional people tend to be work substitute.

### THERAPY

Emotional

GOAL: Discover and cultivate the freedom to think objectively, rationally and act regardless of feelings. Appreciate the stability and objectivity of those who are more functionally inclined.

#### Practical Steps

- Persuade of the scriptural relationship between FACTS, FAITH & FEELINGS. The following passages are helpful here: Joshua 3:13-16; 2 Cor. 5:7; John 13:17; James 1:22-25; 1 John 3:18-20. Emphasize that spiritual growth requires choosing to do what is true, no matter how strongly to the contrary we may feel. It also requires thinking rationally and objectively about relationships, and to judge feelings in the light of truth.
- Remind him of how he has experienced both the negatives of acting on his feelings, and the positives of acting on the truth in spite of his feelings.
- Help him build more of the above positive experiences in their his with God. For example, urge him to come to home group even though he feels bad, pick him up--then later when he feels better, point out why.
- Challenge him to review the last several months and recount what scary steps God has called on him to take. What was his response? What was the result?

#### Functional

GOAL: Believe that emotional relating is God-given and important, and develop the ability to relate this way on a consistent basis. Appreciate the sensitivity and warmth of those who are more emotionally inclined.

#### Practical steps:

- Persuade of the scriptural importance of emotional love giving (see above passages). Help him recall how such expressions have been meaningful and helpful to him. Tie this area into ministry effectiveness; (Gal. 5:22-23; 1 Thess. 2:7-8; 2 Tim. 2:24) you can't go around this to leadership, etc.
- Suggest that low-grade depression and consequent poor functioning are often because of insufficient emotional intimacy in key relationships. Help him experience this correlation positively, and then point it out.
- Stress acting on feelings of warmth and affection when they occur. But also stress that choosing to express such sentiments is valid and important (and not "faky") even when not felt, and emphasize that this becomes easier and more enjoyable with practice.
- Functioners need to be called on to discuss feelings and emotional factors in relationships, including those areas that they don't understand. Structure time for personal relating; take advantage of his functional strength here! Spell out how to talk with his spouse about this area of their relationship. Consider the following questions:

How have you been feeling this week?

How have I made you feel this week?

How could I have been more emotionally helpful this past week?

- Teach Chapman's "Love Languages," have him identify his spouse's love languages, come up with a list of ways he can "speak those languages"-- and have him practice giving her love "spontaneously" in those ways weekly.

The goal is reached when his wife and disciples (if not excessively infantile!) *feel* loved.

## **Routine--Spontaneous**

### DESCRIPTION

"Routine" means desiring predictability in schedule, relationships, etc. Routine people tend to be tribalistic and rigid (see above for their problems).

"Spontaneous" means desiring change and newness in schedule, relationships, etc. Spontaneous people tend to be diffuse (see above for their problems).

### THERAPY

#### Routine

GOAL: Identify and substantially overcome compulsive and controlling behaviors. Appreciate the value of and enjoy the fruit of spontaneity.

#### Practical Steps

- Persuade from scripture that rigidity and controlling are rooted in anxiety, and therefore sinful because they are rooted in unbelief in God's sovereign goodness and unloving. Consider the following passages: Matthew 6:25-34; Phil. 4:6,7; Lk. 10:38-42. Refute excuses like "I wouldn't want to become irresponsible" with statements like "That will never be your problem!"
- Point out that this tendency, unless actively attacked through sanctification, results in ever-worsening phobias, depression, and alienation. When we give into fear, its power over us grows (BOA CONSTRICTOR). Are there people in his life who illustrate this--especially people whose rigidity adversely affected him?
- Urge him to take doable steps of faith to lean against his fears and relate to God and others in new/spontaneous ways. EXAMPLES: leaving the dishes after a meal in order to converse with your guests; giving book-keeping responsibility to spouse; engaging a new person at home group or work; giving money, including spontaneous giving; trying a new ministry area). When possible, be with him at first as he does this to provide some security, reward it with love, and rejoice with him afterward as he enjoys the righteous exhilaration and increased confidence.

- Call on him to learn how to enjoy spontaneity from the diffuse. Agree to spend time with a healthy diffuse person, allowing them to set the “agenda” without critique.

### Spontaneous

GOAL: Identify and substantially eliminate destructive diffuse extremes.  
Appreciate the value of and enjoy the fruit of routine.

### Practical steps

- Persuade from scripture that self-discipline and endurance are important virtues. Consider these passages: Prov. 13:4; 20:4; 26:14-16; 1 Cor. 9:24-27; Rom. 5:3-5; Heb. 12:1-11. If he aspires to ministry effectiveness and leadership, point out that he cannot get around this issue.
- Challenge him to reflect on what his avoidance of these virtues has cost him in his life (relationships; jobs; finances; etc.). Acceptance of the necessity of routine is a key step in healing the relational and functional problems in his life.
- Do some of his most distasteful routine with him--and then reward it afterward with some fun diffuse activity. For example, study silently next to him for 1-2 hours, then go have a beer.
- Help him set up a realistic routine and structure in school, work, family, fellowship, ministry, etc. Secure permission to ask about how he is doing with his structure--and then ask him periodically.
- Add structure gradually so as not to overwhelm. When he fails, encourage him not to throw it overboard, but see the big picture, progress made, etc.

## Empathetic--Confrontive

### DESCRIPTION

"Empathetic" refers to the ability to understand and even enter into others' perspective, situation and feelings. This is a feature of the emotional aspect of love. Work-for-loves are normally empathetic; infantiles are selectively empathetic.

"Confrontive" refers to the ability to evaluate others' attitudes and actions in light of the truth, and to correct them for their good. This is a feature of the disciplining aspect of love. Most infantiles can confront--though often without self-control and for the wrong reasons. Work-for-loves are highly aversive to avoid confrontation. Work-substitutes tend to confront more readily about functional issues than about relational issues.

### THERAPY

#### Empathetic

GOAL: Ability to effectively confront others when needed.

Practical steps:

- Persuade of the scriptural importance of discipline truth-speaking as a part of love. Consider Eph. 4:15,25 as well as the above passages on the disciplining aspect of love.
- Help him to see how failure to do this has hurt his loved ones. Persuade him that his so-called sensitivity is in many cases a selfish act of self-preservation at the expense of his loved ones. Most empathizers tend to deny, minimize, or rationalize the other person's wrong behavior so they will not have to confront them. Instead, they need to let truth--not personal comfort--dictate how they will handle these uncomfortable situations.
- Cut off chronic complaints when he is unwilling to confront. Never confront for him!
- Focus on a concrete issue in a close relationship. Help him plan carefully how to bring up the issue, pray with them beforehand, etc. Remind him that success is the willingness to do the right thing for his loved one, regardless of how he/she responds initially. Be there afterward to talk over how it went. Praise him, especially if he stood his ground and did not compromise his principles. Point out how much better he feels after taking this step of faith.

#### Confrontive

GOAL: Identify and substantially eliminate destructive confrontations. Cultivate the ability to empathize with irritating people.

#### Practical steps:

- Persuade of the scriptural importance of gentleness, kindness, patience and forbearance. Consider these passages: Isa. 42:3; 1 Cor. 13:4-7; Gal. 6:2; Eph. 4:2,3,32; Col. 3:12; 1 Tim. 3:3; 2 Tim. 2:24,25; 1 Pet. 3:8. For those who aspire to ministry effectiveness and leadership, point out that there is no way around these qualities.
- Help him to see how his harshness and lunging have damaged relationships.
- Until more mature, urge him to delay most confrontations until he has cooled off, prayed, sought advice, etc. Many times, he will realize that what is needed is forbearance rather than confrontation.
- Help him learn how to confront righteously (see Christian Principles Unit #3, Week #10, "Encouraging & Admonishing One Another"). Talk through with him in detail how you would handle the situation. If possible, let him see you righteously confront another person--and then discuss it afterward. Be sure that he has a constructive plan for restoration whenever possible.
- Insist that he apologize when he has confronted unrighteously--even if he was right about the issue!

## **Assignment Due Next Week**

1. Study “do tell” and “don’t tell” passages (handout-Gossip versus Conferral) and try to harmonize.

## **Memory Verses**

None this week

## **Key Points to Know for Exam**

1. Be able to explain the definition and four key aspects of biblical love.
2. Be able to define and explain descriptive elements of the love spheres.
3. Be able to define and explain descriptive elements of the love defects.