NationsUniversity®

M 20

Introduction to Pastoral Care

Foundations for effectively communicating the love, grace, and compassion of God

This course introduces Master of Divinity students to the foundations of pastoral care. Ministers, whether paid professional or laity, encounter struggling individuals regularly. Sometimes, those encounters are within the ministries of a local congregations, and at other times, they are on street corners, funeral homes, or hospitals. This course seeks to provide ministry students with a sufficient understanding of their role as pastoral care providers regardless of the circumstances.

This course is divided into three modules. Module 1 discusses the scriptural foundation of pastoral care and the history of its implementation over time. Module 2 addresses the key to effective communication with a special emphasis on communicating pastoral content. Module 3 is a Supervised Ministry Experience which requires the student to put into practice the skills learned in the previous modules and to develop a comprehensive personal theology of pastoral care.

A student must secure a supervisor for this course. The supervisor will provide opportunities for the student to practice the skills being introduced. Additionally, the supervisor will provide feedback to the student and a final evaluation of the student's performance to the university.

Course Objectives
1. Understand the scriptural foundations of pastoral care
2. Identify key scriptures related to a variety of topics
3. Effectively listen and communicate in a variety of settings
4. Develop a personal theology of pastoral care

Credit. Credit for the course requires a score of 70 percent or greater on each of five different assignments. Each grade is valued at 20 percent of the final grade. Three (3) semester hours of graduate level credit will be awarded for successful completion.

Prerequisites. Admission into the Master of Divinity program and completion of all foundation courses.

Course Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, the student will be able to

1. Provide Christian leadership in times of crisis.
2. Explain the benefits of a spiritual worldview to others.
3. Demonstrate the biblical model for pastoral care in daily life.

Expectations

Academic Engagement
Individualized interaction with student advisor and other academic personnel (2 hours)
Examinations and course evaluation (2 hours)
Using the course syllabus as a guide for reading and study (20 hours)
Viewing online videos (7 hours)
Sub-total—31 hours

Academic Preparation
Preliminary (2 hours)
Reading from textbooks and online resources (30 hours)
Studying for module exams (6 hours)
Research paper on Theodicy: The Problem of Evil (9 hours)
Research and final paper on Theology of Pastoral Care (24 hours)
Sub-total—71 hours

Experiential Learning
(2 hours of Experiential Learning are counted as only 1 hour of instructional time. Therefore, the total number of hours earned in Experiential Learning must divided by two when calculating total hours.)
Recruiting and coordinating interviewees (6 hours)
Preparing questions for interviews (6 hours)
Participating in and documenting four "interviews" (12 hours = 3 hours x 4 interviews)
Review of interviews with Supervisor (2 hours)
Pre-meeting with Supervisor for Pastoral Care sessions (8 hours = 2 hours x 4 sessions)
Research and preparation for Pastoral Care sessions (12 hours = 3 hours x 4 sessions)
Supervised interaction in a pastoral care setting (8 hours = 2 hours x 4 sessions)
Preparing review of the supervised interaction (8 hours = 2 hours x 4 sessions)
Debriefing and reflection with Supervisor (4 hours = 1 hour x 4 sessions)
Sub-total—33 hours (66 hours @ 2:1 contact ratio)
Grand Total—135 hours

Letter of Introduction

Welcome to *M 20 Introduction to Pastoral Care*! Your decision to take this course will be one that I believe will be blessed by God as you continue preparing for or advancing your ministry. Regardless of the leadership role you may play in a local congregation or ministry, learning the foundations of pastoral care will help you walk alongside people, listen to their stories, and strengthen them and support them

as they go through life. Pastoral care is not always about crisis, though that seems to be when people think about it the most, but it is always about presence.

In this course you will be introduced to the biblical, theological, and historical context of pastoral care. From the very beginning of Scripture, pastoral care is modeled for us by God himself. Even as early as Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, and Enoch, God was present in the lives of his creation. Scripture further recounts many stories of God's followers being present or coming alongside others who are on a journey, sometimes literally and sometimes figuratively. And what better representation of pastoral care than the Holy Spirit himself who, by his very identification as *paraclete*, comes alongside us and ministers to us.

As you continue through the course you will be introduced to a few of the many historical figures who were called to pastoral care. From the legend of Martin de Tours to the Knights Hospitallers to Mother Teresa, you will find a connection with many companions who ministered alongside those in need of comfort. While professional chaplaincy may be fairly new in the world of ministry, its roots are in one of the oldest ministries in the world—caring for others.

After your introduction to the broad and beautiful context of pastoral care, you will be introduced to the most essential skills of all ministries, but especially this one. You will learn how to communicate, you will learn how to listen, and you will learn how to care. And you will learn to do all of these in the context of presence. In a world filled with impersonal social media, distractions and games, and self-satisfaction and self-aggrandizement, you will learn to be present, to listen, and to strengthen.

Finally, you will have the opportunity to see others at work in their pastoral roles. Perhaps you will choose to make a hospital visit with your minister, or make a house call with a hospice chaplain, or sit in on a counseling session with a Christian therapist. The opportunity to witness pastoral care and to dialogue with someone who is involved in it regularly will be invaluable. You will also practice your listening skills by interviewing others and hearing their stories. And, under the supervision of you field supervisor, interact with and provide guidance to individuals who are struggling.

This course is not for the faint of heart. Pastoral care takes courage, self-discipline, and self-awareness. It requires compassion and humility. And it requires a dependence on the guidance of the Spirit of God, because the Apostle Paul affirms for us that "God has not given us a spirit of timidity, put of power, love, and self-discipline" (2 Timothy 1:7). Pastoral care is the essence of God working through us for the benefit of others, and may well be the essence of God, period.

Procedures

1. The syllabus has three modules. Review each module to see the layout of the course.
2. Begin your work with Module 1. Read the syllabus carefully. Also read the material in the Electronic Collection as it is appropriate.
3. As you come to the end of Module 1, you will encounter your first **multiple-choice exam**. Review the syllabus and all reading assignments carefully.
4. When you are ready for the exam on Module 1, you may open it from the Course Menu.
5. After completing the exam, prepare a **1,000-word essay on Theodicy: The Problem of Evil**. The essay may be submitted using the submission link on the Course Menu.
6. Module 2 makes use of a number of videos and presentations. Watch the videos and presentations located on the Course Menu ***prior*** to reading the syllabus.

7. After completing Module 2, you may take the **multiple-choice exam** from the Course Menu.
8. After you complete Module 2 exam, there are four interviews you must complete. Instructions for the interviews are given at the end of Module 2. After completing the interviews, write a single **1,000-word summary of your interview experience** and upload it using the submission link on the Course Menu.
9. Module 3 is your supervised ministry experience. For this module you will need to secure a supervisor with appropriate training in pastoral care who will allow you to participate in at least four (4) pastoral care sessions. These sessions may include hospital visits, hospice visits, bereavement visits, addiction sessions, prison visits, or any number of settings. Instructions for this supervised portion are given in Module 3.
10. There is no exam for Module 3. However, upon completing your supervised ministry experience, you must submit a **2,000-word essay on your Theology of Pastoral Care**. The requirements for the essay can be found at the end of Module 3. When the essay is complete, you may upload it using the submission link on the Course Menu.
11. After completing all course requirements, please complete the Course Evaluation found at the bottom of the left-hand navigation menu.

Supervisor's Role

For this course, you will need secure a field supervisor. The field supervisor must have at least a master's degree in Bible, theology, divinity, or a related field and at least five years of experience in ministry. Five additional years of ministry experience may substitute for the master's degree if the supervisor holds a bachelor's degree.

During your interviews at the end of Module 2, your supervisor will simply serve to help you develop questions and process the interview content afterwards. He or she may also help you select appropriate candidates for interviewing.

During Module 3, your supervisor will play a more critical role. Your supervisor must be willing to allow you to participate in his or her ministry as it relates to pastoral care. You will observe and, as appropriate, assist your supervisor in providing pastoral care. You and the supervisor will work together to determine the need and setting, such as a hospital visit, private counseling, funeral, prison, or other, and how you wish to work together during the sessions. You must participate in four (4) sessions of pastoral care. It is to your advantage to participate in at least two different settings.

After the four sessions of pastoral care are finished, your supervisor will complete a simple evaluation of your leadership, spirituality, biblical knowledge, interpersonal skills, and compassion. Instructions for completing the evaluation will be emailed to your supervisor.

Things to Know

Module One (History and Theology of Pastoral Care)

1. Old Testament Foundations of Pastoral Care
2. New Testament Foundations of Pastoral Care
3. The Holy Spirit
4. History of the Chaplaincy
5. Modern definitions used in pastoral care and chaplaincy

6. Pastoral Care in Ministry
7. The Problem of Evil (Theodicy)
8. Theology of Suffering

Module Two (Fundamentals of Pastoral Care)

1. Basic Interpersonal Communication
2. Context and Content of Communication
3. Non-Verbal Communication
4. Emotional Intelligence
5. Communicating Pastoral Content

Module Three (Supervised Ministry Experience)

1. Practice in listening and hearing
2. Practice in interpersonal communication
3. Practice communicating as caring
4. Personal reflection on pastoral care
5. Personal theology of pastoral care

Electronic Collection

Clinebell, Howard and Bridget McKeever. Basics of Pastoral Care and Counseling: Resources for the Ministry of Healing and Growth (3rd Edition). Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2011. 496 pages.

LaMothe, Ryan. Ministry in a Troubled Society: The Necessity of Emotional Intelligence and Emotional Wisdom. *Priest*, Jul 2019, Vol. 75 Issue 7, pp 18-23.

Petersen, Bruce. *Foundations of Pastoral Care*. Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 2007. 371 pages.

Select Library

Fry, Virgil. Disrupted: Finding God in Illness & Loss (Selected poems and materials). Abilene, TX: Leafwood Publishers, 2007) https://lifelinechaplaincy.org/disrupted/

Lifeline Chaplaincy. Media Resources. https://lifelinechaplaincy.org/media/

Extended Resources

Adler, Ronald, George Rodman, and Athena du Pre. *Understanding Human Communication (13th Ed.)* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Chapman, Gary. *The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love that Lasts*. Chicago, IL: Northfield Publishing, 2010.

Collins, Gary. *Christian Counseling (3rd Edition)*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc.

_____. *Contemporary Christian Counseling Series*. Waco, TX: Word, Inc.

Crick, Robert and Brandelan Miller. *Outside the Gates: The Need for, Theology, History, and Practice of Chaplaincy Ministries*. Oviedo, FL: HigherLife Development Services, 2011.

Goleman, Daniel. *Emotional Intelligence: Why it Can Matter More Than IQ.* New York: Bantam Books, 2006.

Bradberry, Travis. *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*. San Diego, CA: TalentSmart Books, 2009.

Hellerman, Joseph. *When the Church Was a Family: Recapturing Jesus' Vision of Authentic Christian Community*. Nashville, TN: B& H Publishing Group, 2009.

Kubler-Ross, Elisabeth. *On Death and Dying*: What the Dying Have to Teach Doctors, Nurses, Clergy, and Their Own Families. New York: Scribner, 2014.

Morgan, Christopher and Robert Peterson (Eds.). *Suffering and the Goodness of God*. Theology in Community Series. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008.

Stinson, Randy and Timothy Paul Jones. *Trained in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2011.

Welch, Edward. *Side By Side: Walking with Others in Wisdom and Love*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2015.

Woodard, Whit. *Ministry of Presence: Biblical Insight on Christian Chaplaincy*. North Fort Myers, FL: Faithful Life Publishers, 2011.

Wright, H. Norman. *Communication: Key to Your Marriage: The Secret to True Happiness.* Bloomington, MN: Bethany House Publishing Company, 2012.

_____. *The Complete Guide to Crisis & Trauma Counseling.* Bloomington, MN: Bethany House Publishing Company, 2011.

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Introduction to Pastoral Care

Every Christian has the opportunity at least once in their walk with God to provide pastoral care to another person. Most Christians will never know that they had the opportunity because most do not have a good idea of what pastoral care is. Very few would even attempt to define it, and if asked if they had ever provided it, would quickly say, "No." However, pastoral care is as much a part of the Christian walk as Bible study or worship. When Jesus called Christians to love their neighbors, even the ones they do not like, he was calling Christians to a life of pastoral care.

Pastoral care is not a mystery. It is the introduction of a struggling life into the healing presence of God. Christians seek that presence all the time when they are going through their own struggles. Unbeknownst to them, when they help another person to experience God's healing presence, they have practiced pastoral care.

While it happens spontaneously and informally in the life of every Christian, ministers are expected to be able to do it more effectively than others. This expectation is not an unfair one. Therefore, this course will help Christians, and especially those preparing for ministry, to develop the understanding and skills necessary to be more effective in providing pastoral care.

Module 1 What is Pastoral Care?

Pastoral care is, to begin with, one of the most neglected areas of training for ministers. Numerous congregational ministers and missionaries have bemoaned the lack of preparation they had for providing pastoral care. If pastoral care were only a small part of ministry, perhaps that lack of preparation might not be significant. However, those with any experience in ministry find that 80% of non-teaching time is consumed by pastoral care duties. Overall, it represents well over 50% of a minister's routine. And yet, little training is provided.

In a recent conversation with the Chaplaincy Endorsement Commission, which assists in the recruiting of chaplains for the United States military, one worker stated that the lack of pastoral care training is one of the biggest struggles that new chaplains have. And unfortunately, few schools and seminaries teach

it. Being able to come alongside individuals in crisis, whether emotional, financial, spiritual, or otherwise, is critical to the success of the individual, the church, and the Kingdom of God.

So, if everybody needs it and nobody is getting it, what is it? You will be exposed to a wide range of definitions throughout ministry, but the simplest definition is a simple analogy. Pastoral care is the practice of "coming alongside" a person in need and showing them how God can heal or comfort them. Every time you put an arm around a widow, give a hug to a distraught mother, or even comfort a child after a lost sporting event with a word from or about God, you are providing pastoral care. Maybe you will provide biblical counseling. Maybe you will preach a funeral. Or maybe not. But the act of compassion and the extension of comfort from God is all that truly comprises pastoral care.

Unit 1. Biblical Foundations of Pastoral Care

Pastoral care is not new. While some of its professional manifestations may be more recent to the ministry scene, pastoral care is as old as creation itself. From the time God decided to create Eve to the friendship of David and Johnathon to Jesus and his disciples, pastoral care has been a part of God's story. And by revisiting some of these stories with this new perspective, it is easy to see what God wants us to do.

a. Old Testament Foundations. The Old Testament, or Hebrew Scriptures, contain many examples of individuals providing pastoral care. However, it is important to note that these individuals, though they may be acting contrary to the world around them, are acting in accordance with the instructions of God. Too often the "God of the Old Testament" is characterized as vindictive and cruel. That is simply not true. In fact, God acts graciously towards his people and towards those outside of Judaism. Additionally, God sets a high standard for his people in their relationships both within the biblical covenant and without.

A number of biblical passages come to mind when discussing pastoral care and its foundations in compassion and a compassionate God. A few of them follow.

Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow (Isa. 1:17).

[Lord] You have been a refuge for the poor, a refuge for the needy in their distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat (Isa. 25:4).

He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you
But to do justice; to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God (Micah 6:8)?

Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to act (Prov. 3:27).

I know that the Lord secures justice for the poor and upholds the cause of the needy (Psa. 140:12).

It should be clear that the Old Testament has the same compassionate God as the New Testament and has the same expectation of love, mercy, and justice. It should not, therefore, be surprising to find a number of stories in the Old Testament that exemplify this godly spirit of compassion that serves as the foundation of pastoral care.

Adam and Eve. When God created the world, he made it perfect. Every drop of water was in its place. Every type of plant was perfectly acclimated to its surrounding climate. Every animal was perfectly fashioned to survive and thrive in its world. We can assume, then, that God did the same with mankind when he created Adam and Eve. Both were created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27), and it is impossible to get any more perfect than that.

But in the creation narrative of Genesis, we learn one of the very first facts about the human character as it relates to pastoral care. "It is not good for man to be alone" (Gen. 2:18). God saw the need immediately for man to have someone to be with him. And while the focus of the narrative is on how man and woman came to be, it informs us of man's fundamental need: ***companionship and presence***.

As you consider the nature of pastoral care, it all begins here. Pastoral care cannot be practiced *en absentia*. Pastoral care, at its root, is a ministry of physical presence. While there may be times when being physically present is not possible, it must always remain the goal. A phone call to a grieving mother cannot replace the embrace by a caring friend. So, as you consider the nature of pastoral care and your calling to ministry, you must understand the need for and demands of presence.

Cain and Abel. Shortly after the story of creation in Genesis, we find the story of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4). While this story has been analyzed extensively for its theological insights into the nature of temptation and sin, its value in defining pastoral care is often overlooked. Yet, it is one of the clearest examples of what it means to "come alongside" a person who is struggling.

In the story, Cain and his brother, Abel, offer sacrifices to God. Abel's sacrifices are accepted by God, Cain's are not. The Bible does not explain why, at least not clearly, but it does tell us what is happening between God and Cain. It is in their conversation that we see God himself demonstrating another characteristic of pastoral care.

Cain has become downcast or upset because God has not accepted his sacrifice. God comes to Cain and asks him why he is angry and then gives him some advice. "If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it" (Gen. 4:6-7). It is in God's role as an advisor that we encounter another characteristic of pastoral care: ***guidance and encouragement*** in difficult times. God did not tell Cain that he did not need to be upset. Nor did God provide meaningless comfort—no matter how compassionate that may have seemed. Instead, God came to Cain's side, though we cannot be sure in what way, and encouraged him to do what is right and thereby have his countenance lifted.

"Countenance" is another word for facial expression. Cain's countenance, or his facial expression, had fallen; he was sad. God offered him a way to have his countenance lifted, or to be made happy again. God did not just offer consolation; he offered guidance. While it is appropriate for a Christian to comfort another person without providing guidance from God's Word, that comfort is not pastoral care. Pastoral care involves both comfort and guidance. So, when a minister comforts a grieving widow with words of hope from Scripture, that is pastoral care. When a Christian brother sits and drinks coffee with a friend who has lost his job, but all they talk about is the weather and sports, that is not pastoral care in the sense it is being used in this course. There is absolutely nothing wrong with sitting and talking, and it may well lead to opportunities for pastoral care in the future, but it is not pastoral care at its core. No one needs training on how to drink coffee and talk about the weather.

Eli & Samuel. In the book of First Samuel, we meet Samuel, a young protégé of the priest, Eli. Samuel has been helping in the temple since he was consecrated by his mother, Hannah, to serve with Eli. Eli, unfortunately, had allowed his sons, who were also serving as priests, to abuse their position for personal gain. Because Eli ignored the problem, God spoke to Samuel and had the young boy deliver a message to Eli. The message was a message of judgment against Eli and his sons. God was going to take away the priesthood from Eli and his whole family. The challenge facing Samuel, who was still a young boy, was how to tell his mentor and friend what God was going to do.

Eli made it easy for Samuel by demanding that Samuel tell him the truth. Eli knew it would not be good news because he knew he had been remiss in his supervision of his own sons. So, Samuel told him exactly what God had said. This characteristic of pastoral care goes hand-in-hand with guidance; it is ***courage***. If anyone ever says that ministry, and pastoral care in particular, is easy, then they are not doing very much of it.

Pastoral care, especially effective, meaningful pastoral care, does not take place in a comfortable office over a game of checkers or cards. It takes place in difficult places and situations. In the military, that can be obvious. But even in routine ministry, pastoral care must go to where the hurt is. That may be a funeral home, a hospital, a prison, or a bedroom covered in hospice medical equipment. In truth, it could be a restaurant as well. However, regardless of the place, the situation will require courage. Courage to be present. Courage to guide. Courage to speak God's words of power and comfort and direction into the life of someone who is struggling.

Hagar. In the story of Hagar (Genesis 16) we find a statement that once again exemplifies the nature of pastoral care. Hagar is a slave in the home of Abraham, the patriarch of Judaism. She is cast from his home into the desert by his wife, Sarah, when she becomes pregnant with Abraham's child. However, her pregnancy was not of her will, and God intervened. He sent an angel to comfort Hagar and to promise her that God would care for her and her children. Hagar makes a statement that is monumental, especially given the historical context. Hagar is a slave, a woman, and a foreigner in the house of Abraham. She has no standing, no rights, and no "value" at that time in history. She is beyond being peripheral; she is invisible to society. So, when she proclaims in verse 13, "You are a God who sees," she is identifying one of the most important traits of God and the one of the most important traits of pastoral care: ***seeing invisible people***.

The concept of "invisible people" may not make sense to some people in some parts of the world, so a brief explanation is needed. Invisible people are not, obviously, invisible, but they are treated as such. They are ignored or marginalized. Their needs and feelings are almost never considered in "the greater good of society." These may include the homeless, addicts, certain tribes or races, and even the terminally ill and aging. So, while they are not invisible, often, the world wishes they were.

The heart of pastoral care is seeing, and often seeking, these invisible people. While God may have chosen only one way to be saved, through Jesus the Christ, he did not choose only one type of person to save. Nor did he choose only one type of person to minister to. He ministered to lepers, tax collectors, fishermen, and Pharisees. He saw everyone and rejected no one.

David and Jonathon. Throughout the book of First Samuel we read about the friendship of David and Johnathon. Jonathan is the son of King Saul, and David is the young man who lived in the palace after defeating the giant, Goliath. While David and Jonathan became best friends, David and Saul became worst enemies. In fact, it reached the point where David had to flee the palace to save his own life. And who was it that helped him escape? Jonathan.

In a unique way, Jonathan provided pastoral care to David. He was present in his life. He worked alongside of him. He spoke honestly with David about the declining relationship between David and Saul. And when it came time to decide "who's side he was on" in the battle between Saul and David, Jonathan chose David. It is the decision to ***put other before ourselves*** that is a necessary component of pastoral care.

People will say and do many horrible things when they are hurting. Whether that is from the pain of loss or the pain of betrayal or the pain of illness, pain drives many of us beyond our senses—and sometimes our Christianity. To provide effective pastoral care, the minister must be forgiving and faithful. As ministers to those in need and who are struggling with life, their best interest, in light of God's will and word, must remain our first interest. Again, the New Testament reinforces this idea when Paul writes to the Philippian church in Phil. 2:4, "do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others." He then goes on to describe the personal decision of Jesus to die for our sins and make salvation possible for mankind.

Ruth and Boaz. In the book of Ruth, we find the story of two struggling widows, Naomi and Ruth. After Naomi's husband died, they return to Bethlehem where Naomi was originally born and married. She took Ruth, the widow of her own son, with her. There they hoped to find among their relatives a way to survive. The story follows Ruth as she meets Boaz, is cared for by him, and eventually marries him.

However, it is not the marriage that models for us another aspect of pastoral care but the way in which Boaz cared for Ruth and her mother-in-law. Boaz allowed Ruth to glean grain from his field. Gleaning was the practice of allowing the destitute to collect any grain left in the field that harvesters did not collect. Boaz not only allowed her to glean, but he told his workers to leave extra for her. And while there are certainly romantic nuances to the story, we find the important role that ***provision*** has in pastoral care.

It is too easy and too tempting to limit pastoral care to "a word from God" in a difficult situation. Pastoral care must not ignore the need that is seen. In the New Testament, James reinforces this idea when he

writes, “Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you tells him, ‘Go in peace; stay warm and well fed,’ but does not provide for his physical needs, what good is that?” (James 2:15-16).

b. New Testament Foundations. Within the New Testament, or Greek Scriptures, one will continue to find examples of individuals providing pastoral care to those around them. And as with the Old Testament, there are specific passages that call Christians to act in altruistic, compassionate, and loving ways.

Jesus declared, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’” (Matt. 22:37-39).

If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of god be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth (1 John 3:17).

And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith (Gal. 6:9-10).

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them (Eph. 2:10).

And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing (1 Cor. 13:2-3).

And we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men. See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all men (1 Thess. 5:14-15).

In short, love and actions on behalf of and for the good of others is the essence of New Testament Christianity and the foundation and pattern of pastoral care. Below are just a few more examples of men who lived out these instructions.

Jesus and his Disciples. Just as it was God who first demonstrated pastoral care to Cain, it is God who models it from the beginning of the New Testament. While examples from the Gospels are numerous, it is easy to see Jesus Christ fulfilling his role as pastor and shepherd in the relationship with his disciples. Jesus “came alongside” these men through his incarnation, sought them out in some of the most “invisible” places, and walked with them for three and one-half years. He taught them, encouraged them, empowered them, and guided and corrected them when needed.

Jesus and Zacchaeus. The story of Jesus and Zacchaeus, the tax collector from Jericho, demonstrates the calling to see the invisible people of the world. In Luke 19:1-10 we find Jesus’ encounter with Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus was a short man but a wealthy one. He was also a chief tax collector, so he was ostracized by the Jews. He may not have been invisible to people, but the people certainly wished he was.

Jesus, however, did not disregard this social outcast. In fact, as Zacchaeus was nestled up in a tree to get a better view of Jesus, the Bible says Jesus “looked up” to speak to Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus was not in a place to be seen easily. He was not hiding from Jesus, nor was he standing along the street shouting his name. Nevertheless, Jesus made the effort to look up into the tree and call out Zacchaeus’ name. Just as Jesus reminded his disciples in John 4:35, “Open your eyes and look at the fields. They are ripe for harvest,” so Jesus demonstrates by looking up and seeing those in need of spiritual care.

Ananias and Saul. Sometimes the calling to provide pastoral care requires courage. This requirement is illustrated in God's calling to Ananias. After Saul, whose name is later changed to Paul, is blinded on the road to Damascus, God needed someone to go and speak to him. God called Ananias, a Christian in Damascus, to go and visit Saul.

Of course, at this moment in history, Saul was persecuting Christians everywhere he went, and Ananias knew it (Acts 9:13-14). But when God called Ananias to seek out his enemy in order to minister to him, God was using Ananias to demonstrate the courage needed and the challenges to be expected in pastoral care. Christians cannot choose to whom they will or will not minister. They are called to minister to the widows, orphans, prostitutes, tax collectors, murderers, and everyone in between. It will seldomly be easy, so courage is requisite to the Christian life.

Paul knew all about the courage needed, which is why he penned 1 Tim. 1:7, "For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline." The courage Christians need to provide spiritual and pastoral care comes from the Spirit of God.

Barnabas and Paul. Even after Saul's conversion to Christianity, he was still an outcast and not to be trusted by many. One man, however, sought Saul out and encouraged him to turn his zeal and learning into a mighty weapon for God instead of against him (Acts 11:25-26). This man, Barnabas, who's very name means "son of encouragement," models for all the idea of encouragement in pastoral care.

Epaphroditus and Paul. One last character, who is perhaps one of the most overlooked in the Bible, should be mentioned in this section. As Paul wrote from his jail cell to his friends in Philippi, he recounts the story of Epaphroditus who is carrying the letter for Paul to Philippi. Epaphroditus is praised by Paul for his willingness to serve God and minister to Paul and others, "even to the point of death" (Phil. 2:27). Regardless of his own condition, Epaphroditus, like Paul himself, put the needs of others before his own. In fact, the whole message of the letter to the Philippians is how great Christianity can be if everyone puts the interest of others before their own (Phil. 2:4).

c. The Holy Spirit. In a previous course on spirituality you will have looked broadly at the work of the Holy Spirit. Within the context of an introduction to pastoral care, the discussion will be very limited to only a very small topic, the role of the Holy Spirit as Comforter. In John 16:7 Jesus tells his disciples just prior to his arrest, "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Comforter/Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." The Greek word that is translated Comforter or Helper or Advocate, depending on the version of the English Bible one uses, is *paracletos*. *Paracletos* is made up of two words, a prefix and a root. The root is *kalein* which means "to call." *Para* means alongside or beside, as in parallel lines. Jesus is using this compound word to describe the Holy Spirit as one who is called alongside of another, usually to offer support or encouragement.

Jesus continues in John 16:13 to describe the work of the *paraclete*. "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth." Christians who are providing pastoral care to those in need are empowered by this same Spirit of truth and are able to guide others along the way of truth. This verse is an important reminder that pastoral care occurs within the context of Christian ministry and is not the same as counseling or simply visiting. Pastoral care ushers the hurting into the only source of true healing and comfort, the arms of the Father God. But to bring them to the Father one must heed the words of Jesus Christ, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes unto the Father but through me" (John 14:6).

To conclude this short reminder of how the Spirit works, one must recall that the Spirit is working in and on both participants in pastoral care—the caregiver and the recipient. Just as the Spirit instructs and empowers the caregiver, the Spirit comforts and encourages the recipient. Pastoral care cannot be done without the presence of God; therefore, keeping God present in pastoral care is imperative.

Textbook Reading

Clinebell, chs. 1-5

Petersen, chs. 1-9

Unit 2. Concepts of Pastoral Care

Pastoral care has evolved over the centuries. While its principles can be found as far back as Genesis, it has not been seen as a function of Christianity, and especially ministry, for that long. In this unit you will take a walk through the history and development of the concepts of pastoral care and chaplaincy. You will also be introduced to key biblical passages that have direct bearing on the task of pastoral care.

a. History of the Chaplaincy. The concepts associated with pastoral care, which found its origins in the concept of a "chaplain," can possibly be traced back to the 4th century to a man named Martin of Tours. The story of Martin of Tours was recorded by his friend and disciple Sulpicius Severus. Severus offers insights into Martin's calling and his actions based on that calling.

Martin of Tours' desire to serve God began at an early age. However, at the age of 15, he was conscripted into the Imperial army of Constantine. During his military service, while he was stationed in Amiens, France, around 337 C.E., we are told that he encountered a beggar at the city gates. The man was in want of clothing due to the frigid winter. Martin, removing his military cloak, which comprised the majority of his own clothing, cut it in half with his sword and gave half to the freezing man.

The action itself was noble, but the dream that followed set securely in Martin's mind the importance of his compassionate act. Severus reports that the following evening, Martin, after falling asleep, had a vision of Christ appear to him. In this vision, Christ wore the half of the cloak which Martin had given to the poor man at the gate and told Martin that his actions were for Christ just as for the man. It was because of Martin's compassion that Christ decided to appear to him and to do so in the cloak provided by Martin.

After receiving this vision, Martin finished his term of military service, though not without incident, and eventually returned to Poiteirs, France, where he served with Hilary of Poitiers. Eventually, Martin established a monastery at Liguge, the first of its kind in Gaul, and soon became the bishop of Tours in 371 C.E.

Martin served the people and God diligently and faithfully. However, it was his act of compassion that established him as the origin of the chaplaincy. The cloak, or cape, became the representation of Martin's act of compassion. As such, the place where the cloak was eventually place was called a *cappella and those who cared for it, chaplleins.* (However, the spelling is uncertain.) It should not be difficult to see how the idea of one who would care for another in need would become known as a chaplain.

Spiritual Advisors. For many centuries, chaplains served as spiritual caretakers and advisors. Following the military origin of Martin of Tours, chaplains often accompanied military units and offered services among the camps. Their presence was a comfort and an assurance to the soldiers and commanders.

Over time, royal palaces began to employ chaplains to officiate over religious functions. While this may sound strange in today's time when church and state are mainly separated, such was not the case for thousands of years. Royalty ruled with a hint, if not outright declaration, of religious or divine authority. Chaplains served in the courts to advise the royalty or to at least give the appearance of such. Even feudal lords and wealthy commoners began retaining chaplains for spiritual guidance.

Knights Hospitallers. While monks and monasteries became important pieces of the history of pastoral care and chaplaincy, they were not the only Christian organization to provide care for the sick and afflicted. The Knights of the Order of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem, or simply Knights Hospitallers, was established around 1080 C.E. in Jerusalem. The hospital provided charitable aid to Christians who were on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. They also provided care to non-Christians as well.

Though the hospital was originally overseen by Benedictine monks, the members were officially recognized as a religious order by Pope Paschal II, and the members were recognized as monks. However, as hostilities in Jerusalem increased, the order was reorganized into a more militaristic unit. Eventually, the Knights were granted independence from all local religious authority.

The work of the Knights could be found throughout the Holy Lands. Most of the hospitals were run by the Knights, with the largest being in Jerusalem. The hospital in Jerusalem could hold over 1,000 patients. The Muslims who eventually overran Jerusalem were so impressed that they allowed the Knights a year to move patients to new facilities before the Knights were forced to shut down the hospital. The Knights commitment to serving the ill and destitute continued the legacy of the chaplaincy.

Military Chaplains*.* Perhaps the most familiar service of chaplains today remains the military chaplains. In the United States, chaplains were assigned to military units from its beginning. In 1776, the year of American independence, the brand-new Army ensured that all regiments would have a chaplain. Other countries assign chaplains to military units to promote spiritual and personal well-being and improve morale.

b. Modern Concepts of Chaplaincy. While the fundamental work of the chaplain has not changed, the world around it has. Terms have been recharacterized. Work has been specialized. Training has become certified. As one enters into the work of chaplaincy and/or pastoral care, it is important to know how the work is perceived.

Traditional Chaplains. Traditional chaplains could best be characterized as individuals whose first priority is spiritual care within a specific setting. Heralding back to the tradition of monks serving as caretakers, traditional chaplains work with individuals in primarily secular settings. However, their focus in this setting remains on meeting the needs of their specific religious faith and proselytizing, as possible.

Professional Chaplains. Professional chaplains have become much more common in the 20th century. As professional chaplains, these men and women also serve in secular settings. However, their focus is broader than their own religious faith. Professional chaplains focus on “spiritual care” and have less concern about the beliefs and affiliations of their clients. Spiritual care also has a broader meaning in professional chaplaincy. Professional chaplains may consult on matters of morale, mental health, or grief and loss. So, while the definition of spiritual care may be broader and encompassing of more fields, professional chaplaincy has also developed specializations which would be counter to the role of traditional chaplains.

One result of this simultaneous expansion and specialization is the need for professional training. Traditional chaplains are, in alignment with their heritage, primarily trained in and interested in the spiritual and religious needs of those they served. As such, completion of ministry programs was usually sufficient to provide the necessary foundations. Professional chaplains must go beyond the fundamentals of faith and learn to provide spiritual care in a diverse religious environment. They must also acquire skills that will enable them to meet specialized needs beyond traditional spiritual ones. As such, terms such as “certified professional chaplaincy education” or “certified chaplaincy education” have become more common.

Pastoral Care Providers. As the term “chaplain” has become associated with a specific profession and specific training, it has also become a guarded term. For people to call themselves “chaplains” implies a special training and, possibly, professional credentials. As this term has evolved, another term has risen that emphasizes chaplaincy functions within a narrower religious setting. That term is pastoral care.

Many church leaders are referred to as “pastors.” The term brings to mind a shepherd caring for a flock of sheep (another biblical analogy for a local congregation) in the pasture. Because pastors provide spiritual care for individual members of the congregation and those who are affiliated in some way, this type of spiritual care has become known as pastoral care. Pastoral care is considered local and faith-specific, but may encompass work from marriage counseling, grief counseling, financial counseling, or many others.

Local and faith-specific means that the pastor works only with the members and affiliates of his congregation. In some states in the United States and other countries, pastors are limited by law to provide counseling only to their parishioners. Faith-specific also means that the pastor is specifically interested in adhering to the tenets of his faith and guiding individuals into that specific faith tradition. If someone from an Orthodox faith went to a Protestant pastor, the pastor would be under no obligation to provide spiritual care from an Orthodox perspective. A professional chaplain would be expected to accommodate the person’s faith. This difference is significant.

While being local and faith-specific, pastoral care is also very broad. Leaders in local congregations will encounter needs that range from adultery to gambling addictions, grief to financial crises, and everything in between. Therefore, church leaders providing pastoral care utilize the foundations of their faith to provide general spiritual care and direction. In other words, a pastor will not attempt to provide psychological care to someone who exhibits depression but will, instead, focus the person’s efforts on looking to God for strength, joy, perseverance, and courage to thrive in every kind of situation.

However, even though the pastor is not providing the same kind of care as a chaplain or a professional counselor, the skills are similar. Pastors must be able to listen reflectively, guide discussions, ask probing questions, and provide challenging and thought-provoking solutions drawn from Scripture. The work may be different in many ways, but its goal is the same as chaplaincy; help people draw strength from God.

c. Pastoral Care in Ministry. In the next unit you will discuss some of the difficult theologies faced in pastoral care. In the module that follows that, you will be introduced to some of the basic skills needed to provide pastoral care. In this section you will be introduced to some of the areas of pastoral care that you will encounter in ministry.

Spiritual care. Regardless of the topic, you must remember that your primary goal in pastoral care in your ministry is spiritual growth and care. All too often, ministers try to be psychologists, financial planners, auto mechanics, and every other trade under the sun. While you will probably repair a few tires, plant a few vegetables, or even build a few houses in your ministry, everything must come back to Christ and our life in him. This means that you must know Scripture and be ready to apply it to the life of those who seek your assistance. Before asking, “How do I help them solve this problem,” ask “What is the spiritual struggle they are facing? How can I show them God’s answer?” If you skip this step, you may help, but you will have missed the call.

Couples. You will spend the majority of your time in pastoral care working with couples. Most do not understand the biblical model for marriage. Those who do, do not know how to follow it. Couples have unrealistic expectations of each other and of marriage in general. And above all else, the world has lied to couples about what makes a marriage healthy and successful.

If you have not worked through specific studies on marriage and family, it is highly recommended that you do so. Below are a few resources that can help.

www.prepare-enrich.com (This resources and training has a fee but is well worth it.)

www.sbts.edu/family/tag/marriage

www.focusonthefamily.com

Scripture that might provide some support in this area:

Eph. 5:22-33, 1 Peter 3:1-7, 1 Cor. 7:1-5, 1 Cor. 13

Families. Following logically from the struggles that couples are having is struggles faced by families. Sometimes, these struggles are centered around the parent or parents, and other times, the focus is on the child or children, especially teenagers. Just as in working with couples, the Bible provides excellent advice on what God expects and hopes for a family. Some resources that might help you follow.

www.christianfamilylife.com

www.focusonthefamily.com

www.smartstepfamilies.com

Scripture that might provide some support in this area:

Eph. 5:22-6:4, Josh. 24:15b, Deu. 6:4-25,

Grief and Loss. One of the most traumatic times in a person's life is loss and the accompanying grief. The loss that your church members will have to handle most often is death. They may lose an aged parent, an adult child, a friend, a young child, or a spouse. Death is often the most tragic because of its finality. While grief may be suffered as the result of a loss of a job, divorce, financial crisis, or other temporal events, death appears to be eternal. That is why you must bring the sufferer back to the Bible which offers hope for those who are grieving

Resources to help include:

www.ekrfoundation.org (Information from Elizabeth Kubler Ross)

Doug W. Manning books and videos. (See Amazon.com)

www.grief.com

Scriptures that might provide some support in this area:

1 Thess. 4:13-18, Ps. 23, John 14:1-6

Addiction. Addiction can take many forms. While the Bible, due to its time, primarily deals with the addictions of alcohol and sex, what we learn about those can be applied to many other areas. Today, individuals and families face the destructive impact of alcohol, drugs (both legal and illicit), sex, including pornography, gambling, internet, games, and many more. Anything that (1) interferes with an individual's relationship with God, (2) inhibits the Spirit, (3) compromises behaviors, or (4) prevents a person from fulfilling God's will and expectations for life should be treated as an addition. You may notice that the same definition could be applied to idols, and that is not a coincidence.

Scriptures that might provide some support in this area:

Eph. 5:18, Prov. 20:1, Prov. 23:29-30, Prov. 31:6, Gen 19:32-33, Isa. 28:7

Financial. Financial counseling is perhaps the least frequent type of counseling you will do; however, it is important to remember that financial failure and financial insecurity are leading causes of divorce in the United States. It is recommended that you always include budgeting and financial discussions in all of your premarital counseling. Several resources are available to help.

www.daveramsey.com

www.crown.org (Crown Financial, founded by Larry Burkett)

www.nodebtnosweat.com (No Debt, No Sweat by Steve Diggs)

Scripture that might provide some support in this area:

Matt. 6:19, 1 Tim. 6, Luke 18:18-30, Mark 4:1-20 (v. 19), Rev. 3:17, Mark 12:43-44

(Is it not surprising how many verses address the downfall of wealth?)

Secular relationships. These relationships include relationships with co-workers, bosses, peers, landlords, and just about anyone else who is not family. There are many of these relationships in each person's life, but most people do not seek help in dealing with struggles in these areas. However, the Bible has plenty of advice.

In dealing with secular relationships, one delineating factor is whether the other person is a Christian or not. The Bible gives directions on dealing with non-believers that may vary slightly from how we deal with other believers. In secular relationships with other Christians, it is appropriate to ask for help from other church leaders. If the other person is not a Christian, such an option may seem inappropriate.

Scriptures that might provide some support in this area:

Eph. 6:5-9, Col. 3:17, Gal. 6:9

Congregational relationships. As a church leader, resolving differences and conflicts among members of your congregation will consume a large amount of your pastoral care time and energy. In fact, if you consider how much of Paul's letters were written to address conflict in the local church, you will not be as surprised when this happens. It is in these situations that you must model Christian conduct, just as Paul told Timothy.

Scriptures that might provide some support in this area:

1 Tim. 4:12, Matt. 18:15-17

Encouragement. You are not a professional counselor; however, you have much influence on people's mental well-being. Like Barnabas in the New Testament, you must learn to be an encourager (Acts 4:36). It will amaze both you and those you provide pastoral care how much encouraging words, guided by God's word and the Spirit, will accomplish.

Scripture that might provide some support in this area:

Phil. 4:6-7, Matt. 6:25-34

Referrals. Again, you are not a professional counselor; therefore, you need a "backstop." Dr. Don Hebbard, a longtime professor in pastoral and family care ministries, taught that every pastor needs to know what to do when a situation is beyond them. He compared it to a backstop at a baseball game. Sometimes, a ball thrown to home plate is beyond the reach of the catcher. If it was not for the backstop, the ball would be lost. So it is with pastoral care. There will be situations that are beyond you. You will be overwhelmed by the complexity of the problems, the extent of mental illness, or the depth of the struggle. You must, without hesitation, be ready to refer these peoples to a professional. You can provide encouragement and stabilization, but you must get them the help they need.

Likewise, when the person is demonstrating signs of suicide or other harmful behaviors, you are ethically obligated, if not legally obligated as well, to report their situation to an authority or someone who is professionally trained to deal with those behaviors. (You need to find out the requirements in your state and/or country.) Do not do more harm than good by trying to handle a problem you are not equipped and/or qualified to address. Research, find, and use your community resources, no matter how limited they may be.

An introductory course in pastoral care cannot cover all that one would like. There are resources available on the Course Menu and in the Electronic Collection and Extended Resources. Your best source of information, however, will be the experience you gain while spending time with your Supervisor when you get to Module 3. In the meantime, we shall move on to the most difficult challenge facing ministers when working with individuals in crisis, the problem of evil.

Textbook Reading

Clinebell, chs. 6-13

Unit 3. Theology of Suffering

The problem of suffering is a challenge to all believers. Most cannot fathom why a loving God would allow suffering; yet, the Bible is full of examples of suffering and its causes and results. In this unit you will look at how suffering functions in Scripture, what types of suffering are experienced by God's people, and how to explain these ideas in simple terms.

This unit draws heavily from an excellent book edited by Christopher Morgan and Robert Peterson entitled *Suffering and the Goodness of God* (Crossway, 2008). While much of this unit will summarize the authors within the book, the book is well worth your investment.

a. Suffering in the Old Testament. Walter Kaiser, a preeminent religious scholar, discusses at length suffering in the Old Testament. We are reminded that suffering serves many purposes, many of them instructional. Perhaps that is why we have literature such as the book of Job, the book of Lamentations, Psalms of Lament, stories of sin and punishment, stories of redemption, and more. In truth, it would appear that Israel spent more time in suffering, slavery, and affliction that in any other state of being. However, that suffering often led the people to repentance and redemption.

Retributive Suffering. In short, this suffering is experienced because of sin. It is unfortunate that for most followers of God, we drift from God's truth and will and need to be punished for, or at least firmly reminded about, our disobedience and unfaithfulness to God. When God sends plagues, serpents, and armies to punish Israel, these are forms of retributive suffering.

Many Christians when suffering ask, "Is this a punishment from God?" The answer is often much simpler than we care to admit and comes in the form of a reflective question, "Does it need to be?" Most Christians already know if there is an area of disobedience and unfaithfulness to God and can, therefore, answer their own question.

Educational Suffering. This form of suffering is not punishment, but it is disciplinary. In fact, the Hebrew word that is often translated "discipline" best represents this type. It is best to think of the words of Job's friend, Elihu, who asks, "Who is a teacher like God?" (Job 36:22). There is also a modern mantra that says, "No pain. No gain." Some suffering is designed to strengthen our ability and resolve to follow God.

When Christians are experiencing suffering and cannot identify rebellious sin in their lives, then it is time to ask if God is trying to nudge them in a particular direction. Maybe they have not committed sin but have simply omitted God's will from their lives. In this case, the suffering may be God reminding them that their blessings are found in him and not in this world.

Vicarious Suffering. As Christians we are told that as co-heirs with Christ, we will also be called to be co-sufferers with him (Rom. 8:17). One can simply look at the life of the Old Testament prophets and see that boldly following God and speaking his words will result in suffering. Sometimes that suffering was abuse, and at other times it was loneliness and hunger. Kaiser points to the Suffering Servant passage of Isa. 52-53 as the premier example of vicarious suffering in the Old Testament.

It is perhaps unfortunate that this form is not seen more often. However, there will be times when a Christian may say, “I don’t know why I’m suffering; I’m doing exactly what I thought God wanted me to do.” In this case, as a pastor or leader, reminding them that they are in the company of the prophets and apostles, and even Christ himself, can encourage them greatly.

Empathetic Suffering. At times, Christians will suffer because others do. Empathy is defined by dictionary.com as “the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.” This type of suffering is perhaps most evident when a parent suffers when a child is struggling, ill, or hurting. This type of suffering is applied to God in Isa. 63:9, Hos. 11:8, and Ezek. 18:31-32.

Evidential or Testimonial Suffering. There are times when suffering is, in fact, an opportunity to showcase love for and dependence on God. The story of Job exemplifies this type of suffering. He did not suffer because of sin but because of his righteousness. The strength he displayed in the midst of suffering was a testimony to the power of God.

Most Christians’ sense of “fairness” is offended by this type of suffering. However, when Christians realize—and accept—that their sole purpose in life is to glorify God and be his witness, then it becomes easier to accept this type of suffering.

Revelational Suffering. There are times when suffering allows us to gain a greater understanding of the nature and character of God. God “reveals” himself in suffering. Whereas educational suffering is similar to discipline, revelational suffering is not. Though we learn from it, what we learn is deeper than a mere course correction.

Kaiser points to Hosea has an example of revelational suffering. Hosea suffered great loss as he was betrayed repeatedly by his wife, but his love for her was unwavering. In this story, Hosea, Israel, and Christians today can learn an important lesson about the love God has for all. The Suffering Servant passage of Isa. 53 is another example of how God reveals himself through suffering. In this passage, the suffering experienced by the servant of God testifies to God’s plan and provision of salvation.

Doxological Suffering. Suffering itself does not show the glory of God, but certainly the Christian’s response does. Doxological suffering is the Christian’s opportunity to proclaim God’s glory, love, and provision in spite of his or her circumstances. The story of Joseph’s many setbacks, scandals, and mistreatments demonstrate this type of suffering. Throughout his life, Joseph always clung to the truth that what others meant for evil, God means for good (Gen. 50:20).

Eschatological or Apocalyptic Suffering. For many Christians, the Bible appears to teach that the world will continue to decline, and the suffering of Christians will continue to increase. This type of suffering appears to be all around the world. If no other form of suffering seems to make sense, then at times Christians must remember that the world is heading towards destruction (1 Jn. 2:17) and that will not bode well for anyone.

Response to suffering in the Old Testament. The response to suffering in the Old Testament is not markedly different from that in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, the Jews were given a couple of options. First, if the suffering was to correct a sin, they were told to repent and return to God. Second and applicable regardless of the situation, the Jews were told to remain faithful to love God, trust God, and be faithful to him. Oftentimes, the Jews in the past and Christians today cannot discern the exact reason for their suffering. Therefore, to remain in the steadfast love of the Lord was to experience God regardless of the circumstances.

b. Suffering in the New Testament. The types of suffering cited in the Old Testament remain valid in the New Testament and New Testament era. We can find numerous scriptures in the New Testament that make similar proclamations. However, the New Testament writers develop a couple of themes more intensely than did their Old Testament counterparts. In this section, two key ideas are developed to

support the new Christians in their new life in the kingdom of God: (1) Suffering in expected and (2) Suffering is beneficial

Suffering is expected. In John 15:18-25, Jesus warns the disciples that they will be hated by the world and, therefore, persecuted by the world, because the world first hated the Christ. As a result, anyone who bears the name of Christ should expect to be treated like Christ. Such treatment may not make sense, but Jesus reminded his disciples that the world "hated [him] without reason" (John 15:25).

When Paul traveled back through Lystra and Iconium and Antioch, he "strengthened the souls" there by telling them that "through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 4:22). Paul did not want the new Christians to be discouraged by hardship but instead to expect it as part of their journey heavenward.

Paul lived these words. In Acts 20:22:23, he said "And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what awaits me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardship are facing me." Many other Christians faced, and continue to face, this truth of Scripture. For those who follow God, hardship awaits.

Suffering is beneficial. The expectation of suffering is balanced in the New Testament with a promise that the suffering will also be beneficial. Knowing that hardship would be a part of the Christian life, God also made suffering a means of great blessings. Of course, this "reversal" is counterintuitive in today's society, as was in the first century. Today, preachers preach that health, wealth, prosperity, convenience, and comfort are what God desires for his people. Yet, throughout the New Testament, suffering and hardship are what were promised. Is God so cruel that he would call Christians to a life of misery or is there some blessing to be found amidst the suffering? If so, what are those blessings?

Confidence. In Heb. 10:32-35, the writer reminds the people of their suffering, especially their loss of worldly possessions and comforts but also reminds them of the joy they experienced. They learned that physical possessions did not matter to one who had "better and lasting possessions," referring to their treasures in heaven. As a result of their suffering, they gained "confidence" (v. 35) which is "richly rewarded."

Contentment. Paul writes to the church in Philippi, "I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be I need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength (Phil. 4:11-13).

Perseverance. As the writer of Hebrews finishes his great "Hall of Fame of Faith" in chapter 12, he encourages Christians to "consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted" (v. 3). Suffering builds perseverance, both in the one who suffers and those who see the victory.

Maturity. As James wrote to the churches of the diaspora, he reminds them of yet another blessing of suffering. "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything" (James 1:2-4).

Inheritance. Paul reminded the Christians in Rome that the inheritance of all Christians is wrapped up in the willingness to suffer. He writes in Romans 8:17, "Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, ***if indeed*** we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory [emphasis added]." The inheritance of heaven and glory await all who will share in Christ's suffering.

c. Addressing the problem of evil. There are a lot of questions about evil in this world, not least of which is, "Why would God allow it to exist?" A perfect, loving God would want to end evil, right? What follows is a brief synopsis of one approach to explain the problem of evil.

God wants us to become his children, and this can only happen if we choose to follow him. The key is "choose" to follow him. God doesn't want to be a cruel, over-bearing god; he loves us way too much for that. So, he lets us choose what we want to do. The problem is that some people choose not to follow God and they do what they want instead (Rom. 1:18-32); the result is sin and evil present in the world.

Here is what is hard to grasp. Evil is not something one chooses as an option, like Option A is good and Option B is evil. Evil simply exists wherever people choose NOT to follow God. So as long as God gives people the choice whether or not to follow him, there will always be evil. In order to get rid of evil, God would have to eliminate our freedom to choose to follow him. We'd all become robots who could not love (love is a choice, right?), could not be good to others sacrificially (sacrifice is a choice, right?), and the list goes on.

Some people choose not to follow God and do evil. What about those who follow him? We are blessed! We are "a royal priesthood, a chosen people, a people of God's own possession" (1 Peter 2:9). We receive abundant, eternal life, contentment, and peace that passes understanding. According to Paul, we receive all of this no matter what our circumstances are IN THIS LIFE (Phil. 4:4-14). Even the Beatitudes (Matthew 5) tell us that we are blessed in spite of, or maybe even because of, our persecution and sufferings.

Here is where the two come together. God cannot eliminate evil without seriously destroying your heart, mind, and soul. You would become a mindless drone incapable of love, compassion, and kindness. Sure, evil is eliminated—not because God eliminated evil, but because he eliminated your ability to choose not to obey. In so doing, you lose the ability to love God, do good to others, and anything else that requires a choice.

However, God's blessings do not depend on whether or not ***others*** obey God; they simply depend on whether you do. We receive the blessings of God even when the world is falling down around us—which it certainly seems to be doing. Anyone who CHOOSES to follow God will receive abundant blessings from God. And ANYONE can choose to follow God. That is why when people say "God isn't being fair," they fail to recognize that anyone can follow God and that anyone that follows God is blessed by God regardless of the circumstances of life. God blesses those who follow Him—period.

But what about when the evil one person commits clashes with, or even seems to destroy, the blessings of God a Christian is "supposed" to be receiving? If our blessings from God are greater than and completely apart from our circumstances here on earth, can a person choosing to do evil really rob you of the blessings that God intends for you? The answer is, "NO!" No one is greater than God! No one can rob you of your life in Christ!

What about the people, children and adults, who lost their lives in the school shooting and wars and such? The answer is a matter of faith. Paul gives us two important lessons. First, "I've been crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ who lives in me, and the life that I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and delivered himself up for me" (Gal. 2:20). Our life is never our own; it's Christ's. We live our lives, as Christians, to God's glory and according to his will. And when we die, either by natural causes or at the hands of evil, we gain our promised home in heaven. That is why Paul writes in Phil. 1:21, "For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." What a powerful statement of faith.

What about the children? The Bible says very little about the spiritual state of children. However, if sin is the conscious choice between obeying God and disobeying God, then a child who cannot conceptualize God cannot sin. We often call this the age of accountability. Children who die before understanding God

get to go to heaven. That this is the best choice for the benefit of the child according to God's plan is, again, a matter of faith. We have to trust that God knows what he is doing.

Since God cannot eliminate evil without eliminating love and free will, then God can use the evil in the world to work his ultimate will. This is seen numerous times in the Bible. The story of Joseph being sold into slavery by his brothers and thrown into prison and forgotten and so on is a great example. Joseph tells his brothers in Gen. 50:20, "And as for you, you **meant evil** against me, but God **meant it for good** in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people." Again, a difficult matter that can only be dealt with by faith, but Joseph saw how God used the evil done against him to bring about good for all of Egypt and Israel. Faith calls us to believe that the deaths of every innocent life is not for vain, but that God will use the evil committed against them for good!

Textbook Reading

Clinebell, chs. 14-19.

Examination

Now that you have come to the end of this module, you should review the material in preparation for a multiple-choice examination. When you are ready for the exam, you may open it from the Course Menu.

Essay One: Explaining the Problem of Evil

Throughout the world there are mass shooting, genocide, and other horrific events that take the lives of innocent men and women, children and the elderly, Christians and non-Christians. In this 1,000-word essay, write a brief explanation of your understanding of the problem of evil as if you were explaining it to someone who was questioning God because of these horrible actions.

This essay is not an exegesis or an evangelism plan. Its purpose is to help you frame, in a succinct and compassionate manner, your answer to questions about the presence of evil in the world. The essay will be assessed based on your biblical knowledge and compassion.

When the essay is complete, you may submit it using the submission portal located in Module 1 on the Course Menu.

MODULE 2 Principles of Pastoral Communication

While it is possible to provide effective pastoral care by sitting in silence with someone who is struggling, the majority of the time pastoral care takes place in the context of communication. When someone is hurting, they want someone to ***tell*** them it is going to be okay. When a couple is struggling in their marriage, they want someone to ***tell*** them what to do to make it better. In pastoral care, there is an expectation that the minister or pastor will be able to effectively communicate God's presence and God's words to provide comfort. This module describes how a minister can become more effective in communicating the intangibles of pastoral care.

Unit 1. Understanding Communication

While ministers are often trained communicators, understanding the communication that takes place between individuals is just as important as that which takes place between a preacher and a congregation. In fact, most of the principles are the same. Therefore, it is important to review the communication process with all of its challenges.

a. Communication Process. Communication as a process is fairly easy to understand. It is usually represented as a linear process, which it is, with a feedback loop at the end. The feedback, or interchange between receiver and source (speaker) is critical and often overlooked, especially in interpersonal communication.

Below are the pieces of the communication process in linear order. The last piece, noise or interference, can actually occur during any one of the previous steps.

Source. This is the originator of the thought or idea that is to be conveyed or communicated. In public speaking, the speaker is the source. In interpersonal communication with two or more people, each participant is a source. Each participant is a source whether he or she is speaking or not because in the discussion or dialogue, each person is "originating" a thought to be shared with another person.

Encoding. The mental process of the originator or source putting the idea into symbols. These symbols may be words, but they can also be images or actions. When giving a speech, using non-verbal codes such as PowerPoint slides or handouts can help to ensure better reception. The choices the presenter makes about what to include in a handout or on a PowerPoint slide is part of encoding.

Message. The message is the verbal and non-verbal elements of communication. Every word or element in the message is assigned a meaning by the hearer. The meaning is always much more than just the definition of a word in the dictionary.

Channel. The pathway through which the message is conveyed. The verbal pathway is the most common; it is dialogue or a speech. It can also include visual and other elements.

Receiver. The party who interprets or decodes a message.

Decoding. The meaning that the Receivers (Hearers) assign to the message. If communication goes well, the Receiver assigns the same meaning to the various elements in the message as the Source does. However, in most cases, that is not the case.

Noise or Interference. Anything that prevents the message from being properly encoded or decoded. Sometimes, the Source may use the wrong word to convey an idea. Oftentimes, the Source and the Receivers have different perceptions of the same word. These will be discussed in the next section.

b. Communication Challenges. When a speaker is conveying his or her thoughts, it must be done in such a way as the hearer will understand. That does not always happen perfectly. Differences in personal histories, cultural settings, and even economic class can create challenges to mutual understanding. A few of the most common challenges will be described below.

Culture. This challenge is perhaps the most obvious. Culture is the large-scale system of learned and shared symbols, languages, values, and norms. Almost every facet and dimension of culture varies from one group of people to another. Therefore, in a shrinking world in which speakers find themselves interacting with others from all over the world, the difference in cultures present significant challenges.

Language. Language is defined as a structured system of symbols used for communicating meaning. Words are symbols; they represent an idea. The word "cat" represents or symbolizes the animal of the feline persuasion. Words, however, have meaning beyond the idea they represent. They are imbued with

the personal meaning and ideas of the speaker. An American who hears the word “cat” may think of a Siamese or Tabby cat. An African may think of a lion or leopard.

Gender. More important for our understanding than the biological differences between genders (male v. female) are the roles and expectations assigned to specific roles. Some roles are masculine, or assigned to the male, and others are considered feminine. However, these role assignments are culturally based. What is the male role in one culture may be the female role in another. Likewise, there are androgynous roles that can be assigned to either gender. It is important not to make assumptions as gender roles can often be the source of contention within and between certain societies.

Non-Verbal Communication. Not all communication takes place in words, and not all communication is a planned part of communication. Non-verbal communication is behaviors or characteristics of the speaker or the receiver that convey emotions, affections, acceptance, resistance, and many more subtle meanings. Some examples include eye contact, stance, movement, hand gestures, physical touch, facial expressions, and many more. In many situations, non-verbal communication “speaks” louder than the words being spoken. Following are several examples.

Fillers are meaningless words used to fill the gaps in between sentences or words while you think. Try not to say “eh,” “umm”, or “well.” These are distracting to the audience and take the focus off your message. The best way to avoid using fillers is to rehearse and practice your speech so that it flows smoothly, and you do not have to take as much time to think about what you are going to say next.

Facial expressions. It is important to be expressive when talking, because you want your audience to know that you are passionate about your topic. You also want to keep your audience’s attention and help them to stay focused.

Eye contact. Eye contact helps you further connect with your audience. Avoid looking down, above their heads, or at the back wall. Try to make eye contact with as many individuals as possible. Eye contact will make the audience feel as if you are speaking directly to them and will help them feel more involved in your topic.

Gestures. Gestures can be helpful, but they can also be distracting if used at the wrong time. The same is true if you are overly expressive. Gestures are especially effective when you want to emphasize a point, or when you are trying to illustrate a point.

Another warning regarding non-verbals is important. Like all features of communication, they are culturally specific. A certain gesture intended to convey goodwill in one culture may be offensive in another. It is important to know your audience.

Emotions or Mood. Emotions and mood are related. Emotions are feelings in response to a specific stimulus. The emotion results in physical and psychological changes that may alter thoughts or actions. Mood, similarly, is a prolonged emotional state. Generally, it is the residual effect of an emotional response but can also be unrelated to a specific event. Sometimes, your hearer’s emotions and moods may be easy to assess or assume, such as if you are speaking at a funeral. At other times, either, but especially mood, can be very difficult to determine. However, awareness of a person’s or audience’s mood must be considered when engaging with them in any form of communication.

c. Communication Competencies. There are some common communication tips that will help you whether you are communicating with your best friend or a room of one thousand strangers.

Self-Awareness. Being aware of one’s own behaviors or habits and how they impact the receivers. This concept has become increasingly important and is integrated into the discussion of Emotional Intelligence (EQ).

Adaptability. A competent communicator can adapt his or her style and types of communication to fit a wide variety of situations. Some individuals develop one very specific style of communication, such as preaching, that does not fit a particular situation, such a visiting a family who has lost a loved one.

Empathy. Empathy is defined as the ability to think and feel as others do. Empathic speakers understand the impact of the message and appropriately adapt the message or the style of delivery for the emotional situation.

Cognitive complexity. Speakers who can look at a situation from different perspectives and in multiple ways have a better chance of communicating effectively. Many speeches that are brilliant on paper can miss the mark in the presentation because they do not align with the finer, and often underlying, nuances of a situation or the hearer's personal life.

Ethics. An understanding of socially acceptable actions and language. How a speaker interacts with the hearers or the reputation of a speaker can improve the chances of or prevent entirely effective communications.

Active Listening. When communication is more interpersonal with a smaller number of hearers, competent communicators must be excellent listeners. Using a variety of technics, active listeners dialogue with one another seeking clarifying information. Though the process may add significant time to a conversation, it greatly improves the chances of successful interpersonal communication.

Video Resource: "Active Listening" by Thomas Neal.
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QlmlqAW0cUQ)

Optional Reading

Though not required, students wishing to read in more detail about human communications may wish to purchase and read

Adler, Ronald, George Rodman, and Athena du Pre. *Understanding Human Communication (13th Ed.)* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

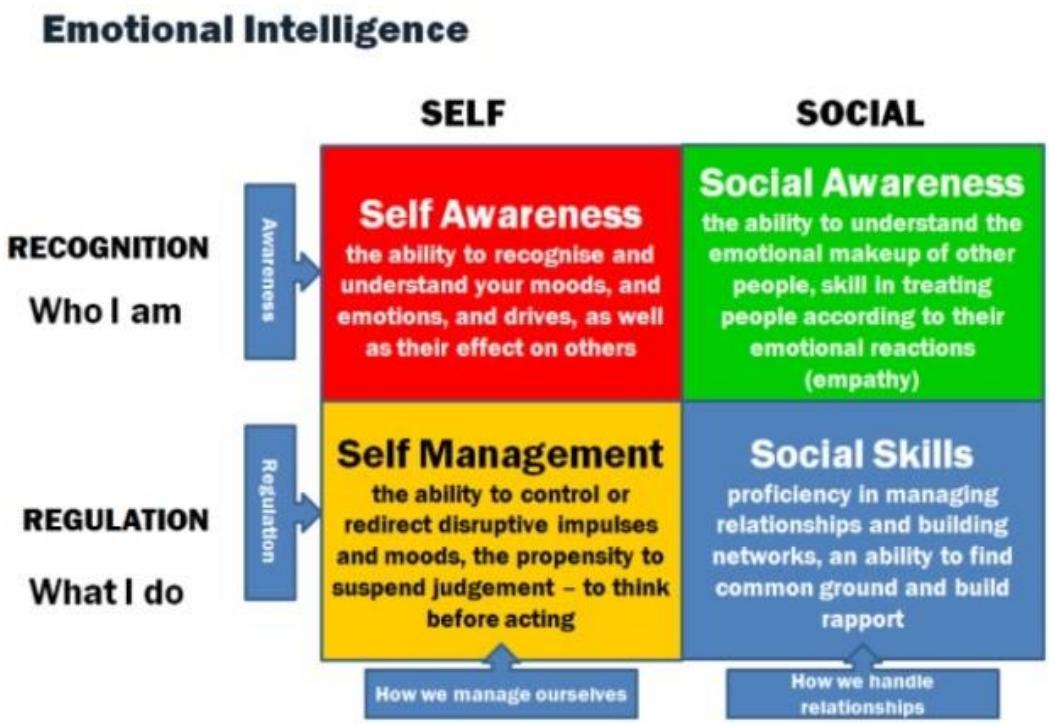
Unit 2. Emotional Intelligence

View the videos located on the Course Menu.

In order to effectively communicate, speakers, and especially those engaged in pastoral care, must have a certain amount of understanding about themselves. When providing pastoral care, it is very easy for the provider to become something else—mom, dad, ex-girlfriend or ex-boyfriend, or worse, judge, jury, and executioner. Without a thorough understanding of our own history, triggers, and pains, pastoral care providers can quickly lose their effectiveness by not responding as a pastor should.

In this unit, you will be introduced to the four elements of emotional intelligence (EQ). The introduction is brief, but the videos for this unit will help tremendously. In addition, resources by Daniel Goleman, who identifies five characteristics of EQ, or Travis Bradberry will help you better understand and assess your own emotional intelligence. For this unit, you will be using Bradberry's description to better understand EQ.

Perhaps a quote from Dr. Bradberry from his book, *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*, will best define Emotional Intelligence. "Emotional intelligence is your ability to recognize and understand emotions in yourself and others, and your ability to use this awareness to manage your behavior and relationships." With this definition in mind, the importance of EQ in pastoral care is obvious.



a. Personal Competence. Bradberry assigns the first two skills related to EQ to the area of personal competence. Personal competence is your ability to know and handle yourself. When we do not know our own strengths and weaknesses, history and triggers, and likes and dislikes, we can easily be sucked into a relationship with someone we are trying to help. Knowing yourself allows you to determine quickly when you are being pulled into an unhealthy relationship.

Self-Awareness is the beginning of the self-evaluation process. You must be able to identify accurately your own emotions. Oftentimes, people look at the end product or results of their emotions and confuse those with the emotions themselves. People might say, "It really makes me mad when my spouse doesn't answer my phone calls." Anger, however, is not the emotion of origin. Someone in this situation may have become angry because they felt slighted or diminished by the other's action. In this case, the emotion is hurt or disappointment. Anger is how it manifests, but anger is not the emotion. It is this level of self-awareness that good pastors have that will help them be effective and remain safe in their pastoral relationships.

However, knowing how you feel about historical events in your life or abstract concepts that can derail you is not the same as being aware of them as they are happening. Perhaps you were often made fun of or bullied growing up. You know how that made you feel then, but it will also impact the way you deal with someone else who is experiencing bullying. You will tend to defend their actions or support them in unhealthy behaviors because you do not want them to feel like you did. On the other side of the situation, you may find yourself experiencing anger or loathing for someone who demonstrates abusive behaviors. Self-awareness means being knowledge and responsible for your underlying feelings.

Self-Management is the ability to handle all of those feelings and underlying issues in your own life. Your tendency will be to respond, initially at least, with reactions with which you have been wired. Self-management means you can sense the beginning of those feelings and prevent them from directing your actions. Instead, your self-awareness helps you diffuse your own feelings and deter your unhealthy reaction. Self-management allows you to direct your behavior positively to produce a healthy outcome for those you are caring for.

b. Social Competence. The second "half" of emotional intelligence is social competence, or how you see, interpret, and deal with the people around you. In the case of pastoral care, these people might include a person, couple, or family you are ministering to, but might also include their extended family, other members of a congregation, or co-workers. Social competence is a measure of how you navigate these difficult situations.

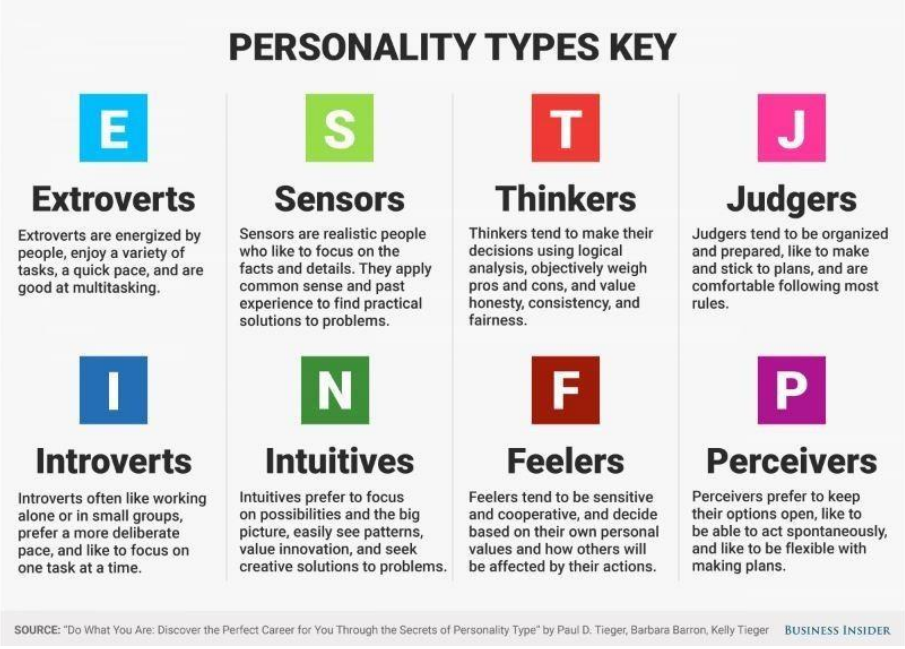
Social Awareness is perhaps the most difficult characteristic or skill to develop because it depends on being able to understand other people's moods, behaviors, and motives. Of course, these can vary tremendously from person to person engaged in the same situation. One person can be happy in a situation in which the person sitting next to them is miserable. (This situation is typical in unhappy marriages.) As a pastor, you must be able to assess those feelings and interact appropriately with each person.

Just as important as appropriate interaction is accurate interpretation of words and actions. Knowing how someone feels in a given situation allows you to better hear what they are saying—even when what they are really saying is unspoken. Social awareness helps you ask probing questions gently, offer guidance assertively, or simply not say a word, all as needed.

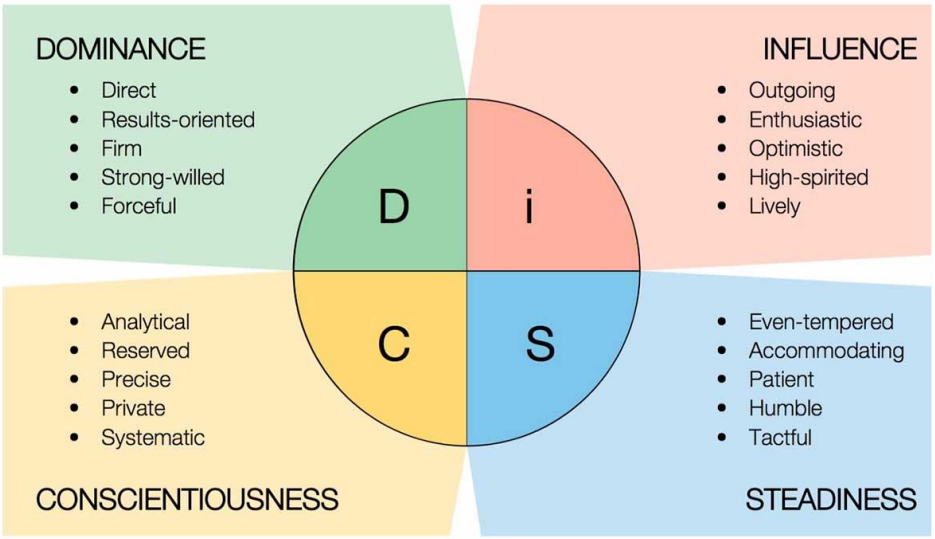
Relationship Management. Personal competence and social competence merge together in relationship management. When a personally competent pastor interacts with others in a socially competent manner, relationships are built. It is within the context of that pastoral relationship that pastoral care can be the most effective.

c. Other Assessments. There are a variety of ways to help you assess your personal and social competence. In ministry, a number of popular self-assessments have been used for many years. A few of the most popular are listed below. Many of them have a free, abridged, online version that you may wish to look for on the internet.

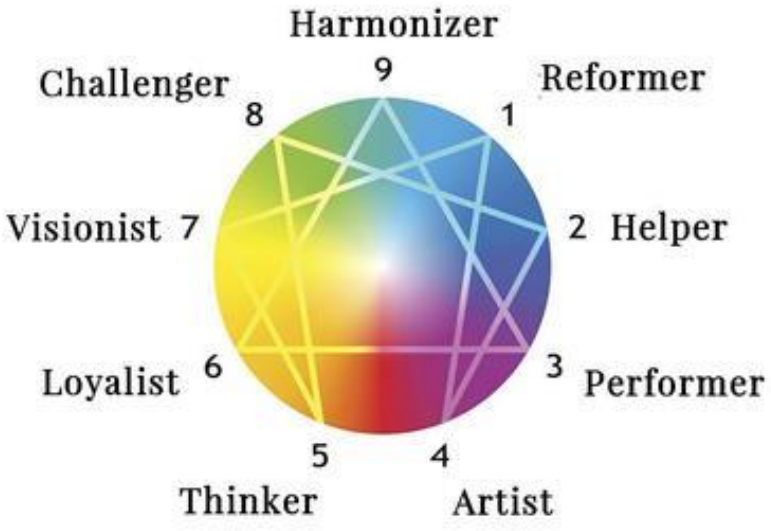
Myers-Briggs Type Indicator has been around for the longest. Each pair of "types" describe a particular personality trait. The composite type, which combines the four different types into one designation, is usually see written in such forms as INTJ, ESFP, or any other combination.



DiSC Assessment is especially helpful in work environments, which includes ministry settings. The assessment determines your primary and secondary personality type.



Enneagram is a personality assessment that defines personalities in one of nine areas. Each type demonstrates specific behaviors in general and in specific situations. The enneagram also claims to have some biblical support, though that may or may not be valid. However, many churches and ministers have found the Enneagram helpful in helping members determine where to fit into the congregation. Like the other assessments, it can also help people in conflict determine why the conflict may exist, if it is related to personality conflicts.



Any of these other assessments can be useful to pastors who need to be more aware of themselves. Whether in ministry or in direct pastoral care, knowing how you present yourself to others and how you may be perceived by others will help you build stronger relationships with those to whom you minister.

Internet Resources

www.truity.com offers several personality assessments including all of the above.

www.talentsmart.com is the website for Emotional Intelligence 2.0

www.discprofile.com offers a detailed description of the DISC assessment.

www.enneagraminstitute.com offers detailed descriptions of the nine types.

Textbook Reading

LaMothe, pp 18-23.

Unit 3. Communicating Pastoral Content

As discussed at the beginning of this course, pastoral care is not just communicating. It is communicating the message of God's love, comfort, and guidance to those who need to hear it. In this final unit before your Supervised Ministry Experience you will learn techniques that will help you do just that. There are many techniques that are employed by professional counselors, psychologists, and chaplains around the world. Therefore, it would be irresponsible to say that there is only one or even a best one. However, as an introductory course in pastoral care, we must focus on a technique that has the potential to work in the greatest number of diverse settings.

The model you will learn in this course relies heavily upon three pieces: (1) good listening, (2) good storytelling, and (3) good use of Scripture. In the professional community, this technique goes by a few names, Christian Cognitive Therapy, Christian Rational Therapy, Rational Emotive/Behavioral Therapy, and so on. All of those names poorly represent what is done in pastoral care, so be patient as you learn the pastoral model for this technique.

a. Active Listening and Probing. It goes without saying that you cannot help someone if you do not understand their problem or struggle. It also goes without saying that many people do not fully understand what their problem or struggle is. Many people like to blame their problem on someone else. Others try to focus on a cause for their problem that is not the real cause, the proverbial scapegoat. Oftentimes, people have simply missed or misinterpreted a piece of their life story that has a significant impact on how they are dealing with a problem, or why it exists in the first place. The following is a true story that illustrates this last point.

An older lady was coming to counseling because she could not get over the death of her father. He had been in a nursing facility for many years and continued to decline in health. She had one older sister with whom she shared the responsibility of making medical decisions for their father. The three of them, including the father, had decided that, if he was to have a heart attack or stroke or some fatal event, he would not be revived. In the months leading up to their father's death, he had several heart attacks. When the nurse called to inform the older sister that he had had a heart attack, she always told them to revive him, and they did. Each time, the sisters talked about it. The younger sister, the one coming for pastoral care, always reminded the older one that their father did not want to be revived and that she would not have revived him. They always fought about this decision.

As the months went on, their father's condition declined even more rapidly due to the heart failure. He was miserable and in great pain. One day, the nurse called the younger sister and told her that her father had had a heart attack. The younger sister asked why they had not called the older sister. They replied that they had talked to the older sister, and she had told them to call the younger one. Of course, the

younger sister said to let the father die in peace. She was heartbroken, and worse, felt like her older sister had put her in a position where she had to “kill” their father.

Years passed, and the two sisters never made amends. When the older sister passed away, the younger sister could not handle the grief. She went to her minister for help. As she told her story, it ended the same every time. “My sister didn’t want my dad to die, so she made me be the bad daughter.”

After a few sessions, the minister asked the younger daughter why she thought the older daughter had the nursing facility call her. Again, she said the same thing. “She didn’t want him to die.” At that point, the minister asked one question, “Then why did she have the nursing home call you? Didn’t she know what you would say? That you would tell them to let your father die in peace?” The younger sister sat spellbound. The minister continued. “Perhaps, she knew that he needed to pass on in peace but couldn’t bring herself to make that decision. By having the nursing facility call you, she was giving you permission to make a decision wasn’t able to make but knew was necessary.” Suddenly, it all made sense (that is what “cognitive” means), and years of anger and self-loathing and grief melted away.

All it took to help her past a decade of pain was an abundance of good listening and one very good question. Of course, there were many other questions throughout those sessions to get to the discovery, but often it is one question that can crack the darkness and let light shine in. When you listen to understand, ask good question, and listen to the answers, the answers can solve so many problems in the lives of those to whom you minister.

b. Engaging in Story. As illustrated above, you do not need to have a degree in psychology. You just need to be able to engage people in their story. While this sounds simple, and it is, it is faced with one very big challenge. You cannot be in control of the story. You must learn to listen and ask questions. You must let them tell the story. However, you can help them tell that story in a more productive way if you practice a couple of good listening techniques.

Probing questions will help the individual fill in important details that are missing in their story. In many occasions, a person’s story can have numerous holes, and they will not even notice. When you realize that your brain did not make the same jump in the story as the storyteller, have them stop and answer a question. Here are a few examples.

1. Why didn’t you ride with your sister to the store that day?
2. When did you discover that your spouse was using drugs, before or after the accident?
3. What happened between the time that you got into a fight and the time that you saw each other at school the next week?

Questions like these can build connections between events that the individual is not seeing, or they can help disconnect events that the individual has incorrectly ***assumed*** were connected.

Rephrasing helps get at the inconsistencies or inaccuracies in a person’s story. You are not trying to trap them in a lie. You are trying to get them to reconsider connections they have made between events, circumstances, feelings, and actions. Many times, you will find that you are helping the individual assess cause-effect relationships. Here are some examples.

1. What I hear you saying is that you didn’t want to go school on Monday because of what happened over the weekend.
2. So, are you saying that you left your husband because he cheated on you or because you were dissatisfied in your marriage as well?
3. Would you have reacted the same way if you had known in advance that your son was using drugs?

Rephrasing requires good listening skills, but they also require empathy and compassion. When rephrasing statements, it is easy to sound judgmental, such as in the second question above. Rephrasing should be used as gentle way to get individuals to think again about what they are describing.

c. Incorporating Scripture. In many cases, though not all, as in the example at the beginning of the unit, the person seeking pastoral care is needing to hear from God's Word. They may or may not know that is what they need, but it is your job to let God speak to people in need and in pain. You can offer sage advice, perhaps, but only God can offer true healing.

Throughout this course you have been introduced to close to 100 scriptures related to pastoral care. That is great toolbox full of resources for anyone needing to provide pastoral care. But like any toolbox, you must become familiar with the tools. You must learn what each tool is for, how best to use it, when not to use it, and when it can be used in unorthodox ways. So it is with Scripture. Each scripture can be used in more than one setting to help meet an underlying need, such as a scripture on grief used during a visit with an alcoholic. Their primary need may be dependence on God, but, likely, they have lost jobs, family, self-respect, or many other aspects of their lives.

When using Scripture, it is important to introduce it into the conversation appropriately. Too often, people feel like they are being judged when someone quotes Scripture. Therefore, it is important to know how to do so. Below are a few recommendations.

1. Do not say, "The Bible says." This point may be a shock, but it is an important point. When you begin this way, many people feel like they are being judged.

2. Instead say, "There is a story about a young man named David who was in a similar situation. You can read about his struggle in the Bible but let me tell you his story." Remember, you are engaging their story, so another story is a great way to do exactly that. You can give them book, chapter, and verse at the end of the visit.

3. Help them compare their situation to Scripture. "Do you see any similarities between your situation and Paul's life in prison?" "How does Jonathan's struggle between his relationship with his father and his best friend parallel your situation?" "Does your love for your husband exhibit the characteristics of love Paul mentions to the Corinthian church?"

4. Get them to think about what Scripture is saying. "What advice do you think Hosea would give you if he were here?" "How would Jesus' words to the persecuted apply to your situation?" "Do you think Peter's advice to husbands to consider their wives' feelings is appropriate to your situation? How so?" "How would your relationship with your wife be better if you loved like Paul described love to the Corinthians?"

5. Help them see the blessings of following Scripture. "What do you think would happen if you did what Paul and Silas did when they were in jail?" "Do you think your life would be more aligned with God's will if you followed James' advice?" "Would you be more content if you worried less about the things of this world?"

6. Help them see the sin in their lives. This last recommendation is tough. Most Christians do not want to talk about their sins. Unfortunately, as was discussed by Kaiser previously, there are times when we have created our own worst situation because of the sinful choices we make. When it becomes obvious that someone is stubbornly refusing to acknowledge sin in his or her life, you need to gently nudge them to consider that possibility. You can say, "Do you feel in your heart that your decisions are pleasing to God?" "How do you think God feels about your decisions?" "Based on what you know about God's holiness, what do you think he would say about your choice?"

When confronting sin, you must, without exception, be ready to extend God's grace. It would sound something like this. "God doesn't want you suffering because of your decision. All you have to do is tell

God you are ready to give this situation to him and to start living a life that pleases him. The change may not be immediate, but if you are sincere, the comfort and strength will be. God's greatest desire is to see you living a beautiful Christian life."

7. Pray for them. Most people who come to a pastor for help understand there is a spiritual dimension to their problems. Do not be afraid to pray for them, both before and after your visit. After the visit is important because your focus in your prayer is for strength and conviction to live a life pleasing to God or to rely on God's strength and comfort or whatever you may have discussed from Scripture.

These are just a few questions that can help an individual begin to apply God's Word in his or her own life. It is critical, however, that you do not rush into quoting scriptures AT someone. You are to come alongside them and walk with them through God's Word. Help them to see the value in Christian living and the fallacies of worldly living.

Textbook Reading

Petersen, chs. 10-16

Examination

Now that you have come to the end of this module, you should review the material in preparation for a multiple-choice examination. When you are ready for the exam, you may open it from the Course Menu.

Essay 2: Interview Summary

This assignment is comprised of four interviews. The first two involve interviewing two people who are involved in pastoral care. The first interview should be a minister in a congregational setting. You want to learn about his or her experiences, challenges, successes, and suggestions. Ask for insights into being a better listener and communicator.

The second interview will be with a counselor, chaplain, or other pastoral care professional. This interview focuses on pastoral care provided outside the context of congregational ministry. You want to learn how non-congregational care differs from congregation-based pastoral care, how the professional pastoral caregiver deals with the greater diversity outside the congregation, and how he or she communicates about spiritual needs. Again, ask for insights into listening and understanding those who may practice a different faith than you do.

The third and fourth interviews will be with two friends or acquaintances. In this interview, you are to learn something new about the person you are interviewing. You are not providing pastoral care; you are simply learning to listen. Ask probing questions about the person's experiences but do so gently and compassionately. Use the listening and communication techniques learned throughout this course.

When you have completed all four interviews, write a single 1,000-word essay on what you learned about pastoral care and the importance of listening. Write a summary of the advice and experiences of the two pastoral care providers and compare that with your experience in talking with your third and fourth interviewee. What did you learn about yourself, your ability to listen, your ability to understand others, and your ability to be empathetic and compassionate?

When the essay is complete, you may submit it using the submission portal located in Module 2 on the Course Menu.

MODULE 3 Supervised Ministry Experience

Having now completed the “listening” exercise you are ready to begin your Supervised Ministry Experience (SME). The Supervised Ministry Experience involves your participation in four (4) pastoral care sessions.

Unit 1 Preparation

Prior to beginning your Supervised Ministry Experience, take the time necessary to prepare yourself. This preparation will include reviewing the course objectives, reviewing previous work, and reviewing the supervisor's qualifications and willingness to serve.

a. Goals and Objectives

Purpose of experience. As you begin preparing for the SME, you must recognize that the purpose of this experience. Ministry involves people—every kind, every problem, every situation, and every occasion. As a pastor, you will be relied on to provide biblical guidance, and this course and SME are designed to give you at least some experience in doing so. The purpose is not to “qualify” you as a professional counselor or raise your “stock” as a minister. The purpose is to help you see the challenges and prepare to meet them.

Goals of experience. There are five goals of this supervised ministry experience:

1. Introduce you to the challenges associated with pastoral care.

2. Give you the opportunity to practice active listening and pastoral communication.

3. Increase your confidence in the scriptural foundations of various pastoral care topics (grief/loss, addiction, family, etc.).

4. Process your experience with a qualified, experience pastoral care provider.

5. Exercise self-evaluation through feedback and personal reflection.

b. Securing a Supervisor.

Qualifications. A supervisor for this course must have the following qualifications.

1. Must possess a Master of Divinity with at least 5 years of ministry experience, or a Bachelor’s degree in religion, Bible, theology, or ministry and possess at least 15 years of ministry experience.

2. Must have training or at least 5 years of experience providing pastoral care in a ministry setting. The ministry setting does not have to be a local congregation but may include hospice, hospitals, military, or other form of pastoral care ministry.

Expectations. A supervisor must be able to meet the following expectations.

1. Provide guidance to the student in selecting and arranging appropriate pastoral care opportunities.

2. Serve as a liaison between the student and individuals with whom the student will interact. This expectation includes getting permission to have the student present and participating in the session.

3. Provide preliminary orientation to the student before each pastoral care opportunity to ensure the student is adequately prepared to engage in the pastoral care session.

4. Allow the student to take the lead in the pastoral care session but remain actively engaged to provide direction and clarification as needed.

5. Provide appropriate feedback to the student after each pastoral care session to ensure continuous improvement of the student's skills and increase in his or her confidence.

6. Provide the student with a written evaluation at the completion of the four sessions.

7. Help the student develop specific goals for improving his or her pastoral care abilities.

c. Opportunities for Engagement. It is the supervisor's responsibility to work with the student to identify the appropriate pastoral care opportunities and to select at least four (4) people with whom to meet. These opportunities may include the following.

1. Hospital visits

2. Hospice or Bereavement follow-up

3. Nursing Home visits

4. Pre-marital counseling

5. Marriage enrichment/counseling session

6. Funeral preparation with the bereaved family

7. Visiting with parent(s) of children or teenager experiencing some life difficulty

8. Other opportunities as deemed appropriate by the supervisor that meet the expectations of this course. Prior approval is not required for session selection.

Unit 2 Implementation

Now that you have made the necessary preparations, it is time to begin preparing for your individual meetings with pastoral care recipients. Following the outline below will ensure that the experience you gain from this exercise is beneficial and that it establishes a pattern of following best practices. The process is simple and straightforward. You will prepare before you meet with each individual, you will be attentive during the meeting, and you will complete your notes after the meeting.

a. Before meeting. Below are three keys to have a good Supervised Ministry Experience. These activities are best conducted one to two days before the scheduled session or visit.

Pray with supervisor. You will be called upon during the session to provide spiritual guidance. This guidance is best achieved, and perhaps only achieved, when you are connected with God. The Apostle Paul reminds us to pray without ceasing. Beginning now, and through your session, have a mindfulness that is filled with prayer.

Discuss situation. Even though you may have talked about each session while you were selecting them with your supervisor, it is important to review the situation of the people with whom you are about to meet. In routine ministry, as it may have been even now, time passes between visits and circumstances change. You, as a caregiver, need to make sure you are fully aware of what has happened in previous sessions and what your plan is for proceeding. Since you may be entering into a session that has many previous sessions with your supervisor, you need to be aware of his or her goals and strategies, as well as understanding the needs of those who are coming to you.

Prepare thoughts. Before engaging in discussion with the individual(s) with whom you are meeting, prepare some thoughts based on your discussion with your supervisor. If you have met a few days before the session, you may wish to use that time to look up Scripture that is relevant to the problem being discussed. You may also want to read and make a few notes from books or articles, both religious and secular, that address the issue at hand. If, for example, you do not have a great deal of experience with addiction counseling but know the person coming in goes to something like an Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) program, then research how 12-Step programs work. As you research and pray, make notes about the subjects you would like to discuss and information you wish to provide.

b. During meeting. Now that the day and time of your pastoral care session has arrived, remember that you are not entering into a relationship with people in need. They do not need "expert" advice; they need to experience God's love and compassion and grace and truth. You are merely a conduit through which that truth flows. So, do not worry. Following a few simple steps will make the meeting go smoothly.

Pray with individual(s). As you did with your supervisor, pray with the individuals as you begin. Remember, they are seeking pastoral care because they understand that there is a spiritual dimension to their problem. Begin by connecting the entire experience to God through prayer.

Listen to individual(s). You are well-prepared for the session as it begins, but you must allow the individual(s) seeking help to begin the session. You may offer a brief summary of past sessions, if appropriate, but do not begin with a lecture. Allow the individual(s) to share important experiences or recent events that bear on the meeting. Allowing them to begin assures them that you have their best interests in mind.

Ask questions for clarification. As the session progresses, continue to listen. Most sessions are a series of related stories, but there is usually a beginning and end to each story. After each story is told, take a moment to ask clarifying questions as discussed earlier. You may have to interrupt by asking permission to ask a question, but if you hear something that you need clarified, or that you feel the individual needs to clarify, gently ask for clarification.

It is while you are seeking clarification that you can introduce some of what you have researched. You can say, "The situation you just described reminds me of Ezekiel's experience. Can I share that with you so that we can compare his response to yours?" Likewise, you can offer insights from other resources. "You sound like you have been struggling with addiction for some time. Have you ever participated in a 12-Step program? Our church offers a Bible-based one that might be helpful."

Use Supervisor sparingly during meeting. This experience is yours, so do not depend on your supervisor. He or she is your safety net and will intervene if necessary. However, as you interact and provide pastoral care, remember that you are learning. You cannot learn if you keep asking for help. Instead, only use your supervisor when you feel you are facing an issue that needs to be resolved immediately and that you do not feel competent to address. It is okay to ask the supervisor for his or her thoughts.

Ask Supervisor to help wrap-up. Give the Supervisor the chance to get closure with individuals, if needed. Your supervisor will likely be the one continuing the pastoral care sessions, so it is important for them to be engaged in the closing and wrap-up. Your supervisor also is privy to information you may not have, and he or she may feel the need to provide closure for a particularly difficult issue the individual may be facing. They can also assign any "homework" to the individual that they feel is important.

c. After the meeting. After each session take time to assess your performance.

Write a Verbatim. After the meeting is over, take time to write a verbatim. A verbatim is a written account of the session to the best of your memory. This verbatim provides you with an account of the session for you to review and assess. You will not necessarily do this step in every session in your own ministry, but

it is beneficial in the learning process and may be a tool you use in the future for particularly complex sessions.

Review missing pieces with Supervisor. Use the verbatim to have a review with your supervisor. Asked for feedback. Especially use the verbatim to identify areas in which you struggled. Your supervisor may also point out important points in the session that you missed. Reviewing the verbatim helps you prepare for the next session.

Unit 3 Evaluation

Now that you have completed all four pastoral care sessions with your supervisor and have completed your personal assessment after each, it is time to do a comprehensive assessment of your supervised ministry experience and produce a paper on your personal theology of pastoral care. Your paper on your personal theology of pastoral care should reflect scriptural foundations and your experiences throughout this course. Without combining Scripture with experience, your theological understanding of pastoral care will lack the crucial element of applicability.

What are the biblical foundations for pastoral care from Module 1 that you found to be the most useful in your sessions?

How effectively were you able to listen and provide spiritual insights into the individual's struggles? Did you find yourself relying on a few key Scriptures throughout all sessions or did you find each session required its own particular Scripture?

What did you learn from your experience about the role of Scripture in pastoral care? Did you feel you overused Scripture or underused it? How was Scripture received by the individuals you met with?

Which seemed to be the most important to the individuals with whom you met, your knowledge of Scripture or your ability to listen and dialogue?

After you have completed your reflections and summary of your experience, use this information to help you complete Essay 3: Theology of Pastoral Care. Instructions and submission portal are found on the Course Menu.

Essay 3: Theology of Pastoral Care

From your experiences and your answers to the previous questions, prepare a 2,000-word essay that describes your personal theology of pastoral care. It should include scriptural foundations for the practice of pastoral care, the role of Scripture in pastoral care, and your goals when providing pastoral care. The entirety of the paper should be supported by experiences from your encounters with individuals throughout the course. Your theology of pastoral care must be biblical and practical, or it cannot guide you in ministry.

Prepare your paper following NationsUniversity guidelines and submit it on the Course Menu under Module 3.

Supervisor's Evaluation

Have your supervisor complete the Supervisor Instruction and Evaluation Form found in the General Section of the Course Menu. After it is completed, and you and your supervisor have reviewed it together, it is your (the student's) responsibility to upload a copy of the evaluation to the Course Menu.

The Supervisor Evaluation will not count as a separate grade but will be considered when assigning a grade on the Theology of Pastoral Care essay as these two assignments represent the whole of the Supervised Ministry Experience.

Course Evaluation

After completing the third essay, we ask that you please complete the Course Evaluation. The Course Evaluation link is located on the Course Menu at the bottom of the column below the Course Summary.

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