

**Russell Kelfer**

# **As They Walk Through the Door**

**303-A**

**Series: Miscellaneous Messages**

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INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

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# As They Walk Through the Door

As they walk through the door  
What goes through our mind:  
How to be thoughtful, sensitive, kind?  
How to be used as a vessel of prayer?  
  
How to reveal how deeply we care?  
Or are we tempted, deep in our heart  
To think, “Oh, no, here comes Mrs Smart.”  
Dare we lose sight, as they walk through the door,  
  
Of just what a Christian friend is for?  
Oh, dear God, no! May ever it be.  
When they walk through the door,  
They see Jesus in me!

As they walk through the door! What a captivating thought!  
What an incredible time to reset the stop-watches of our hearts to  
“Eternal Standard Time” and remind ourselves what a wonderful  
privilege it is to take God’s Word and reveal God’s heart so that  
God’s sweet Spirit can come alive in hurting men and women.

The premise of today’s study is that you are a Christian  
counselor. Now don’t tune me out just yet. If you are a child of  
God, you are a Christian counselor. You may not be a professional  
counselor, but you are one, nonetheless. You have the glorious  
privilege of knowing Christ, and that makes you both qualified and  
vulnerable to share what you know and what you have with *any  
one who walks through the door.*

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready  
to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the  
hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

(1 Peter 3:15 NKJV)

Are you prepared to do that? We live in a world of hurting  
people. Marriages are falling apart. Families are falling apart.  
Lives are falling apart. People are desperate for help. Only a small  
percentage will ever make it to the counseling room; but many of  
them will make it as far as your living room or mine. Dare we not  
prepare ourselves for that moment when *they walk through the  
door?*

## As They Walk Through the Door

The title of what I would like to share is “As they walk through the door”. I am preaching to myself and perhaps to a few of you who might have the same need I have...the need to be reminded of five basic principles which ought to be reviewed *each time a seeking friend walks through that door and faces us, be it the first time or the fiftieth time.*

There are five verses of Scripture which I believe ought to be engraved on plaques on our walls, or written on cards on our desks, or better still, engraved on the tablets of our hearts in sequence and reviewed *every time someone walks through the door looking for help.* None of them will be new to you. I only ask that their familiarity does not detract from their value. It ought only to increase it. Let’s look at them in sequence together:

### PRINCIPLE 1- TOTAL DEPENDENCE

Verse 1- Jesus said it. It ought to be the hallmark of anyone teaching, counseling, discipling, preaching, or simply encouraging a friend. It is this:

I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me. (John 5:30 NKJV)

Pay attention to whom is speaking! This is Jesus Christ, God incarnate, the living God made flesh, the sinless one dwelling in a body just like yours and mine, telling His disciples that He could do, in and of Himself... nothing.

Perhaps it was a misprint, you say, or an idle comment taken out of context. Then listen:

Then Jesus answered and said to them, “ Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. (John 5:19 NKJV)

Then Jesus said to them, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself...” (John 8:28 NKJV)

You say, but what does that have to do with me as a friend or an encourager or disciple-maker? Plenty. If Jesus Christ as He walked this earth had no power, no wisdom, no discernment apart from that which His Father gave Him, how wise can we be apart from total surrender to His Lordship *in each and every ministry opportunity?* (Each time someone walks through that door) Listen to Jesus,

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“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”  
(John 15:5 NKIJV)

That’s an interesting word, *nothing*. Have you ever done a word study on that word? Looked it up in the dictionary? Then in a concordance? Do you realize what it means? It means nothing, nada, zilch, zero, no exceptions. In other words, Jesus is saying that apart from His indwelling Spirit leading, guiding, empowering us, we can do in the Spirit realm just exactly as much as He can do apart from His Father...which is...*nothing*.

You say, but why review that verse each time someone walks through that door? Because, Beloved, we all tend to unconsciously slip into the mode of co-lordship with Christ. We may even pray at the beginning of each day, “Lord, take over”, but then as individual situations occur, we tend to trust our experience, our training, our past successes, our models, our formulas, or our wisdom. Not consciously. But how often we forget to fall on our faces in utter humility before God and admit that apart from His divine grace, we can do nothing to change the life of the person who just walked through that door. Nothing.

Oh, we can give them principles. Let them talk. Give them solutions. Even help them solve some problems. But that divine sensitivity that lets us hear their heartbeat, know what questions to ask, know when to encourage, when to rebuke, when to be silent... that comes from God. And that person’s ability to respond to God’s word will come from His Spirit. And anything that is eternal in nature, can only be accomplished by Him. Period.

Then what determines how freely His Spirit can flow through us into the lives of those walking through that door? One thing more than any other—how we humble ourselves in His presence and acknowledge His grace.

His grace, remember, is *His divine enabling which allows us to do in the Spirit realm that which is impossible*. What makes grace flow? If it is undeserved, yet freely given, is there anything we do that allows it to flow unhindered, and anything we do that stops it from flowing? Scripture says there is. It says that God’s grace is free to be poured through a life in *proportion to the humility and surrender that characterizes that life*. It says God resists the proud (those who think they can in and of themselves do anything). He stiff-arms them, but He *gives grace to the humble*. So He admonishes us to

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Humble ourselves therefore, under the mighty hand of God.  
(I Peter 5:6)

Therefore, the more inadequate we know we are, the more aware we are of our inability to change another's life apart from His divine intervention, the more power we possess, the more wisdom we receive to help someone else.

Often we begin our Christian pilgrimage filled with that sense of inadequacy and dependence. But as God blesses us, we unconsciously tend to drift into a subconscious mode that says to God, "I can handle it now, I'll call when I get into trouble." Beloved, the minute we think that, we just *got* into trouble.

I wonder, then, if we ought not to stop *every time a person walks through our door* (or calls on the phone or writes a letter to us indicating they are searching), and say, "Dear God, apart from you I can do...nothing. I yield myself to you. Do in this person what only you can do, and I will give all the glory to you. Amen". I know it sounds like such a small thing. But oh, what a difference it can make in us, in our ministries, and in the lives of those we touch. It means we need to pray over every person we meet with. We need to pray *before* they walk in the door. We need to pray as we are ministering to them, and the warfare ensues. We need to pray the minute they walk out that door that God's Spirit would cause the seed to fall on fertile soil, and the enemy, described in Luke as a "seed-snatcher", would not succeed in snatching the Word from their hearts before it can bear fruit. A simple thing. It's expected of us. But oh, how easy it is to forget. That's why that verse is so important.

### PRINCIPLE 2- SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Verse 2- I believe the second verse we ought to meditate on every time someone walks through the door is:

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places  
(Ephesians 6:11,12 NKJV)

*So then we wrestle not against flesh and blood.* That ought to both encourage us and drive us to our knees. It means that the problems on the surface are only the surface problems. The world doesn't understand that. We must. Mary and John come in with a

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severe marital problem. There is abuse, there is hostility and there is no communication. Wow, do they need help. But how often we forget, *their marriage is not their real problem*. Up in the heavenlies, God and Satan are vying for control of their lives; for control of their children's lives; for their testimonies, for their influence in the lives of others; and if they are not believers, for their salvation. God has a plan for their marriage. It is a portrait of His marriage to His bride, the church. It is to be forever. It is to be selfless. It is to be selfless unto death.

But if we deal with marriage the way the world would, and forget that the real issues are spiritual, we may win the battle and lose the war. The issue isn't always who is right and who is wrong. If one is a believer, the issue may mean what can the wronged party give up to win that unbelieving mate? They may be 98% right. But what does it matter? They are representing Jesus, and in the heavenlies, God is allowing this conflict in their marriage to demonstrate Christ to the unbeliever, to transform the believing partner into His likeness, and to demonstrate to a lost and dying world how God looks when the heat is on. If we forget that, and try to counsel them based on what's wrong with the marriage, we might just let them leave reconciled to each other, but not to God. The real battle is spiritual, and the real issues are eternal. Oh, Beloved, I need to remind myself of that fact *every single day*, and I need to pray that passage into my life every time someone walks through that door.

A young person comes in with a problem with a relationship. There is moral infidelity involved. We try to help them solve the issues involving the relationship, but sometimes we forget that in heaven what Satan is vying for is a way to violate the sanctity of God's holiness through moral impurity. Down here, the struggle is how to resolve their conflicts. Up there, it's how to glorify God through purity. The couple thinks the problems are physical and temporal and personal. You know they are spiritual and eternal and they affect more than just the two of them. They affect the children yet unborn, the brothers and sisters who are forming moral absolutes based on what they see, the parents whose hearts are breaking, and above all, God who cannot look the other way when immorality is involved.

Most of all, we tend to forget that *the very reason they walk through that door is that God is trying to use what they construe to be their problem as a tool to reshape them into His image*.

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Bob Evans loses his job. Pressures mount in his life. Stress results. It begins to affect his marriage and his relationship with his children. They come for help. We might be prone to first want to help them deal with the stress and help him find a job. But there is a deeper need. In heaven, God is wanting to teach Bob

For exaltation [promotion] comes neither from the east nor from the west nor from the south.

But God is the judge: He puts down one, and exalts another.  
(Psalm 75:6,7 NKJV)

God may have allowed him to lose his job to:

- 1- Teach him about the sovereignty of God.
- 2- Teach him that his God still supplies all his needs.
- 3- Teach him to search his heart for the qualities he needs to be more mature in Christ.

If you give him a piece of paper and ask him to list his major needs, he might well write:

I need patience.

I need contentment.

I need humility.

Then ask him if he has thanked God for losing his job. Because if he wants more than anything else to be conformed to the image of Christ, as Paul prayed

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son...  
(Romans 8:29 NKJV)

Then God just answered his prayer:

knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.  
(James 1:3 NKJV)

He will learn to wait now as never before.

Paul learned to be content with such things as he had, but he learned that by having both times of plenty and times of nothing. Here's your "nothing" time, Bob, so thank God.

Jesus demonstrated the mind of Christ when he laid aside his robes of righteousness and became a servant in Philippians 2. Bob may have to take a job way below his station in life for a season. How humiliating. But how wonderful in the spirit realm. Bob needs to see that we are not wrestling against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers; that the issues above are the real issues.

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Then he can begin to get excited about what God is doing, rather than just learn how to negatively deal with his discouragement or depression. That's why we have to meditate on Ephesians 6:11-12 every time someone walks through our door.

### PRINCIPLE 3- THE NEW BIRTH

Verse 3- The third verse we need to remember is

Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."  
(John 3:3 NKJV)

If ever there were seven words every one in the ministry needs to memorize it's these: "Unless one is born again, he cannot..."

What we are called to be in Matthew 28 are disciple-makers. Our counseling or encouraging others is a part of that process. And what I am so prone to forget is that you cannot help someone grow until they are born. You cannot teach principles of life to someone who is dead.

None of us would dare go to the cemetery, stand over the graves of those who are deceased and begin lecturing them on how to have a good marriage, how to deal with anger, how to overcome the traumas of abuse. We'd never stick a list of "dos" and "don'ts" on their tombstone and tell them to come back next Tuesday, would we?

Yet we often take people who come to us who may be Christianized, but are not Christians, and begin to teach them spiritual principles, or even confront them with Christian absolutes, expecting them to hear what we say and do what we suggest. Paul said that's impossible. Remember?

...even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit, which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

But the natural man [the unbeliever] does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. [And he doesn't have the Spirit!]  
(1 Corinthians 2:14)

In other words, to give Christian answers to a non-Christian is as ridiculous as handing them an assignment in a language they've

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never heard before. Paul says, “*They can’t even hear you.*” They can’t pick up the signal.

Imagine that you want to check the weather on the weather channel. It’s channel 35 on the cable network. The only problem is: you don’t have cable. But you want it, and you want it badly. So you climb on the roof, and you talk to your antenna. “I want cable,” you whine. Then you run down to the den, turn on the set, and try again. Still no cable. “Maybe the set doesn’t understand,” you murmur. So you take a piece of poster board, write out “35” with a magic marker, and paste it on the set. Still no cable. What’s wrong? *You’ve never connected.* Until the provider comes in answer to your request, and connects your set to the signal, you can talk to your TV and even beg it, but nothing will happen. Until you are connected, you cannot receive the signal.

And the same thing is true in the spiritual realm. Until the provider, Holy Spirit Cable Company, is called on by you and asked to connect your heart to the heart of God by the shed blood of Jesus Christ, no matter what you do to your receiver, it will still come up... “No signal... sin in the way.” Except a man be born again, he cannot receive and interpret the word of God or receive the grace that enables him to obey it. So even if he understood, he would only be more frustrated, because only the indwelling Spirit of God can perform in us that which supernaturally allows us to love the unlovable, overcome besetting sins, overcome anger, rise above rejection, live above persecution, to die for our mates.

Or imagine that you go to a doctor’s office with a seemingly incurable disease. You are in desperate pain. But the pain is a *symptom*. The pain is God’s way of showing you that you have a disease. If you cure the disease, not only will the pain go away, you will save a life, as well. But suppose your doctor is in a hurry, and rather than take a lot of tests to find out what was causing the pain, he just gave you a box of pills to deaden the pain.

You went there *seeking a cure*. You left out of pain. You are happy, *for now*. But later, the pain comes back, and you find that *he had only treated the symptoms, and overlooked the disease*. You had temporary relief, but long-term, the results were disastrous. Did that doctor do you a favor? No, *you were better off in pain. At least, then, you knew you had a problem.*

God sometimes allows circumstantial pain to come into people’s lives in order to call to their attention that they need a physician.

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They need the “Great Physician”. If they come to us and we relieve their immediate pain, but fail to tell them about the disease of sin that is running rampant in their souls, and fail to offer them the totally free treatment that will cure them once and for all, *we not only haven't helped them*, we have, by easing their pain, removed the very signal God sent into their life to bring them to Himself.

When they walk through the door, we are tempted, aren't we, to try to deal first with their broken marriage, their troubled children, their financial crisis, or their desperate bitterness over what their parents might have done. But suppose we solve their marriage problem, and don't lead them to Christ?

For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world [*or his marriage*], and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?  
(Matthew 16:26 NKJV)

No, unless the counseling room becomes the delivery room where men and women, boys and girls are led to Christ *first*, we are treating the symptoms, and ignoring the disease. And are we not, in fact, harming them? Because if their marriage were to be helped *without their coming to Christ*, have we not removed from their lives the *very thing God has allowed to reveal their need of Him*? We then, who are placed there to bring them into the kingdom, send them on their way, problem supposedly solved, bound for an eternity apart from God. What a grievous sin.

It's true that often people aren't ready to be confronted with their lost condition immediately. But oh, how often I use that excuse, and miss the one chance I will ever have to share the person of Christ with someone who does not know him. Satan wants us to *assume* that because someone attends church, or professes to be a Christian, or even uses Christian buzzwords, they know the Savior personally. Dear God, may we not fall into that trap. One way to prevent it, is to have written on your desk to review *every time someone walks through the door*, these words, “Unless one is born again, he cannot...”

### PRINCIPLE 4- THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

Verse 4- The fourth and fifth verses really go together. Verse four is one of the most familiar, most overworked, misunderstood passages in Scripture.

And we know that ALL things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.  
(Romans 8:28 NKJV)

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I'm not sure how many of us really believe that verse, even if we quote it daily. Take it, word by word and look at it. Either it's true or it's not. If it's true, every thought we think must take it into account. That word, *know*, is a Greek word that means total, absolute, awareness that is personally experienced. It's positive assurance. The Amplified Bible reads:

We are assured and know that [God being a partner in their labor] all things work together and are [fitting into a plan] for good to and for those who love God and are called according to [His] design and purpose. (Romans 8:28 AMP)

"God as my partner, I *know*." The word *all* is the antithesis of that word *nothing* we looked at earlier. All in the Greek means *all*. In Hebrew, it means *all*. In Spanish it means *all*. In French, it means *all*. It means there are no exceptions. None. The word *things* means *every circumstance, person, or experience, past, present, and future*. The phrase *work together* (sunergeo) means "two partners in harness to accomplish one purpose". In this case, the two partners are God and everything past, present, and future that has ever happened to you. Those who are *called* are those who have heard Christ call and have responded by receiving Him (all believers).

So the passage says that *everything that has ever happened to you (without exception) or ever will happen is being used by God to make you into the person He wants you to be*. Nothing has happened, is happening, or can happen that won't work together for your good if we let Him accomplish His purposes (which, remember, are spiritual.)

You mean that child abuse that took place when she was six? Yes. You mean the father's desertion of the family when he was nine? Yes. You mean that ugly divorce that shattered their dreams? Yes. You mean that total rejection by her mother? Yes.

Look at the men and women God really used. Look at Moses. He was a *basket case* from the time of his birth. He was a child of minority birth, his parents were forced by the state to abandon him. He grew up in an overprivileged environment, then as he reached life's most crucial stage, made his spiritual decision,

choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,

(Hebrews 11:25 NKJV)

So he set out to do what he thought was God's will, ended up being rejected by friend and foe alike, and was banished to forty

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years of meager existence, working for his in-laws doing menial tasks, compared to his dream which had died. Surely he was psychologically scarred for life. Ruined. Finished. *No, now he was ready for God to use him.* At the end of himself at last, he was now the *meekest man in all the earth.* His self-image was gone. But his image of his God had been formed in him at last.

Look at Joseph. Parental favoritism. Peer rejection. Total absence of friends. Childhood trauma. Sold into slavery. Punished for taking a stand. Banished to prison for a crime he didn't commit. What counselor in his right mind wouldn't write him off as incurable? God's kind of counselor wouldn't. Because all things work together for good. The parental favoritism developed jealousy; jealousy developed bitterness in his peers. God used that bitterness to send Joseph where he needed to be. The parents he thought he needed were now nowhere around. God was developing a leader. He had to substitute that coat of many colors for experiencing many failures so he could one day lead a nation, and one day save the very people who had, humanly speaking, caused him all his grief.

No wonder then, how important that pivotal verse is at the end of his life. It is the Romans 8:28 of the Old Testament. He said to the very brothers who sold him into slavery.

“And as for you, b you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about a this present result, to preserve many people alive.” (Genesis 50:20 NASB)

Satan meant it for evil. God used it for good, because

...all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose. (Romans 8:28 NKJV)

What a joy to help people see that the very incident in their lives which has so traumatized them was *allowed by a sovereign God to protect them, or prepare them, or give them a ministry.*

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,

who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

(II Corinthians 1:3,4 NKJV)

In plain English that says, *Guess what? remember that trauma in your life that resulted in so much of God's grace? God is going to give you a ministry, using the same grace He gave you to pass on*

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*to others.* That rejection in your life will equip you to minister to those who have been rejected. That abuse will equip you to help the abused. That persecution, rightly responded to, will help you help others in the same experience. So, then, the very things Satan meant for evil, God turned into good, to save many people, to bring them to life.

### PRINCIPLE 5- PRAISE AMIDST TRIBULATION

Verse 5- Which brings us to the last Scripture to recall *as they walk through the door.*

in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ  
Jesus for you. (I Thessalonians 5:18 NKJV)

There's another absolute. *Everything.* No exceptions. Many who come to us seeking counsel are looking for only one thing: how to find the will of God. Here's their answer. *This is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning them...* They are to learn to give thanks for everything, *even and especially the things Satan meant for evil.* Thus they not only endure the past, they turn the past into power, and do the one thing Satan does not want done. They begin to praise God for the very things they were bitter at God about before.

Then life comes full cycle. Then life's dark clouds reveal rays of sunlight hiding amidst what once seemed so ominous. The rainbow of God's love streaks across a sky that could not hold a rainbow, had there not been such a storm.

No, it isn't logical. Yes, the world thinks it's foolish. The gospel is foolishness to them that perish. But

for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who  
believes, (Romans 1:16b NKJV)

And the foolishness of God's perspective is what people need. It alone can transform their perspective and bring alive their reason for living.

Five things we must remember, then, *every time someone walks through that door. And in sequence they make even more sense.*

#### 1- Apart from Him I can do nothing

That's important because:

#### 2- We wrestle not against flesh and blood,

That's why we must remember:

#### 3- Unless one is born again, he cannot...

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But nothing in this life is without meaning, once you are a believer, in fact

4- All things work together for good to them that love God.

Boy, is that good news. That means our job, and the job of those we counsel or encourage, is to...

5- In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Five principles that run totally at odds with the world's point of view:

The principles of total dependence

The principles of spiritual warfare

The principles of the new birth

The principles of the sovereignty of God

The principles of praise amidst tribulation

But those principles are precepts in Scripture. They are not optional, they are absolutes. Therefore, they can and will transform the life of every man and every woman, who, by God's amazing grace, walks through that door and into our lives.

May we humble ourselves in the days to come, and thank God daily that He would actually entrust to us the lives of those, who in His divine plan, He sends *walking through that door into our lives*.

Must we not pray this prayer?

Oh, dear God, please send them,  
Troubled, weary, worn,  
Send the ones with broken hearts,  
Send those with souls unborn.

Send them, Lord, into our lives  
And as they walk through the door,  
Dear God, we give ourselves anew—  
May Jesus through us pour.

Grant them eyes to see Your love,  
And oh, in Jesus' name,  
We ask that as they turn to leave,  
They'll never be the same!

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### For Focus and Application

1- Have you ever thought of yourself as a Christian counselor? Why not? If someone needs to know how Christ has impacted your life and comforted you in your tribulation, *would you be willing to share what He has done?* Then, Beloved, you are in the counseling business.

2- If someone were to ask you what Jesus meant in John 4:30, how would you describe His statement? He was God in the flesh. As God, He could *do anything He wanted*. What did He mean when He said He could do nothing?

3- Meditate this week on John 15:5. What do you think that word “nothing” means? What factors affect the availability of God’s grace? Can you find Scripture to back up your answer?

4- Consider Romans 8:28. What do you think “principalities and powers” means? What do they have to do with the “wiles of the devil”? How do the principalities and powers come into focus when someone is having a marriage problem? A drug problem? A moral problem? A problem with anger?

5- What can’t a person do who has not been born again? Why is that so important to godly counseling? Why is it wrong to try to solve people’s problems without solving the sin problem? What does I Corinthians 2:14 say about it? Can you paraphrase that passage?

6- Do you really believe Romans 8:28 means “all” things? Even traumas that *seemed to have ruined your life?* Can you think of a Biblical character whose life seemed ruined, and then God took the “all things” and turned them into good? Has it ever happened in your life? When?

7- I Thessalonians 5:18 describes the will of God for all believers. What is it? How can you do that? Does it mean “feel thankful”? What does it mean? Would you be willing to try that for one week and see how it feels to do the will of God consistently?

8- Why do you think these five precepts run so at cross-currents with the natural mind? What does that mean? How does that affect our counseling or encouraging of others? What must we do from now on *when they walk through the door?* Are you willing?

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