COURSE 6

2015

BIBLICAL COUNSELLING TO FAMILIES: CHILDREN & THEIR PRIMARY CAREGIVERS

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Four Learning Areas

1. **Pregnancy - 3 years (embrional, baby & toddler phases)**
2. **3-7 Years (infancy & early childhood phases)**
3. **7-12 years (childhood & puberty phases)**
4. **12 – 18 years (adolescense)**

Notes:

- **Children differ from each other**
- **Learning areas are overlapping & interrelated**

Learning Area 2

21 March 2015

Presentation focuses on counselling children 3 – 7 years

Counsellors will also learn to empower primary caregivers to parent (including to counsel) their children

Terminology: 3 – 7 Year Olds

Grouping:

2-3:	Toddler	Peuter
4-5:	Infant	Kleuter
6-8:	Infant / Child (junior)	Kind
9-12:	Child (middle)	Kind / Puber
12-18:	Child (senior)	Kind / Adolescent

Notes:

- Each child is unique
- Phases overlap
- Don’t generalize

Resources Compulsory

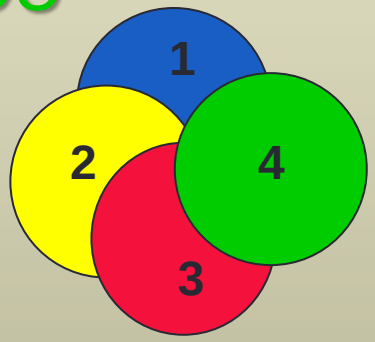
- **The Bible**
- **ABBO Course 1,2 & 3**
- **Peace, M. & Scott, S.W.** 2010. The Faithful Parent: A Biblical Guide to Raising a Family. P&R Publishing. ISBN 978-1-59638-201-5 Chapter 5 (Augustine) **10 p**
- **Tripp, P.D.** 2009. Getting to the Heart of Parenting. DVD. CDR Communication. Session 5 & 6: Ages 0-5 (Augustine Bookroom). (Also prescibed for Learning Area 1).
- **Tripp, T.** 2005. 2nd edition. Shepherding a Child's Heart. Revised and Updated. Wapwallopen: Shepherd Press. ISBN 0-9663786-0-1 Chapter 1 – 15. **160 p**

Resources Optional

- **Britz, H.** 2008. Kweek gesonde gesag. Vanderbijlpark: Carpe Diem Media. ISBN9 781770 310827
- **Cattanach, A.** 2004. Play Therapy With Abused Children. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. ISBN 1-85302-193-8
- **Coetsee, D.** 2011. Walking With Wounded Children. White River: Petra College.
- **Cloud, H. & Townsend, J.** 1998. Boundaries With Kids. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. ISBN 0-310-22220-6
- **Landreth, G.** 1991. Play Therapy.
- **Tripp, P.D.** 2002. Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands. Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing.
- **Tripp, T.** 2001. Shepherding a Child's Heart: Parent's Handbook. Wapwallopen: Shepherd Press. ISBN 0-9663786-4-4.
- **Van Zyl, L.** 2007. Die ontwikkelingsfases van jou kind. Wellington: Lux Verbi. ISBN-10: 0 7963 0655 9

A Biblical Method of Counselling 3-7 Year Olds

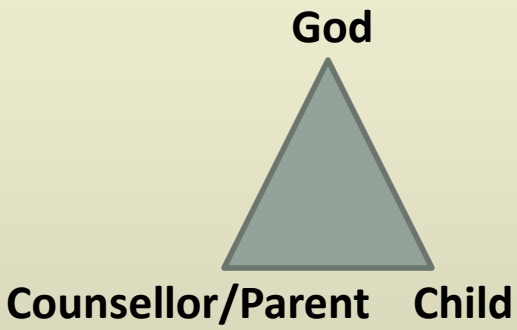
1. Build a Relationship : LOVE
2. Understand: KNOW
3. Confront: SPEAK
4. Activate: DO



PHASES OVERLAP

Building a Relationship With Infant

- Enter his world
- Incarnate God's love to him
- Identify with him
- Accept him with agenda



Communicate through play & words

Tripp, 2002:115-159

Enter World of Infants

- Entrance gate = experience of child
- Joys & sorrows/hurt
- Validate experience with understanding & empathy
- Minister hope: “God sees your situation, hears your voice, understands & promises his help”
- Build trust by providing structure and operating on the level of the child
- Get a commitment from parents to create enough time for counselling

Tripp, 2002:115-160

Enter World of Parents & Children

Examples of Entrance Gate Questions:

- What pressurizes infant most at present? Situation
- What emotions does he have? Strategy
- What is he afraid of? Structure
- How does child experience God in this situation? Treasure

Tripp, 2002:115-160

Incarnate God's Love

- Show mercy: Come alongside child
- Have compassion: Feel with child (**Rom 12:15**)
- Bear fruit of Spirit (**Gal 5:22**)
- Spend enough time
- Be patient & persevere
- Avoid over-dependency

Tripp, 2002:133-140

Identify With Suffering

- Jesus Christ suffered vicariously (**Is 53:3**)
- Jesus Christ identifies & helps us with pain & temptations (**John 14:18**)
- Counsellor has own suffering and can identify to some extent with the (unique) suffering of the child (**2 Cor 1:3-5**)
- Counsellor may share own experiences in a discrete manner (**2 Cor 1:8-11**)

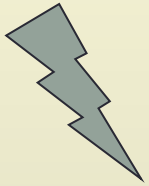
Tripp, 2002:141-157

Accept Child with Agenda

- Accept where child is: reality of his troubles (**John 16:33; Gen 47:9; Job 5:7; Ps 90:10**)
- Promote dependency on God by expressing own reliance on God: “I trust God will guide us”.
- Assure child that God will help her to handle her situation in a godly manner
- God wants us to change continuously

Tripp, 2002:158-160

Understanding Infant



Situation

External: Past, present & future
Internal: Body

Treasure:

Control of the heart

Structure:

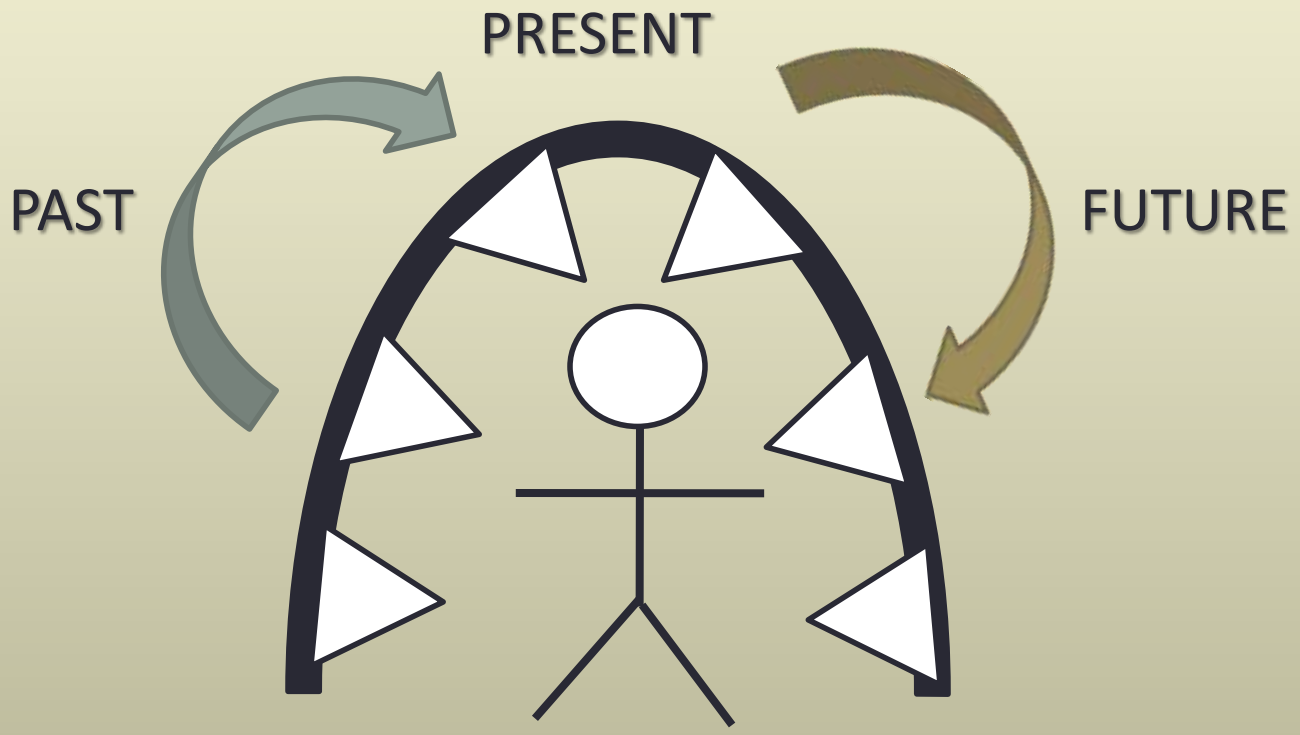
Thoughts, desires, motives, goals

Strategy:

Reaction to the situation
Behavior, habits, patterns

UNDERSTAND THROUGH PLAY AND WORDS

Understanding Infant's Situation



Situation of Infant

- Pregnancy (wanted/unwanted; difficulties to get pregnant) development of unborn child
- Birth
- Child's physical condition (development; abilities; injuries; illness)
- Style of parenting: attunement before & after birth
- Other people's behavior: emotions; acts; communication
- The primary care givers (parents) constitute the child's main situation
- Assessing parents' shaping influence (parents' hearts and behavior towards child) enables counsellor to counsel infants (& parents)

Situation: Shaping Influences

A child allows influences to shape him by the way he responds to them from the orientation of his heart

1. Family structure

- How many parents
- How many generations involved
- How many children
- Birth order of children
- Relationships of all family members to child
- Personalities, abilities, interests of members

Tripp, T. 2005:10-14

Situation: Shaping Influences

A child allows influences to shape him by the way he responds to them from the orientation of his heart:

2. Family values

- What are the important themes in parents' lives?
- Are people more important than things?
- How close/distant are parents to children?
- What are the rules?
- Where does God fit into the family?
- Are values based on human traditions or on Christ (Col 2:8)?
- How are the relationships with neighbours & friends?
- Secrets (how much does dad earn)?
- Who trusts who?

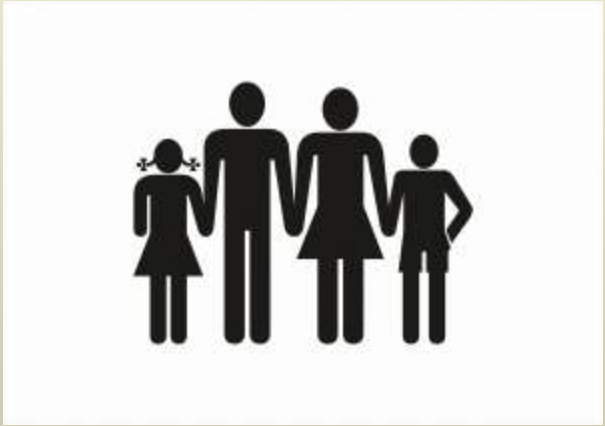
Tripp, T. 2005:10-14

Situation: Shaping Influences

A child allows influences to shape him by the way he responds to them from the orientation of his heart

3. Family roles

- Is father involved or distant?
- Who pays the bills?
- What is the mother's role?
- Other kids?



4. Family conflict resolution

- How is conflict handled?
- Walk away from problems?
- Talk?
- Resolve in a biblical way?
- Fight?

5. Family response to failure of children

- Are children mocked, ridiculed, made fun of, criticized, encouraged?

6. Family history

- Death, money, health, mobility

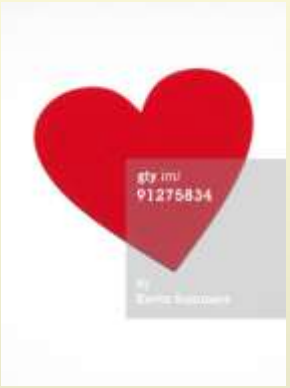
- **Tripp, T. 2005:10-14**

Situation: Shaping Influences

- Two mistakes:
  1. Determinism: Child = helpless victim.
  2. Denial of influences (Prov 29:21).
- "Christian determinism" believes that if a child has a good childhood, he/she will turn out to be OK; a proper environment will produce a proper child.
- Bible: Parent is not moulding passive clay. Clay responds to shaping. Children are never neutral or passive receivers of shaping, but active responders.

Tripp, T. 2005:15-17

Situation: Shaping Influences



Child's relationship (orientation) to God determines how he responds to parenting

- Good shaping influences don't automatically produce good children (Prov 4:23).
- Child responds to shaping influences from a heart that knows God or a heart that is controlled by an idol: e.g performance, power, sensual pleasure, love for possessions.
- Parents should communicate with children about it.
- Parents should structure influences under their control & shepherd the Godward orientation of child. Children are never neutral.
- Preventing bullying & ridiculing your child is less important than shepherding his heart: Helping your child to understand who he is in Christ and to handle the pressures from that position.

Tripp, T. 2005:15-17

Situation: Shaping Influences

God's concern with the parent's shaping influence

- Gen 18:19: God chose Abraham to command his children to stay on God's way
- Deut 6:6-9: God's commandments must be in the mind of the parent so that the parent will love God as the only God with his mind, heart and power. He must model & teach his children to do the same and give reasons for the command (21-25).
- Eph 6:4: Don't provoke your children; they may react with anger. Discipline and reprimand them according to God's will.
- Col 3:21: Fathers (& mothers) should not criticize their children all the time. They may react with discouragement.

Tripp, T. 2001:12

Shaping Influences: Unbiblical Parenting Goals

Parents desire for their kids: success; happiness; comfort. In order to help their kids to be successful, parents use ways:

- Developing special skills: Classes in sport, dance, music. How many? Does it fit parent or child? What are the values of the coaches? Will there be biblical instruction on self image, competition, companionship, etc?
- Psychological adjustment: Pop Psychology is about building self esteem of children, but not about esteeming others; about being served but not serving others. Can those advice stand the test of Scripture?
- Saved children: "As long as child is saved, all problems will be solved". Keep in mind: (1) Human heart can deceive itself (2) After profession of faith a child still needs training for sanctification

Tripp, T. 2005:40-42

Shaping Influences: Unbiblical Parenting Goals

Parents desire for their kids: success; happiness; comfort. In order to help their kids to be successful, parents use ways:

- Family worship: Belief: "The family that prays together stays together". Family devotions may be valuable, but is no substitute for true spirituality. Scripture should be connected to reality.
- Well behaved children: Children are taught social skills and how to make guests comfortable. Good manners must be rooted in servant hood. They are not a means to manipulate others to serve self.
- Good education: Academic achievement and recognition don't guarantee wisdom.
- Control: Parents simply want to control their kids by applying what their own parents applied. Motive: Not character building but personal convenience & public appearance .

Tripp, T. 2005:42-43

Shaping Influences: Unbiblical Parenting Goals

- Col 2:8: Legalistic traditions of people
- Eph 5:8-10: Darkness brings forth bad fruit
- Lev 20:26: God sanctified Israel: put them aside; took them out of heathen nations
- Deut 18:9-10: Don't follow the ungodly ways of the heathen: "We sacrifice our children in a fire when we hand them over to ungodly coaches who teach them to serve idols in sport, modelling and debating".

Tripp, T. 2001: 37-38

Shaping Influences: Unbiblical Parenting Motives

- What pay off is there for the parent? What motivates the parent: anxiety; envy; love of self; fear of man; pride; desire for approval; greed; selfish ambition.
- Israel had to heed the influence of Canaan. Don't be squeezed into a worldly mode (Rom 12:1-2).
- What is a worthy biblical goal? To glorify God and to enjoy Him. Wrong to teach children to focus simply on satisfying their own needs, and taking delight in excitement and possessions.

Tripp, T. 2001: 38-39

Shaping Influences: Unbiblical Parenting Methods

Case Study

Little girl at airport: very demanding.

Mother is fed up: “I’m sick of you. I hate you. Go away from me. I don’t want you.”

Girl says she is sorry & behaves well.

Comments:

Mother succeeds to change child’s behaviour with wrong method.

Biblical goals require biblical methods.

Tripp, T. 2005: 58-59

Shaping Influences: Unbiblical Parenting Methods

TV-programs; so-called experts; traditions, e.g.: “I didn’t turn out so bad – my dad yelled at me and knocked me around once in a while”.

Discern unbiblical abusive or permissive methods:

Pop Psychology:

- Parent makes deals or bribes child with gifts or money
- Evil desire in child’s heart is used as a motivation to change behaviour
- Child is not taught to look out for the interests of others
- Not taught to submit under authority
- Not taught to have biblical reasons for responsibility or neatness.

Tripp, T. 2001: 60-61

Shaping Influences: Unbiblical Parenting Methods

Behavior Modification:

- Reward good behaviour & ignore or punish bad behaviour.
- Good behaviour can be praised, but not rewarded, e.g. to give an ice cream when he obeys a command.
- Heart is trained to greedy self-interest. Junior is taught to live from lust.
- Example: Names of kid on a piece of paper in a jar whenever something good has been done & taken out when child didn't do something right. Prize draw at end of week. An effective tool to teach children to be selfish. They perform for parental approbation. Also learn not to perform when mom is not looking.
- Of course biblical incentives are temporal blessings attached to obedience, but not goals in themselves. God honours those who honour Him for His sake (1 Sam 2:30).

Tripp, T. 2001: 61-62

Shaping Influences: Unbiblical Parenting Methods

Emotionalism:

- Parent uses an emotion of the child to change child's behaviour, e.g. mother uses fear of abandonment at air port to get the child to be submissive.
- Emotion of parent may also be used to motivate child: "You are hurting my feelings when you act like that"; "You are hurting my reputation as a community leader".
- Parent doesn't appeal to the glory of God.
- Another example: Child is punished – put on a chair in middle of living room; everybody is ignoring her. She learns not to change her heart, but to fear and avoid the emotional privation of being on the chair. She may learn to please her parents. Or she may learn to isolate herself from her parents internally to avoid the pain of rejection.

Tripp, T. 2001: 62-63

Shaping Influences: Unbiblical Parenting Methods

Punitive Correction:

- The threat of punishment is used to control the child: yelling; hitting out of unholy anger.
- Examples: Children are grounded from bikes, phones, TV, other children.
- Grounding is not corrective; it is punitive.
- It doesn't teach him to respect God.
- Grounding is too easy. It doesn't require discussion or exploring the child's heart; or patient instruction.

Erratic Eclectisism:

- Draws freely from many sources.
- Parents try everything and stick to what works for them: contracts; spanking; grounding; bribery.
- Parents stay unsure
- Children are confused.

Tripp, T. 2001: 64-65

Shaping Influences: Unbiblical Parenting Methods

Case study

Child is not doing home work

- Bribery: “Do it all week and I will take you to the ball game”
- Emotional: “When you don’t, I feel that I have wasted my money on you”
- Punitive: “You didn’t do it, so no TV for a week”
- Behaviour modification: “For every day you do it, I’ll put a slip of paper in the jar”

Tripp, T. 2001: 64-65

Shaping Influences: Unbiblical Parenting Methods

Bad Methods

- All these methods teach child to please the parent and not God.
- They may bring distance between child and parent.
- Children may resent parents' attempts to control their behaviour.
- Depth of communication & relationship may be lost.
- All methods shepherd the child's heart, in the right or wrong direction. What trains behaviour, also trains the heart.
- Unbiblical methods are some form of behaviourism. Behaviourism can change behaviour. But the roots are false. It teaches the child not what is acceptable to God, but what will get me what I want or help me avoid what I don't want.

How can Jesus Christ and the cross be put in the centre of a parent's approach?

Tripp, T. 2001: 47; 2005:66