

## Taking a History Using Section 2 (My Story) of the Workbook

\*Note: I usually assign the entire section (minus the Personal Summary) as homework at the end of the 1st session; we probably will not review it at the 2<sup>nd</sup> session, but I will use it to begin putting together their history/LMD. At the 2<sup>nd</sup> session, I make copies of their homework, tuck it in their folder, and spend the rest of the session on Core Needs (via the Looking for Love Power Point or just talking about it from pages 8-11 in section 3.

### Using Section 2 Page by Page:

#### Page 1—Introduction

- At session 3, I begin by **reading the intro**, emphasizing the middle sentence: *The circumstances and relationships in your past often influence how you act and what you think, feel, and believe in the present. The past can serve as a window into understanding the present.* I also stress the last line: *It is our prayer that God would use these next several weeks to reveal to you His perspective on how your past has shaped your present.*
- Then I move to the questions section, reading the question, and allowing them to share their response. The following are some suggestions/comments I have regarding client responses:
  - 1) If there is nothing in their answer that pertains to “early years,” try to ask them if there was anything in their family of origin in their first 10 years that they believe helped to shape them. No worries if they say that they do not remember. We have multiple methods to eventually get to those early years.
  - 2) It has been my experience, that most answer “yes,” however, I have had some clients say that their husbands will not come in for counseling because they do not believe that their past has anything to do with their present circumstances. Regardless of a client’s or their spouse’s opinion, “expects agree” that a person’s past definitely has an effect on their present. Here is a quote from one such expert, Dr. Charles Solomon, in his book, *The Ins and Outs of Rejection*: (first sentence from his preface) *The author has found that persons who have mental/emotional disturbances usually have not had their need for love and acceptance met in their childhood, and the effect has continued in their adult lives.* (Chapter 1— “Rejection: A Family Thing”, page 13) *In working with persons who have mental and emotional disturbances, there is one trait which pervades most, if not all, of those seen in the counseling office. This trait is characterized by an impaired ability to give or receive love and is usually traceable to a person’s childhood and parents who had the same problem. Although there may have been a type of love in the home, a child sensed some degree of overt or covert rejection—hence, the categorization of symptoms which follow could be subsumed under the heading, the Rejection Syndrome.* [This will be addressed on p. 3]

- 3) It has been my experience that most clients say “no, they would not change it” even when they have experienced some very traumatic experiences, usually with a comment to the effect that because “it has all shaped me into who I am today.”

### Page 2—Feelings

- I ask the client to tell me why they identified the emotions they circled, asking questions regarding the circumstances/relationships that caused them to experience them. I sometimes find that even though the sheet says to consider the early years, they sometimes have focused on more recent situations. Again, try to ask them to recall a time that they felt that way in the early years.

### Page 3--Rejection

- This page can serve as “the mother lode” for all you need to complete the LMD. These early experiences of rejection, perceived or real, effect an individual throughout his life.
- Before asking the client to tell me about the times they experienced what they circled, I “set up” the reason we are asking about this by reading the definition of rejection in the box near the bottom of the page: *Rejection can be defined as the absence of, or alienation from, meaningful love.*
- Some thoughts for the counselor to consider, some of which may be helpful to share with a client at times:
  - “Growing up in an atmosphere of rejection programs one for rejection. And when he finds himself in a situation where he is not rejected, he somehow sets it up so he will be rejected. Then he knows how to conduct himself. He is much like a person who has been in a prison cell for years and hates it but knows every inch the place. After a while, his prison cell becomes his protection or security. He can respond to any situation except freedom!” (Solomon, p. 31)
  - The effect also often extends to his concept of God. “Having difficulty attaining acceptance on a human level, it is only natural that he would feel unacceptable to God. Such persons who have received Christ as Lord and Savior still find it difficult to believe that God loves them unconditionally.” “Not feeling accepted by others, they do not feel accepted by God.” (Solomon, p.29)
  - “The person who has had a pattern of rejection from childhood will often read rejection into a situation or conversation where none exists. And, whether or not the rejection is actual, if he reads rejection into the conversation or circumstances, it opens up old rejection wounds which amplify many times the supposed or actual rejection.” (Solomon, p. 34)
  - “One of the most obvious relationships negatively affected by the results of rejection is the marital relationship. The person who has experienced rejection does not know how to give or receive love and has never learned basic trust.” (Solomon, p. 33)
- Work through the examples with the client, realizing that this could take more than one session, depending on the number of examples they circled, and on the severity of the circumstances.

- **Miscellaneous Tidbits on page 3**

- Another word for “covert rejection” could be “subtle”
- Another form of covert rejection connected with “over-protection” is “over-indulgence—doing everything for the child (“loving them to death”; Solomon notes that it is “rejecting by love”); look for this pair especially if a client was an “only child”
- One more example of covert rejection that you may want to consider is “withdrawing love when performance is not up to the expected standard” (this is performance-based/conditional love)

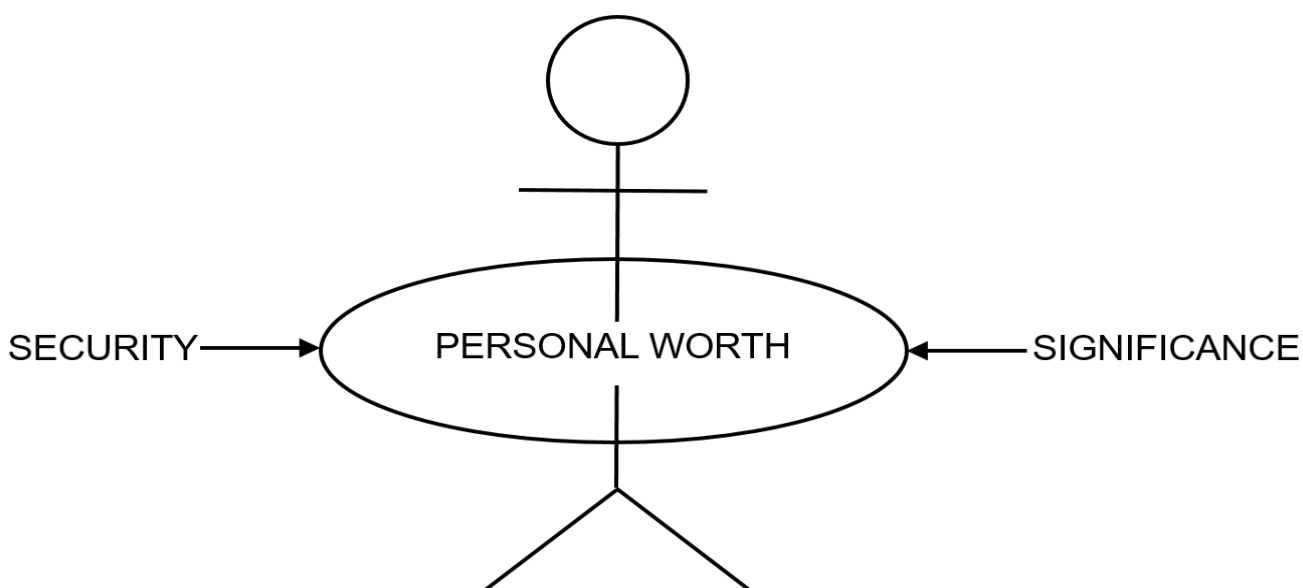
#### Page 4—Survey of Life’s Needs and Goals

- I usually do not review this page before doing a little “teaching” using page 5.
- Also, their responses on this page can also provide a lot of helpful information regarding the ways they have attempted to meet their own needs apart from Christ. [If you have reviewed the Looking for Love PowerPoint, this point regarding what people look to meet their needs was touched on.]
- When explaining how to complete this page for homework, be sure to tell them NOT to write the “right” answers, i.e., that Jesus would make me feel more secure and significant; I often say to respond how they really **feel**.
- This entire process is going to be about exchanging their self-life and dependency on others to meet their needs for Christ’s life as their source for all they need in life.

#### Page 5—Fulfillment/Satisfaction + Personal Worth (Self-Worth) = Two Needs

- Explanation for this page comes from Dr. Larry Crabb’s *Effective Biblical Counseling*
  - p. 61—People have **1 Basic Personal Need** [BPN] which requires **2 kinds of input for satisfaction**; the most BPN is a sense of personal worth (an acceptance of oneself as a whole, real person); the 2 required inputs are: 1-**significance** (purpose, importance, adequacy for a job, meaningfulness, impact) and 2-**security** (love—unconditional and consistently expressed; permanent acceptance)
  - p.61—“I believe that before the Fall, Adam and Eve were both significant and secure. From the moment of their creation their needs were fully met in a relationship with God unmarred by sin. Significance and security were attributes or qualities already resident within their personalities, so they never gave them second thought. When sin ended their innocence and broke their relationship with God, what were formerly attributes now become needs. After the Fall, Adam hid from God, fearing His rejection. They both blamed another for their sin, afraid of what God might do. They were now insecure. The earth was cursed and Adam was instructed to work by the sweat of his brow. There was now a struggle between man and nature. Would Adam have the strength to handle the job? He now was wrestling with threatened insignificance.

- p. 62—Although men and women need both kinds of input, for men, the primary route to personal worth is **significance**, and for women, the primary route is **security**.
- p.68— “The point of this chapter [for us, p.5 in the workbook] is to illustrate and clarify the 2 basic needs of people. We all need **significance and security** if we are to function effectively. If we can regard ourselves as **significant and secure**, we feel worthwhile as persons. Proverbs 18:14 asks the question, ‘A wounded spirit who can bear?’ When a person feels worthless, he will make it a top priority matter to protect himself from an increase in those unbearable feelings and to ease the feelings already there.”



- p. 69—Solomon suggests that “problems develop when the basic needs for **significance and security** are threatened.”
- pp.71— “True **significance and security** are available only to the Christian, one who is trusting in Christ’s perfect life and substitutionary death as his sole basis of acceptability before a holy God. When the resources of God are not available because of unbelief, the individual is left with no hope for genuine **significance and security**. Life has neither purpose nor unconditional love apart from the Lord. People then develop alternative strategies for learning to feel worthwhile as they can. Because these strategies can never really work and because they often run up against obstacles, people do not enjoy **significance or security**, two elements which all of us desperately need if we are to live effective, productive, richly creative, and fulfilled lives.”
- p.70—“**Significance** depends upon understanding who I am in Christ.” [Which is one of the primary areas we address in the process.] My need for **security**

demands that I be unconditionally loved, accepted and cared for, now and forever.” [Of course, this need can only be met in this way by God, and often clients are unable to allow Him to meet this need due to misconceptions about God, which will also be addressed in our process.]

- After reviewing these points on page 5, I then take the client back to page 4 and say, “Let’s see how you have attempted to meet these 2 BPN.”

### **Page 6—Inventory of Spiritual Experiences**

- The purpose of this page is to have the client identify anything they have looked to other than God in order to meet needs. Participation in any of these counterfeit spiritual experiences, and the false beliefs that may have developed as a result must be renounced.
- This can be done by a simple prayer in which the client repents of/renounces involvement with any of these spiritual experiences, thanking God for His forgiveness and acknowledging a willingness to be dependent only on the Holy Spirit.

**To fill in any gaps in the history, refer to “Key Things to Consider When Taking a History (with sample questions)” Page**