

Homework That Renews the Mind and Effects Biblical Change

THE PURPOSE OF HOMEWORK

To demonstrate the importance and method of planning specific strategies that will help the counselee to actually implement the biblical directives in his/her life; to focus attention on the "how" as well as the "what" of biblical change.

1. Practice self-examination.
2. Practice the appropriate put-offs and put-ons.
3. Practice the graces of God.
4. Scripture basis
 - Prov 14:15-16
 - Prov 16:20
 - Prov 21:29
 - Rom 12:17

PLAN STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING BIBLICAL CHANGE

1. Identify and eliminate hindrances to change (Rom 13:14b)
2. Identify and increase what facilitates change (Rom 13:14a)
3. Assess the use of spiritual disciplines
4. Cast a vision for your counselee
5. Map out your agendas and assignments accordingly (be flexible and adjust as necessary)

BENEFITS OF HOMEWORK

1. Sets pattern for action and change
2. Clarifies expectations of the counselor and counselee
3. Promotes hope by communicating something can be done about the counselee's problems
4. Puts responsibility for change where it belongs
5. Decreases potential for counselor dependency
6. Tool for gathering data
7. Keeps the counseling going throughout the week
8. Provides a tool to assess the understanding and progress of the counselee both positively and negatively
9. Provides a good starting point for each session
10. Builds counselee's confidence to carry his/her own load
11. Facilitates implementation and practice of biblical principles essential to the development of godly habits

12. Provides counselee with a problem-solving, self help manual for the future
13. Provides counselee ideas and material that may be used in helping others

NATURE OF GOOD HOMEWORK

We are not merely solving people's problems, but we are pointing people to a person. Our homework is about making disciples.

1. Make use of Scripture
 - Assign regular Bible reading
 - Have them interact with their reading – e.g. “Read Ephesians, chapters 1-3. Try to read one chapter a day for the first three days. Then for next three days read each chapter again, this noting 3 important truths from each chapter about who you are and what you have in Christ. Be prepared to share this with me next week.”
 - Have them memorize Scripture
 - There is no set way to do it: do what works.
 - Have them use an app like Fighter Verses.
 - Have them write it down multiple times a day.
 - Have them read it multiple times a day.
 - Be specific with the plan and adjust as necessary.
 - Have them teach it and share it with others.
 - Assign particular passages that address their specific issues
 - Make certain to explain the context and doctrine behind any command passages.
 - Use particular passages to address doctrine issues, motive issues and behavior issues.
 - Use homework that lists multiple passages pertaining to a particular topic.
 - Use Bible reading worksheets like *Discovering Wonderful Things* (see below).
2. Assign what is appropriate to the person, his or her situation and problem, and to your agenda and plan for them.
3. Make the assignments clear with specific instructions and expectations.
 - Be clear about what and why you want a counselee to do something.
 - Be prepared to explain how to do it.
 - Make certain they know what you are asking them to do.
4. Make certain to check on and discuss homework.
 - If your homework is appropriate you can easily use it to set the agenda for the time with your counselee.
 - Can defeat the process and possibly diminish hope if assigned homework is ignored.

5. Make prayer a part of homework (see below for *Practice of Prayer* worksheet)
6. Make regular worship service attendance and fellowship part of your homework
 - Lifelong change and perseverance happen in community
 - For many, it is their isolated lifestyle that hinders their spiritual growth.
7. Assign spiritually rich resources (books, booklets, articles, audio, videos)
 - ACBC site
 - CCEF site
 - BCC site
 - P&R site
 - Faith Baptist Counseling (Lafayette, IN)
 - Focus Publishing
 - New Growth Press
 - Monergism
 - Grace Books International
 - Cruciform Press
8. Make use of data gathering assignments
 - Lists
 - Sins and failures
 - Likes and dislikes
 - Pros and cons
 - Ways to improve, God wants you to change
 - Ways to serve
 - Goals
 - Strengths and weaknesses
 - Think list
 - Inventories / Assessments (see Wayne Mack's *Homework Manual for Biblical Living*, vol. 1, 2 & 3)
 - Journals or diaries
 - General – what do, what happens, highlights of the day
 - Directed, more specific – temptation journal, fight journal, etc.
9. Make use of practical assignments
 - Date night
 - Acts of service

- Register for a class or to serve in a ministry
- Prepare a lesson to teach
- Interview someone

HOMEWORK SUPPORT

1. Research good resources
2. Keep good resources on hand for easy use
3. Keep a variety of resources (worksheets, Bible studies, apps, audio, videos, etc.)
4. Suggested essentials
 - *Christ and Your Problems*, Jay Adams
 - *Godliness Through Discipline*, Jay Adams
 - *You Can Trust God*, Jerry Bridges
 - *Gospel Primer*, Milton Vincent
 - *Two Ways to Live*, Matthias Media
 - *Basics for Believers*, Jim Berg

Remember that God causes the growth and He uses His Word and Spirit to do it. You will never come across the magic bullet or miracle pill in homework resources that will insure success.

PRACTICE OF PRAYER WORKSHEET

Mt 6:5–15 (ESV) — **5** “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. **6** But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. **7** “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. **8** Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. **9** Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. **10** Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. **11** Give us this day our daily bread, **12** and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. **13** And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. **14** For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, **15** but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Prep for PRAYER

1. Be genuine from your heart when you approach God in prayer. Don't pray to win a prize or to earn other people's favor. (v. 5)
2. Prepare to pray with God alone in mind. (v. 6)
3. Remember that God is alive and real and is deeply interested in what you have to say. He wants to commune and have fellowship with you. (v. 7)
4. Remember that God knows what is going on in your life. You aren't praying to inform Him of anything. You approach Him to engage in a relationship with Him. (v. 8)

Petition #1: GOD'S GLORY “hallowed be **your** name”

1. Write out a prayer that reflects your concern and desire for God's reputation to be upheld and protected.
2. Write out a prayer that reflects your concern for communicating well Who God is.

Petition #2: GOD'S PURPOSE "your kingdom come"

- 1. Write out a prayer that reflects your concern for God's purpose in history and people's lives.
- 2. Write out a prayer that reflects your concern and desire for His purposes, not yours, to be accomplished.

Petition #3: GOD'S PLAN "your will be done"

- 1. Write out a prayer that reflects your concern for God's will.
- 2. Write out a prayer that reflects your desire for His will, for the skill to understand His Word and the strength to carry it out.

Petition #4: YOUR PROVISION “our daily bread”

1. Write out a prayer that reflects your dependency on God for His provision.
2. Write out a prayer that reflects your desire to be content with God’s provision.

Petition #5: YOUR RELATIONSHIPS “forgive us ... we forgive”

1. Write out a prayer that reflects your desire to be right with God and others.
2. Write out a prayer of confession.

BIBLE STUDY WORKSHEET: "DISCOVERING WONDERFUL THINGS" Psalm 119:18

Before you begin to study...Pray for understanding! (Proverbs 1:23)

PASSAGE Ephesians 4:29 DATE: _____

OBSERVATION What does this passage say? Write out the text. Read the text out loud slowly in different translations. Memorize it.	INTERPRETATION What does this passage mean? (Define words - see cross-references.) Write out the interpretation. Is there a doctrine (teaching) to know? Is there a reproof (a sin to avoid)? Is there a correction (command to obey)? Is there instruction in righteousness (practical steps in how to put off the old nature and put on the new nature, Eph. 4:17-32)? II Tim. 3:16.	APPLICATION What does this passage mean to me? How should this change my life? What specific things can I do to apply this truth to my life? Write down what you are going to do, with whom and for whom and when you will start.	PRAYER Write out a personal prayer asking God to accomplish in your life what the passage demands.
<p>"Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear." (NASB)</p> <p>"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen." (NIV)</p>	<p>Define words like Unwholesome=</p> <p>Edification=</p> <p>Grace=</p> <p>X The tongue can be a source of harm</p> <p>X The tongue can build people up.</p> <p>X The tongue can be an instrument to minister grace.</p> <p>Application</p> <p>Johnny: Dependable – Wise Full of faith – Forgiving Enthusiastic – Resourceful Thrifty – Sincere Punctual – Tolerant</p> <p>Harry Cautious – Grateful – Neat Has initiative – Responsible Courageous – Decisive Determined – Sensitive - Loyal</p>	<p>I must stop saying unwholesome words like:</p> <p><i>"Can't you ever do anything right?"</i> <i>"You're always 10 minutes late!"</i> <i>"Can't you ever listen the first time?"</i></p> <p>I will make a list of the five people closest to me and the ten character qualities I appreciate about them and purpose to compliment one person each day.</p> <p>Dick: Well disciplined - Bold Faithful - Discerning Good listener - Persuasive Content - Fair</p> <p>Jane: Courteous - Kind Thoughtful - Well organized Humorous - Joyful Cheerful voice - Energetic</p> <p>Suzy: Persistent – Available Accurate – Precise – Creative Reverent – Thorough Confident - Patient</p>	<p>Father, show me the things I say that are hurtful and cutting and help me to stop saying words that are unwholesome. Help me to say words that will build people up today and encourage them.</p> <p>RESULTS</p> <p>What happened in my life because I applied this truth?</p> <p>The Holy Spirit pointed out to me that I say many more unwholesome (hurtful) words than I thought.</p> <p>I was able to keep my goal of one positive comment every day, and, in fact, on three days I could remember complimenting at least four people in the course of the day.</p>