

STARTING LINE:
**WHY ARE SO MANY
CHRISTIANS UNHAPPY?**

THOUGHT STARTER:

Can you learn from an "old timer"?

The Word that God speaks is alive and active: it cuts more keenly than any two-edged sword: it strikes through to the place where soul and spirit meet, to the innermost intimacies of a man's being: it exposes the very thoughts and motives of a man's heart.

Hebrews 4:12, Phillips

What I teach across the world is based on forty years of Bible memorization and reflection. Acting on these insights has been life changing for me and my clients.

My counseling career began when, as a 26-year-old engineer, the Holy Spirit tamed my vicious temper. People who knew me marveled at the change.

Some of them asked if I could help them. With zero knowledge of the Bible, my wife and I gathered Bible verses useful for my friends and me. Two in particular caught my attention:

Blessed is the man . . . [whose] delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. (Psalm 1:1-2, KJV)

Those who love Thy law have great peace, And nothing causes them to stumble. (Psalm 119:165, NASB)

To obey biblical guidelines as I lived out my life, I needed these guidelines in my head. For me, this clearly meant Bible memorization. Even now, forty years later, I still consider Bible memorization the single most important aid in my Christian life and in my counseling.

During the challenging years of obtaining a doctorate in this field, I listened to hundreds of stories from all levels of life and economic backgrounds. During those years, I studied with a secular textbook at one hand and a Bible at the other. I saw a wide gulf between the two approaches.

You can find relief from either the secular humanist or the biblical counselor. However, in the long run, I find that relief resulting from human efforts without God is often a cloud without water, a broken promise, a hope builder, and a heart breaker. We often think we have found the answer when the problem appears to have gone away. In fact, the long-term problem continues under the surface. Often the consequences of obtaining quick relief leads to more difficult issues at a later time.

The cure offered in the Bible promises that the problem will be dealt with, solved, and finished; it describes an achievable goal. Christ holds the *cure* to the things that disturb us, and *relief* is the automatic result. He offers us His supernatural peace. He heals our broken hearts and wounded spirits with a love beyond human measure.

The statement is strong: the Bible offers a unique and quick cure for the things that disturb us. But, we need to remember that like a cold, we can be cured of one and then get another; equally so, we can be cured of a problem and get the same problem again if we don't follow biblical directions.

I have spent thousands of hours working with people using both approaches: relief from symptoms and effecting "the cure." I can say without reservation that the cure is most rewarding for both the counselor and the counselee. Only this approach will put me out of business!

In the following lessons take a look at the relief available through people helping people, through human efforts apart from God. Then, explore the many dimensions of Christ the Cure: God's healing love can transform the most miserable life into one of comfort, joy, and deep personal peace.

- I recommend that you memorize the verse at the beginning of each chapter. Think about the verse for a week or two:
- Recall the verse as often as possible.
- Examine what the verse means to you.
- Discuss the verse with others.
- Observe yourself in relation to the verse.
- Observe others in relation to the verse.
- Compare the verse to what you hear on radio and TV, in conversations and sermons.
- Compare the verse to what you read in books, magazines, and newspapers.
- Find other Bible verses that are similar.

Ten verses in your head at the end of this course is much better than a hundred pages in your notebook. Don't rush.

Hopefully, as you read the following pages, these lessons that I have collected

from forty-plus years of living will help you along your way. Remember, you have a choice: relief or cure.

HENRY BRANDT
1991

A comparison of the two approaches:

The world is self existing. . . .

There is no God. . . .

No deity can save us: we must save ourselves. . . .

*Ethics is autonomous and situational,
needing no theological sanction. . . .*

*As in 1933, humanists still believe that traditional theism,
especially faith in the prayer-hearing God,
assumed to love and care for persons,
to hear and understand their prayers,
and to be able to do something about them,
is an unproved and outmoded faith. . . .
Reasonable minds look to other means for survival. . . .*

HUMANIST MANIFESTO II, 1973

The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God."

SOLOMON'S FATHER, 1000 B.C. (Psalm 14:1, NKJV)