

Deaf Pah – Christian Caregiving

Christian Caregiving is an online *DeafPah!* course that helps prepare church members to serve in their congregation's ministry. Your instructor is Rev. Donald Leber.

You may download the video lessons, this study guide for free from deafjesus.org, and study questions.

The videos were originally prepared as VHS videotapes for the Deaf Institute of Theology. The optional textbook for this course is *Christian Caregiving – a Way of Life*, by Kenneth C. Haugk; 1984, Augsburg Publishing House.

Introduction

Welcome in the name of Jesus. We will gather together and learn. We may then offer a higher quality of distinctively (specific) Christian Caregiving than before.

Our goal is to understand Christian caring better. Then we may take care more effectively and more efficiently (skill) as Christ Himself cares (take care).

We are gathering here not just to become effective learners in Christ's school. But also to become more effective (skill) servants in God's world.

God has given you vision what? God will bring more Deaf people to heaven! You are a caregiver...Yes!

Lesson 1: It's Not Easy Being A Christian

Example of a story:

Looking at Peter you think he is a fine Christian man. Peter is 39 years old, married, and a father of two children. Peter occasionally went to church when he was younger. Now he is on church boards and committees. He is helping out when work needs to be done. He visits the sick and shut-ins. He does volunteer work at a home for mentally retarded people.

Deaf Pah – Christian Caregiving

Peter says, “Volunteer work is not really connected with our church. I just go and show kids how to make things from wood. Last time I showed them how to hammer .. accidentally hammer the thumb ahh.”

But when asked about his faith, Peter said, “I don’t like to talk about religion. I don’t believe in pushing my faith on anyone. Last year I went to a meeting in New Orleans. Some friends and I went for a walk. We met a sidewalk preacher. He was shouting. He was making crazy statements about the end of the world. I was disgusted about it. My two friends made jokes about him and about religion. I was mad at the sidewalk preacher. I also was mad at myself for not defending my own faith. I didn’t want to defend the preacher because of his shouting and crazy words. That is not the way a Christian should act.”

Have you experienced times that you were embarrassed to be a Christian? Being embarrassed is something you learn as a child or you were born with it.

People often find it easier to talk about sex than about their religion and relationship with God. Maybe we learned about embarrassment from our parents. But you are not the only person that feels that way.

In dealing (acting) with people, you must learn to defeat embarrassment, because if you don’t feel comfortable, then people won’t feel comfortable with you.

Example of story:

Like feeding a squirrel, the squirrel wants the food you offer, but is not sure he can trust you. You want to give the peanuts to the squirrel, but when you move quickly the squirrel moves away until he can trust you again. The more you talk about your faith with people, the more the people will feel comfortable and open up to you.

Like Peter in the first example story, some of us are afraid to push our faith on others. The problem is that we miss an opportunity to witness to someone and win them for Jesus.

Yes we need to be careful and not force people, but we must also need to be bold and courageous. Use every opportunity you have to share your faith.

Two things that will help you to become more comfortable:

- 1) Education
- 2) Training

The purpose of these lessons is to teach you all you need to know and show you how to use the abilities that God has given you. Maybe you are smart and know the Bible, but when someone has a problem, you maybe feel awkward in talking with them.

Sometimes we are afraid of the things people will say to us. Or maybe some topics we feel are too difficult to handle. We are afraid of making a mistake.

God gives us His promise of forgiveness again and again.

When you meet with other people, you have to take risks, especially in sharing your faith. But a child of God knows that he has forgiveness even before he needs it.

Example of story:

Remember when you first learned to drive a car? A car is a dangerous tool; it kills people. But you can learn the way to use a car responsibly.

Another fear we have is rejection, that people won't want to listen to us. When you demonstrate true honest Christian caring, people will accept you. When you carefully listen to their problems and allow them to share their feelings with you and not be cut off, then they will accept your leadership.

You will feel rejected if you only try to satisfy your own needs and neglect the needs of others.

Summary:

It talked about that some people are embarrassed that they are Christian when they are with a friend who is not. They didn't want to defend other people about their faith and yet same time they felt guilty for not defending their own faith.

Note: Peter denied Jesus 3 times and yet felt guilty for not defending Jesus.

Note: Let look at the opposite of that situation. If you have a Christian friend who noticed that you are sitting with people who are not Christian, 'why hang around with them non-Christian?' 'Why not be with us Christians?' Jesus sat and ate dinner with sinners. Someone told Jesus why he hanged around those people sinners and that he should be with other. Jesus said 'the patient needs a doctor.' That is the same way sinners need a savior. He didn't come for healthy ones but

for sinners. Only a strong Christian may be able to withstand among non-Christians – who know a Christian may plant a seed of faith in non-Christian.

Note: Not only about defending faith. It is more than just merely defending faith. How can you defend a Christian from another Christian whose badmouth about each other? Even if they have the same faith?

God use us Christian caregiver to communicate more clearly to people in need that God forgives them. Our ability to share the forgiveness of God with other people is one of our most valuable gifts.

Study Questions:

1. What can Peter say to his friends after they mocked the sidewalk preacher?
2. Can you remember a time that you wanted to share your faith with someone but you didn't?
3. What connection is there between God's forgiveness and your being a Christian caregiver?

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

You are at the airport with a good friend and the two of you have never discussed religion in the past. Just before your friend gets on the plane, your friend asks you, "Why are you a Christian?" what answer will you give in 1 minute?

Lesson 2: God as The Caregiver

1. The word “Therapy” is signed “healer” or “T-helper”. It means to serve, restore, care for, wait for (to serve), treat medically.
2. The word “Ambassador” is signed “Announcer”. It means an authorized messenger.
3. The word “farmer” means to till (dig to plant), fertilize, plant, cultivate. God makes things grow.
4. The word “cure” is signed “heal”. The word “care” is signed “take care of”. Remember the doctor cares but medicine cures.
5. The Caregiver is you. The Caregiver is God

Read Matthew 9:37-38 (NIRV)

Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

This story helps us understand that we work together with God in His work of caring for our world. Farmers plant, tend (take care), and harvest crops but God causes the miracle of growth. Likewise (same as) we, as caregivers, plant God’s Word, tend to people, and gather people together and God causes the miracle of faith in the lives of people.

It is tempting at times to forget God’s responsibility in the caring/curing process. We want to look at the different responsibilities in this process and grow in appreciation of God’s way of using us in His process of caring and curing.

The word “Therapy” comes from a Greek word that means to serve, to restore, to care for, to wait upon, or to treat medically. Because you follow Jesus, you are a Christian therapist. You serve and care for other people. Understanding the Bible teaching about therapy will help you to see the difference between all other caregivers and you as a Christian caregiver.

You are offering to people love without limits. Because Jesus lives in you, you are God’s ambassador. You bring the Good News of God’s acceptance and forgiveness and life.

Caring is a process like plowing, fertilizing, planting, and cultivating (prepare). God takes care of the growth and the fruits.

When you realize that God is the CAREGIVER, you are freed from worry and false expectations. You no longer are responsible for the results (for what

happened). You are free to make the best possible therapeutic situation for growth to happen by developing trust and communicating acceptance and love.

If you do not depend on God as caregiver, you are in deep trouble. Why? Because then either you have to blame yourself for not being good enough or not doing the right thing or you blame the carereceiver because he didn't try hard enough or didn't listen to your advice.

Summary:

We cannot cure people, only God can. But we can be the caregiver, take care of them or tend to their need but not to cure them.

Study Questions:

1. Do you think that Jesus was a therapist?
2. Have you ever had an experience that you thought yourself to be the caregiver instead of the carereceiver?
3. Have you ever had an experience that you completely trusted God to help you with a problem?

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

1. A week or two ago your teacher broke an arm and went to the hospital. Today your teacher arrives home and you come for a visit. Your job is to make your teacher feel better.
2. Your teacher is feeling very depressed because he lost his job. You are to talk with your teacher about his feelings. Remember your goal is not necessarily to get your teacher smiling or feeling better, but your job is to listen and help your teacher to open up and talk about his feelings.
3. Explain the difference between #1 and #2.

Lesson 3: God, You and Me

“Two heads are better than one.” That mean, two people have better success than if one person acts by himself.

Also we must remember that two therapists are better than one. If you are one of the therapists, who is the other? GOD of course.

As a Christian caregiver you are never alone. God is always present with you as He promised, “Anytime two or three are gathered in My name, I will be there.”

When you identify and include God in your caring relationships, you have great power with you.

God is with you like a boss surgeon. Before a student doctor can enter the operating room, the boss surgeon must give instruction (teaching) and guidance. When the student enters the operating room, the boss surgeon is there overseeing, giving instructions, ready to help in any emergency, talking to the student to get him through the operation. God is like that boss surgeon for us. God is with us teaching and guiding us through each caregiving situation.

Our hands do the work, but without God’s wisdom and guidance in and with you, you would be very much alone. With God’s help, you have a powerful Christian resource (help). God is with you like a Wounded Healer. God is all knowing and all powerful, but he is not far away from us. God is with us as one who has gone through all the trails (trouble) and tribulations (problem) of life.

Read Isaiah 53:5

But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.

Read Matthew 25:35-36

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

Because Jesus suffered just as we suffer, He understands our grief and pain. And God is with you like a comfortable reclining chair, inviting everyone to come and sit down and relax.

Read John 10:28

I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.

God is like the good hands of Allstate insurance holding you and me and the care needer all at the same time. In our caregiving we must acknowledge God's presence with us through prayer, through using God's name and by showing that God is present with us at all times.

Prayer and preparation study your lessons so that you know them well. Pray for the people you visit. Read your Bible and ask God to show you the way that He wants to lead you

Summary:

We cannot do without God's help. We cannot do alone on our own. God is always present with us and in us. God will guide us how to care someone.

With God's help then we can have a powerful Christian resource to help other.

Study Questions:

1. Do you picture God being with you in any of these three ways:
 - as a boss surgeon,
 - as a wounded healer,
 - as a comfortable chair?
2. What difference can it make to the care needer if you mention God or not?
3. How can you be a "Wounded Healer" for someone?

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

Share with your mentor a story about a time when you felt God was very close to you.

Lesson 4: Why Care?

Story:

Jim was a university student. He was anxious and sometimes depressed. This problem bothered his studies and his sleep. Sometimes he became irritable with his roommate and friends. Jim went to a Christian counselor for help. The counselor helped Jim see that he always wanted things perfect and when things were not perfect, he became anxious and depressed. Jim realized his problem and began to improve.

Jim and the counselor had a good relationship with each other. Jim asked the counselor, “Why are you a counselor?”

The counselor said “Because I am interested in people and I want to help people with their life struggles and problems.”

Jim said, “I understand that, but why are you a counselor?”

The counselor said, “I very much enjoy working with people, I get a lot of satisfaction from helping people have a happy life.”

Jim said, “Yes, but why are you a counselor? Why do you do things you do?”

Now the counselor realized that Jim wanted to hear something different than the general reasons for being a counselor. The counselor thought a minute. “Counseling gives me an opportunity to deal with situations and people not just from a distance, but to get involved with them in a personal way.”

The counselor was pleased with the last answer. But Jim was still not satisfied. Jim said, “I understand the thing you are saying. But I want to know what really motivated you. What is the thing behind your life and work? Why do you do the thing you do?”

Now the counselor understood that Jim was asking a spiritual question. The answer he gave was, “My work comes from my faith in God and in the things that God did for me in Jesus Christ. I believe that Jesus cares for me so much that He willingly gave His life for me. Remembering His love, I must now reach out and share that love through caring with other people. That is the reason I do the things I do.”

This should be the reason you want to be a caregiver.

Study Questions:

1. Why do you, as a Christian, care?
2. Think of a past time that you helped someone. Did you find it pleasing? What didn't you like about it? Did the person you helped know you were a Christian?

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

Share with your mentor about your present job and why you do it.

Lesson 5: Family Ties

Have you ever gone to a large meeting and noticed someone using sign language across the room? You immediately go over and meet them and you talk about your deaf school and things you have in common.

Most other people in the room have nothing in common with you except this other deaf person. You are like family to each other.

The Bible describes the Christian family in many ways. One of the most powerful descriptions is used by Paul telling us that every Christian is a part of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27).

Our human body has many different parts, the same way Jesus' body (that means the church) has many different people in it. The church has people from different nations, cultures, ages, abilities, and interests. Jesus is connected to every believer in a special way that he lives in us. God joins us lonely people to Himself and to each other.

The Christian family is joined together by the power and love of Jesus that no other religion in the world gives.

The story:

One time I was away on a trip to visit another church to help them with a program. I arrived on Ash Wednesday and I remember feeling sad that I couldn't be with my own family and congregation for the Lenten soup and salad dinner and worship. But I felt that being with other Christian people on this special day was good too. That evening the people at the church I visited made me feel very welcome at their meal, and I felt that their congregation (church people) become my congregation for that 24-hour period of time.

When the time arrived in the church to receive a blessing and to get a cross from ashes put on my forehead, the same way as we do in my home church, I know that same time my family was doing the exact same thing at my church. I was not worshiping separately from my family but together with them and with the Christian church all over the world as we worshiped God together.

Christian caregivers sometimes ask themselves, "What right do I have to involve myself in another person's life?"

The right to care comes from our responsibility as family members. God created the Christian family. God wants us to touch the lives of our fellow (friends) family members with His love.

We have a “license” from God to take care of His people. When God’s people are hurting inside, they want to talk about their needs. Sometimes at first people are shy and don’t want to say anything. But after they begin to talk about their problem, then they are thankful that you cared enough to ask, listen and help them.

Widows and widowers often complain that after their spouse died, friends and other people didn’t want to talk about the dead person. But truly most of those people want to talk about that loved one that died.

Because the caregiver and care needer are from the same family, Jesus family. Trust is established from the start you already have something in common with each other, your faith in Jesus the Savior. Sometimes it helps to tell the person that you are both members of the same family. This good news will make the person feel calm.

Study Questions:

1. How is the Christian church like a family? And how is it different?
2. What is the difference between "being nosy" and caring for another person as a Christian?
3. If you needed to talk with someone about a personal problem, who would you go to see and why? A Christian or a Non-Christian?

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

Make a list of names of people in your church group. After the name of the person, write a part of the body that you think this person represents. A toe? A heart? An ear? Be ready to explain your answers.

Lesson 6: Move over Dr. Freud

Do you feel skilled to handle the problems that people will bring to you? How can you help someone with a death in the family, with the rape of someone in their family, with an upcoming divorce, or with a runaway child?

Won't it be better for them to go to a professional psychiatrist or psychologist? Counseling by a professional counselor can and often does help people in need.

But Christian caregiving has one blessing more important than other kinds of counselors. The Christian caregiver is able to talk about the most important things : such as life, death, and about God's love for us in Jesus. These things other caregivers are not able to offer. You can do this with God's help.

As a caregiver, you must be careful not to judge people. Judging people belongs to God, not to us.

As a caregiver, you bring the love of God to other people even if you don't always agree with the way they act and how they handle the situation.

As a caregiver, you must be wise enough to know when the person in your group needs the help of the pastor or other professional counselor.

It is never a failure to refer someone to a counselor more skilled to help the person; it is the sign of a successful referral.

Study Questions:

1. Why do you think that Christian caregiving is better than other kinds of caregiving?
2. What examples can you think from the Bible about Jesus caring for individuals and how did He handle it?
3. Give an example of a situation that you would refer to another professional.

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

Role play: one member just had a death in the family, another member has the job of comforting the person.

Lesson 7: Touching Spiritual Depths

People have many different kinds of needs:

1. Physical
2. Emotional
3. Mental
4. Social
5. Spiritual

Physicians take care of the physical needs.

Counselors take care of the emotional needs.

Psychiatrists and psychologists take care of the mental needs.

Friends and family take care of the social needs.

Who is the caregiver for a person with spiritual needs? Most people will answer that it is the job of the pastor, and that is true. However, every Christian's job description includes serving as a spiritual caregiver.

Because you are a Christian, you can see when people have spiritual problems and God gives you the power to help those people.

Because God created all people, all people live in some relationship with God.

Those relationship vary among individuals and across time.

Some people are very angry with God and separated from Him.

Other people have no relationship with Him.

And still other people have a close relationship with God, finding meaning, purpose, value and honor in that relationship.

Still all people find themselves asking questions like:

1. What is so important about my life?
2. Why am I here?
3. How does God know about me?
4. What is right and what is wrong?
5. Why does God permit suffering?
6. Why must I die?

Who can help people with these questions?

You and I can help as Christian caregivers.

Many excuses will come to your mind to keep you from helping those people.

You would rather talk about other things not spiritual.

Discussing personal spiritual needs with another person is scary.

We become afraid or we feel that we don't know the answers ourselves.

We as Christian caregiver we have the opportunity to talk about spiritual needs.

When the person accepts you, you will help the person more.

Listen to them express their needs.

As trust grows begin asking about their relationship with God using prayer and the Bible to open the conversation to God.

Ask questions like:

1. Do you think God knows about your problem?
2. Do you think that God can help you through this problem?
3. Do you think that God is punishing you?
4. What plans do you think God has for you and your future?
5. How do you see this problem making you better person in future?

Avoid lecturing to the person.

Talking about God or faith is not like taking a funnel and pouring the right words into someone.

It is a sharing process that both people need to participate.

Avoid common religious sentences like "All you need is faith." "Praise the Lord anyway." Or "Don't worry. God loves you." These kind of words do not help with the problem but only makes the problem worse.

And avoid saying that you know all the answers because you don't.
Only God knows the heart of a person.

Study Questions:

1. How did we Christians get the job as caregiver?
2. Why is it so difficult to talk about spiritual things?
3. Give an example of spiritual things in the "Monday-Saturday world."

Lesson 8: Ministering to the Whole Person

Christian caregiver deals with the “whole” person.

What does the word “holistic” mean?

It means dealing with people’s spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical needs. God made us with each of these needs, but they cannot be totally separated.

As Christian caregivers we bring God’s peace and help to each of these needs.

Matthew 22:37-39 (NIRV)

Jesus replied, “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Love him with all your mind.’ (Deuteronomy 6:5) This is the first and most important commandment. 39 And the second is like it. ‘Love your neighbor as you love yourself.’ (Leviticus 19:18)

As we follow Jesus, we help people with all of their needs. God is the one that offers to make our life full. Jesus came to give us a life that is full and complete.

John 10:10 (NIRV)

A thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so they may have life. I want them to have it in the fullest possible way.

Jesus names it an “overabundant” life.

In our lesson, we want to see the things that God gives us to make us become full people of God. We will learn to help other people that have that abundant life like us also.

In helping people (in your group), you must be careful not to do some things:

1. Don’t separate a person’s problem into physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual. If a person has a physical problem, that will affect emotional, then affect mental then affect spiritual life. For example: if you read from the Bible, say a prayer, and talk about God and that has nothing to do with the person’s problem. If a person has a physical problem that will also change his emotional, mental, and spiritual life.
2. Don’t divide a person’s problem by percentages. For instance, if a person is angry, don’t say his emotional problem is 75% and his spiritual problem is

Deaf Pah – Christian Caregiving

25%. His physical problem is 0%. Each of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual are equal in %.

3. Don't expect to be perfect. We are not a doctor, teacher, business person, psychologist, and farmer etc all in one person taking care of a person needs. We are not perfect caregiver. Accept that fact. God is the perfect caregiver.
4. Don't blame ourselves when a person doesn't want our help. We are not God. God alone is the one that helps broken people and make them well again. We are the only tools that God uses to help people.

Try to help each person with their needs. If they are hungry, get them food. If they are sad, comfort them with God's good news. We have to remember they have other needs as well. Help the 'whole' person because God loves the whole person.

Study Questions:

1. What do you think about the idea that problems in our lives come from problems in our relationship with God?
2. Someone (in your group) has recently had a child killed in a car accident. How can you care for this person's physical, emotional and spiritual needs?

Lesson 9: Servanthood vs Servitude

Martin Luther wrote,

“A Christian is a perfectly free Lord of all and under no man. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all and obedient to all.”

As a Christian, we are free and no one can force us to serve other people. But Christ frees us to serve all people eagerly.

Servitude means we are a slave and must obey our master.

Servanthood means that we are freely serve and help people because God loves us.

Some Christian people get these two ideas confused. Some Christian people are afraid that God is not happy with them so they try to do lots of helpful things to make God happy. When we do that then we are getting the benefit from our work and we do not get benefit from the person we are trying to help. We have become a slave.

Many great opportunities open up for us when we understand servanthood.

We need to realize that acting as a Christian servant is not an easy job, but the work we do for the Lord can satisfy us a lot. Christian servant must always realize that the Holy Spirit is the one who guides us. Without God’s leading, we will meet trouble.

There are some things we must be careful to not do.

1. Don’t take the problems of other people on our shoulders. We may feel sympathy for them, we may listen to them, and we may help them, but do not take over the responsibility for the problem. Example: when someone fell into a mudhole, will you jump in the mudhole to help them out? No.
2. Be careful for people that are too much sweet and loving. Maybe they are covering up and hiding their real problems. They deny that anything is wrong. Be careful, but always be honest. Honesty can become catching in a group.
3. Watch out for people who manipulate us. Christians are known we are patient people but that does not allow another person to control the things we do. i.e making things excuse for people when they lack in something,

covering up or controlling us to feel sorry for them – example of drinking problem control spouse call in to make excuse saying that person is sick etc. Being a true Christian servant means giving people the things they need, not the things they want.

4. Don't become involved in a problem when we don't want to help. A gossiping person always seems to want us to listen to him, and we feel it is our duty to help that person to stop gossiping. But at the same time we complain about him to other people. A servant chooses the things that he will become involved with, then works with all his energy.

Mark 10:45 (NIRV)

Even the Son of Man did not come to be served. Instead, he came to serve others. He came to give his life as the price for setting many people free.”

Jesus, the Lord, the Creator, served people. Because God calls us to be disciples of Jesus, we are perfectly free to serve other people.

Study Questions:

1. How can a Christian be free and a servant at the same time?
2. Have you ever found yourself in the trap of SERVITUDE?
3. How can you know the difference between a person's needs and his wants?

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

Think about the last time you had to do something that you didn't like to do. How did you feel about that job? Did you do a good job?

Lesson 10: A Surprise Gift: Forgiveness

All people are sinners and failed to do the things God requires. All of us must say “*Father, I have sinned against heaven and you; I am not worthy to be named your son.*” Luke 15:21

But God in His great mercy sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer and die on the cross so that He can now offer to us God’s full and complete forgiveness.

Forgiveness is a surprise gift from God because we did not earn it. God shares this message of forgiveness through His people.

As a member of Jesus’ church, Jesus commands us to offer His forgiveness to one another.

[John 20:23 \(NIRV\)](#)

[If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”](#)

In life when God’s love seems far away, God use us warm people like you and me to communicate more clearly to people in need that God forgives them.

Our ability to share the forgiveness of God with other people is one of our most valuable gifts. Before we can offer this surprise gift to people, we must first show people that we accept them no matter what they have done wrong. We must love people the same way that God loves us. Remember that no one is perfect and that “we all sin and do not deserve God’s glory.”

In Christian caring relationship, we must never act like we are better than other people or that we would never do the same sin that they do. And we must never show that we are ashamed of the person, because that will turn the person away from us. And we will never get the opportunity to offer them God’s forgiveness. That doesn’t mean we accept their sins. We accept the people no matter their sins. God hates sin, but God loves the sinner.

Listen! Listen to people.

Don’t be anxious to give forgiveness too quickly.

Example: If you give keys to a car to a five year old, he is not ready to drive. But when you give keys to a 16 year old, because he realizes the responsibility and is ready to accept it.

Only by listening fully to the things people are thinking and feeling, and helping them to see their mistakes then can we truly help them with God's forgiveness. People must see their need for forgiveness first.

If you offer it too soon, then they will say "You can't possibly forgive me! You don't know half the story!" or "Why is he forgiving me? What did I do wrong?"

For a person to experience forgiveness fully, enough time and accepting love must be part of a caring relationship. After listening to their feelings and allowing them to talk about their problems, you will want to share with them God's words of forgiveness.

The words you say to them will depend on you, the other person, the situation, and the need.

Here is an example: "I'm glad you wanted to talk I know that was hard for you to be honest with yourself. I want you to know that God loves you and forgives you no matter anything you have done wrong and I also want you to know that I forgive you too. You are a very special person to me and to God."

Study Questions:

1. Why is listening so important to forgiveness?
2. If you refuse to forgive a person that needs it, how can that hurt the person needing forgiveness?
3. If you refuse to forgive a person that needs it, how can that hurt you?
4. What is the role of the pastor in forgiveness?

PRACTICAL ACTIVITY

Share a time that you felt you couldn't forgive someone, or someone that refused to forgive you.

Lesson 11: Confession and Absolution

Confession and Absolution (forgiveness) are words that most people think we find in church. But in true confession and forgiveness, the process is that one person communicates the burden of his sin to another person, and then that person shares the good news God already forgave the sin and promises to heal the sinner. That can happen in many places. Yes, it happens every week in church, but it can happen over the back yard fence or in your meetings individually with people.

Private confession between a person and God is important and absolutely necessary. But sometimes a real live person sometimes can tell you about God's love and forgiveness can be a great comfort and help.

A person can go to a psychiatrist or psychologist or a counselor and tell all their troubles and feel good about it. But when a Christian caregiver speaks a word of forgiveness, then he speaks with the full power of God. In truth it is Jesus Himself that forgives through the Christian caregiver. That makes a big difference between you and I and the rest of those counselors in the world.

Sharing God's forgiveness is both a great privilege and great responsibility. The great privilege is seeing the forgiveness of God bring joy to the crying eyes of burdened people.

The great responsibility is determining just the right time to share the message of forgiveness. If you jump in and share it too soon, the person will walk away and have confessed nothing. But if you wait too long, The person will become depressed and full of guilt.

Study Questions:

1. What was Jesus teaching on confession and forgiveness? See Matthew 7:9-15; Matthew 18:21-35; Luke 7:40-48; Luke 17:3-4. Look up these verses now.
2. Can you describe a situation where you would refuse to offer forgiveness to someone?
3. Do you think a person can confess to God and then tell himself that God forgives him?

Lesson 12: Skills of your trade: Their correct use and wrong use

God freely gives us Christian tools to help us in our work of caring for other people.

These tools are : The Bible, prayer, and especially the Holy Spirit.

When you use these tools correctly, then they will help you better care for and to speak God’s Word to people. Image that someone in your family dies, you are experiencing grief and sadness. Your friend Eric comes to visit you. You want to talk about your doubts and struggles with your faith. Erick talks about everything else. When Eric is ready to leave, he prays words that he memorized. Then he leaves hurriedly. You still feel grief and sadness.

Brenda comes to visit you and she immediately begins saying Bible verses and telling you her thoughts about arising from the dead. She tells you that Jesus has taken away the pain of death. Then she kneels down and says a prayer about death and arising and then leaves. You are happy that she leaves.

What can Eric and Brenda learn? Eric offered no Christian care. Brenda knew all the Bible verses but she didn’t use them in a helpful way to take away your pain and grief. Don’t become an Eric or a Brenda in your caring for people.

First, we need to know which tool is appropriate to use in each situation. To do that you maybe need to learn to listen to people for the things they need and not the things you think they need. You maybe even decide not to use any Christian tools in caring for a person and that is all right.

Some people feel that only pastors can use these tools in caring for people. That is not true. We are all “priests” before God. Every Christian has the responsibility to share his faith with other people. And remember that people expect you and I to be Christian caregivers and to do things differently than non-Christian caregivers.

Two things for us to always remember.

1. Don’t treat people as things. Some people only care so that they can bring those people into their church. That means they think of those people as numbers, not as people with special needs. Ask ourselves question: Am I

Deaf Pah – Christian Caregiving

here to help other people need? Or am I here to help myself and my goals and my needs?

2. Match the tools to the person's need. Find out the things the person needs before you start using the tools. Listen carefully, then use God's tools.

Study Questions:

1. What does it mean "universal priesthood of all believers?"
2. What are some "signs" you can watch for that will help you know the correct time to use your Christian tools?
3. Even though people don't believe the same way that you believe, do you think that they will still respect you are a Christian caregiver?

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

Your mentor's father recently was placed into a nursing home because the father has Alzheimer disease. What do you say?

Lesson 13: Prayer

You and another person pray to God with others. Not every Christian is born with the knowledge of how to pray. But prayer is one of the important tools we need in truly caring relationships. Some people think that praying is the duty of the pastor, and that only the pastor has the right relationship with God. That is not the truth.

Every Christian has the duty and responsibility to pray with other people as the opportunities arise. Why do some Christians refuse to pray with other people? Because they never learned how to pray. They are not sure about the reason to pray, when to pray, how to pray, what to pray for, and even where to pray.

God invites people to come near to him and share their worries with him thru prayer. He wants his people to come to him together in prayer.

James 5:16 says “Pray for each other.”

Matthew 18:19-20 (NIRV)

“Again, here is what I tell you. Suppose two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for. My Father in heaven will do it for you. Where two or three people gather in my name, I am there with them.”

That is a powerful reason to pray together. When you pray with another person, God is a third person in that caring relationship. Another reason for praying together is that it will help your relationship with that person to pray. In prayer you talk very honest with God because He knows all things and you are honest with each other. While you come closer to God, you will also come closer to that other person.

Prayer should be a natural part of your conversation. Don't just add a prayer at the end of your visit. Change it around. Pray at the beginning or in the middle. Listen to the person and pray when that person shows a need for prayer. And if that person does not want to pray, please don't force a prayer on them. You can pray privately by yourself at a later time for the person. Always keep your prayer simple and easy.

Study Questions:

1. What is prayer?
2. Why do you think some people are afraid to pray in front of other people?
3. How can praying with another person bring you closer to each other?
4. What do you think about showing feelings of anger, sadness, bitterness, and fear in your prayers to God?
5. Do you have a favorite prayer?

Lesson 14: The Bible

The same way the last person talked about prayer as a tool to use in caring for people. In this lesson, you can use the Bible as your tool in caring for people. Learning verses from the Bible can help you in caring for people in various situations.

The Bible is God His own Words tell us way that God care for people during long ago. The Bible gives us a picture of God the same as a sweetheart that never gives up and continues to bless us. The whole story of the Bible can be summed up in the verse from John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in Him will not die but have eternal life.”

Our people are living in a world of bad news. They live among suffering, oppression, conflict, grief, sickness, terrible accidents, and finally death. They can use some good news they need to hear God’s gospel.

People often look in the Bible for help when they begin to experience problems and needs in their lives.

The Psalms have help for people that are depressed, angry, happy, and need to sing their praises to God. The lives of Bible people are good examples of people with weaknesses and strengths.

The teachings in the Bible teach people the way to live the right way in relationship with God and with other people. Use the word of God because the Bible has the story that people need to hear. The words of God work in the hearts of believers for good.

It is important to know some verses from the Bible ahead of time that are suitable for different situations. You maybe can ask the people you are caring for if they have any special verses that are important to them and then add them to your list. You can mark some verses in your Bible or keep a 3x5 card with several verses on them.

When the time is right, you maybe can say the following: suppose when you talk about feeling sadness, “I remember the words of Jesus about grieving people, ‘Blessed are the people that grieve, for they shall receive comfort.’” Or “Something that really helped me in a similar situation to yours is the story of the

death of Lazarus. The Bible says, ‘Jesus wept.’ If it is alright for Jesus to cry with grief, then it is all right for us to do the same.”

“You said that you enjoy reading the Psalms. Do you remember Psalm 121? This Psalm encourages me during difficult times. Psalm Bible verse says that “God is always with you and protecting you.”

Psalm 121 (NIRV)

A song for those who go up to Jerusalem to worship the Lord.

- ¹ I look up to the mountains.
Where does my help come from?
- ² My help comes from the Lord.
He is the Maker of heaven and earth.
- ³ He won't let your foot slip.
He who watches over you won't get tired.
- ⁴ In fact, he who watches over Israel
won't get tired or go to sleep.
- ⁵ The Lord watches over you.
The Lord is like a shade tree at your right hand.
- ⁶ The sun won't harm you during the day.
The moon won't harm you during the night.
- ⁷ The Lord will keep you from every kind of harm.
He will watch over your life.
- ⁸ The Lord will watch over your life no matter where you go,
both now and forever.

Never, never, never use the Bible to criticize people that will only turn them away from God and not toward Him.

Study Questions:

1. Have you ever used the Bible to help yourself in times of trouble?
2. How can all of us become more familiar with the Bible and find the correct verses to use to help us in our caring?
3. Does God speak to people in other ways than through the Bible?

Lesson 15: Sharing a Blessing

In lesson 13 maybe you will not always end your visit with a prayer. Another good way to close a visit is with a blessing. This comes from the Latin word that means “a good saying.”

Today people maybe will say to you, “Have a good day.” Or “Take it easy.” Or “Keep your chin up.” Or “Goodbye.”

That comes from meaning of “God be with you.” “God bless you.” Now there is a difference in regular blessings and Christian blessings.

Regular blessings vs Christian blessings

Regular blessing: “Have a good day” or “Keep smiling” etc means person must do something.

Christian blessings make no demands on the person but Christian blessings ask for God’s divine help into our sinful lives: “God be with you” or “The Lord bless you and keep you” or “The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you” or “The peace of God go with you.”

Blessings are remembering tools. It reminds us that God is with us and He is in control. Christian blessings have a great influence on people also because we are saying it instead of God we are letting the people know that God will continue to be with them thru all their troubles in life.

The same as praying and reading a Bible verse at the appropriate time is important, the same with giving a blessing. It can come at the end, or maybe in the middle. Think yourself instead of the other person and ask yourself when is the right time to say the blessing. As you share the blessing with people, you maybe can hold the person’s hand. Touch is an important part of caring.

There are several great blessings in the Bible. Maybe you can mark them in your Bible to help you remember them or even to memorize them.

The first is in Numbers 6:24-26

“May the Lord bless you
and take good care of you.
May the Lord smile on you

and be gracious to you.
May the Lord look on you with favor
and give you peace.”

The second one we also use sometimes in church and it is from 2 Corinthians 13:14

2 Corinthians 13:14 (NIRV)

May the grace shown by the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. May the love that God has given us be with you. And may the sharing of life brought about by the Holy Spirit be with you all.

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”

The third is from Philippians 4:7

Philippians 4:7 (NIRV)

Then God’s peace will watch over your hearts and your minds. He will do this because you belong to Christ Jesus. God’s peace can never be completely understood.

“And the peace of God that is above all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”

The fourth is from Hebrews 13:20-21

Hebrews 13:20-21 (NIRV)

Our Lord Jesus is the great Shepherd of the sheep. The God who gives peace brought him back from the dead. He did it because of the blood of the eternal covenant. Now may God 21 supply you with everything good. Then you can do what he wants. May he do in us what is pleasing to him. We can do it only with the help of Jesus Christ. Give him glory for ever and ever. Amen.

“Now may the God of peace, He raised Jesus from the dead, the great shepherd of the sheep...”

Or maybe you prefer a shorter blessing like:

“God be with you.” Or “God bless you.” Or “Peace and joy to you.”

Anything you use should come from an honest heart. Mean the thing you are saying. Don't just say it because it will seem nice to the person.

Study Questions:

1. Can you find a way to change a regular blessing and make it a Christian blessing?
2. How can you help a person that is hurting by reminding them that their day is in God's hands?

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

Tell your mentor a time in your life that God really blessed you.

Lesson 16: A cup of Cold water

One time I was driving down a country road and suddenly I saw red flashing lights and a policeman telling all the cars to park on the side of the road. Two cars had collided and one was upside down in the middle of the road. The policeman said we had to wait for the tow truck to remove the cars and then we can drive on. I noticed across the road a person lying with a blanket covering their body and nearby was a man sitting alone. The policeman was busy stopping the cars, but the man was alone. I walked across the road toward the man. He was older man and I noticed some cuts and some blood.

The old man told me what happened. I listened. Then the old man said, “You are very kind.” Then he said, “I am scared.”

I said, “I will stay with you.” The old man seemed to be having trouble breathing, so he asked me to loosen his tie. When I did that I noticed he was wearing a cross. I asked, ‘Are you a Christian?’

He answered, “Yes, I am.”

I said, “Me, too.”

With a big smile. We talked a little more about faith and then I asked him if he wanted me to pray with him.

He said, “Yes.” I asked him something that he maybe wanted me to include in the prayer, and then he began to pray. It seemed as if God’s love was wrapping all around us. Then we heard the sound of the ambulance coming and a car pulled over behind my car. A man and woman ran over to us. It was his sister and brother-in-law.

When they left in the ambulance, I prayed: “Lord, go with them.”

That night at home I began to wonder, when did my caring for him first become Christian? Was it when we shared our faith? Was it when we prayed together? Was it when I noticed his cross? No, my caring began the minute I got out of my car and crossed that road. Before I said or used one Christian helpful thing, I was already showing my Christian care. That is the same as the Bible names “cups of cold water.”

Matthew 10:42 (NIRV)

Suppose someone gives even a cup of cold water to a little one who follows me. What I'm about to tell you is true. That person will certainly be rewarded."

Jesus does not stand waiting for us to use the right words for Him to come and be with us. He is already here in the middle of every situation. He is waiting for us to see that. Some people want to keep separate the sacred from the secular. That means that God is only involved in the sacred part of our lives. But that is not the truth. God makes all of life sacred, so everything we do He is involved in.

Study Questions:

1. What are some acts that you can call "cups of cold water?"
2. When does our caring become truly Christian?
3. Can you think of a time that you gave a "cup of cold water" to someone?

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

Read Matthew 25:31-46. Make a list of things that people need in your community. Take five minutes to do this. Then make another list of all the things that your church is doing to solve those needs. Take five minutes to make that list. Finally, make a list of things that your church can do in the future to meet those needs.

Lesson 17: Evangelism – caring connection

The word “Evangelism” is a scary word for many Christians. It reminds them about Jehovah Witness people and Mormon people that come knocking on your door and try to convince you to come to their church because they are the only true church. But the truth is that Christian evangelism is communicating the surprising and beautiful fact that God truly loves us, and that He showed it by winning the victory over sin and death through the death and resurrection of His Son. And God really wants us to share that message with all people. The same way that I am calling by God to be a Christian caregiver also God calls me to evangelize.

True Christian evangelism is caring. The two go hand in hand.

Greatest gift is that we can share with other people is the love and life of Jesus Christ. When you witness about the things, that Jesus did for you and for all people you are showing that you truly care for them by showing interest in their present and future. Love must always be the reason for witnessing.

If only interests in having more members in our church, then we are like “If I speak with the voice of men or angels, but have no love, then I am the same as a noisy bell or crashing-cymbals.” 1 Corinthians 13:1. Does that mean that numbers are not important? Nol. Growing church members show that our evangelism is successful. But our starting place is a message to and with a person that needs to be loved.

Evangelism is always a two-way street. If you clearly care about someone then you will want to listen to that person. You will want to find out what that person is thinking, feeling, believing and experiencing. That is the reason Jesus proclaimed the Good News differently to Nicodemus (John 3) than he did to the Samaritan woman (John 4). If your evangelism is not a two-way street, then your words are worthless.

You must remember to communicate the story of God’s love to the depth of people’s lives, because that is the place the Holy Spirit begins faith. You can’t do that by talking with the person once or twice. You must be willing to give them, because that is an important part of loving a person – time.

God spoke to the prophet Ezekiel and said, “Son of man, I made you a watchman for the house of Israel; anytime you hear a word from My mouth, you will give a warning from Me. If I tell the wicked people, ‘You will sure die.’ And you give no

warning, or say nothing to warn him to avoid his wicked ways, then that wicked man will die in his sin, but his blood I will require from you. But if you warn the wicked, and he refuses to change from his sins, he will die in his sins; but you will save your life.

Ezekiel 37:17-19 (NIRV)

“...Join them together into one stick in your hand. Your people will ask you, ‘What do you mean by this?’ Tell them, ‘The Lord and King says, “I am going to get the stick of Joseph and the Israelites connected with it. That stick is in Ephraim’s hand. I am going to join it to Judah’s stick. I will make them a single stick of wood in my hand.”’ ”

Study Questions:

1. What positive feelings do you have about the word "evangelism?"
2. Are there opportunities for caring evangelism in your neighborhood, your work, or among your friends? Explain.
3. Have you ever told anyone about the way God called you into His family?

Lesson 18: Celebrating Hopes

Helping people during their problem times in life or helping people to resolve their problems is a blessing. When you are involved in caring for another person, it feels good to say,

1. “I am happy that I can support you during your time of grief.”
2. “Now you are beginning to live again for yourself.”
3. “Suppose tonight someone you love has accepted that he will die and feels at peace with it.”

People today are always looking for good answers. The best words to remember are that answers begin to happen when you stop looking for them.

Goals are good to have but always remember that your main focus as a caring individual is to remember the process of caring instead of the answers. Process goals are different than answer goals.

Your goal:

1. Providing a comforting and accepting situation. Example: Helping Jennie talk openly about her husband’s death. Her goal: that Jennie would no longer feel her loss as an open wound, untouchable, and excruciatingly painful.
2. Helping that person express her feelings of sadness, hurt and anger. Her goal that although Jennie still mourns, her anger now fades, and she continues to work even though she is sad.
3. Relating to that person in a caring and consistent way. Her goal that Jennie would know that you care for her and she would trust you and begin trusting others as well.
4. Encouraging that person to share with you, her fears about returning to her job, and how she will handle offers of sympathy. Her goal that Jennie would return to her job and successfully deal with people’s offers of sympathy.
5. Helping that person to consider the possible of entering into social situations. Her goal that Jennie would get out, socialize, and participate in church and community activities.

6. Communicating to that person that it is both acceptable and healthy to grieve. Her goal that Jennie would work through her grief.

Notice each of your goals begins with a word action. They all require time. All of that person's goals happen at the end of a process but need to keep an eye on the process, not the end result.

Many football teams failed to win the championship because during the playoffs they began to think about the last game and not about the game they were playing today.

Study Questions:

1. Jesus describes Himself as a tree and we are His branches. How can this picture help you and me in our Christian caring?
2. Imagine you have a friend going through a painful divorce. How would you search for answers? How would you focus on process?

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

Sit quietly and write on paper three goals that you want to see happen in your church in the next ten years. Then make a list of the things you need to do to achieve these goals.

Lesson 19: Hope – Full caregiving

One Christian help that we have not discussed is hope.

Responsible for Christian hope is not yours, but God's. Paul speaks about unbelievers as "having no hope and without God in the world." Ephesians 2:12

Our hope comes from God. To have hope only in people is depressing because people fail, and people are sinful and selfish. We have something special to give to people; a hope that never fails.

Secondly, Christian hope is different than all other hope. Christian hope is for both now and the future. It is both at the same time. Our minds cannot fully understand it. Remember the story of Lazarus. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." But Martha said, "Lord, by this time the body will smell because he is dead four days." Jesus said, "I told you, that if you will believe, you will see the glory of God!" then Jesus prayed and said, "Father, I thank you because You heard (past) me. I know that You always hear (present) me. But I said this because of the people standing here, that they will believe that You sent me." Then Jesus said, "Lazarus, come out." Notice carefully the tenses of Jesus' prayer. They seem to be reversed. They show that Jesus was saying in the first "heard" that Lazarus is already alive. Jesus did not separate the future from the present.

As Christian caregiver you can share God's hope with people. Here are nine ways that you can do that.

1. Stay with them. Show people that we are willing to stay with them thru all their problems. Show by our words and actions that they can depend on us the same as we can depend on God to be with us.
2. Be available for them. Hope comes from letting people know that they can get in touch with us any time they need us. It helps people much to know that we are there 24-hrs a day if they need us.
3. Reducing worry. Often the people we care for have lots of worry. By meeting with them once or twice we will help to reduce the worry of the care receiver. Reduce worry and we will increase hope.
4. Sharing the stories of others. Sometimes hopelessness happens because people think they are the only people experiencing these problems. Often

hope can be given by sharing a good example. Maybe you can say: “You can’t see how you can continue now that your wife/husband died. I know other people whose wife/husband died and they also told me that at first it was hard to live alone.” Be careful about words you choose or the stories you use. Be sure that they give hope to the people and not make them feel worse.

5. Accepting the other. By communicating thru words and actions your acceptance of people no matter what their problems and mistakes, you also give them hope. Acceptance leads to trust and trust is followed by hope.
6. Emphasize the positive. Often when people are depressed they only see the negative things in their life. They need someone to point out the positive things about themselves.
7. Realize failures and limitations. Learning about the positive things also means realizing that everyone has failures and limitations. Jesus both praised Peter and also spoke the truth in love about his denial.
8. Jesus is with you. It is comforting to know that Jesus is both with you and in you, with both the caregiver and the care-receiver. Jesus is before you to lead you. Jesus is behind you to guard you. Jesus is beside you that he can support and comfort you. Jesus is above you to bless you.
9. Being clearly Christian. Finally you can give hope just because you are a Christian. By speaking Christian words and relating to other people in Christian ways, you show your skills as a Christian caregiver, and therefore give hope.

Study Questions:

1. How does your hope in Jesus Christ help you in your caring relationships?
2. What does it mean that Christian hope is both now and in the future?

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

Share times with your mentor that you strongly hoped for something and ended up not receiving it. Then answer the following questions:

1. What effect did this have on your faith?
2. How does this affect your ability to hope now?
3. What lessons did you learn as a result of this incident of disappointed hope?

Lesson 20: The Thrill of it all

Remember whose power you bring into every situations—the power of God the Father, His loving Son, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Remember the powerful helps that you bring into every situation—the Bible, prayer, confession, forgiveness, servanthood, hope, etc. to me, the power of God and these helps are truly thrilling!

I am comforted that I am not the only one experiencing difficulties in being a Christian. I am happy that my calling is to be a caregiver, while God is the curegiver. I feel that I am not alone and that God has promised to always be with me in every caring situation. I have a purpose and goal because I know that God is guiding me. I feel good inside when I am able to help someone with their deep spiritual needs. I am free to help a lot people because I understand that Christ made me His servant. I rejoice that the “cups of cold water” that I give to other people are accepted by God as specific Christian caring. I got courage from all the wonderful Christians in the past that were caring individuals and I am thankful that I can continue doing that work today.

Study Questions:

1. Do you feel ready to go out and be a Christian caregiver?
2. How will your caring be different toward people than the way you did in the past?
3. Have you discovered through this class your special gifts that God has given to you?

Practice Activity:

Sit back, get comfortable, relax, let your hands and arms hang down to your sides and dream. Think about a person you know that needs some caring, maybe a family member, maybe a friend. Now picture yourself going to them and becoming a Christian caring person to them.