


Breaking down the Problem

I. There are several aspects to nearly every problem.

A. There are surface problems or symptoms.

Some of these symptoms may include both attitudes and actions.

- 1. Relational conflict (parents, spouse, in-laws, neighbors, co-workers, employers, etc.)**
 - 2. Pornography**
 - 3. Substance abuse**
 - 4. Explosive fits of anger**
 - 5. Sleeplessness**
 - 6. Procrastination**
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7. Physical problems (ulcer)

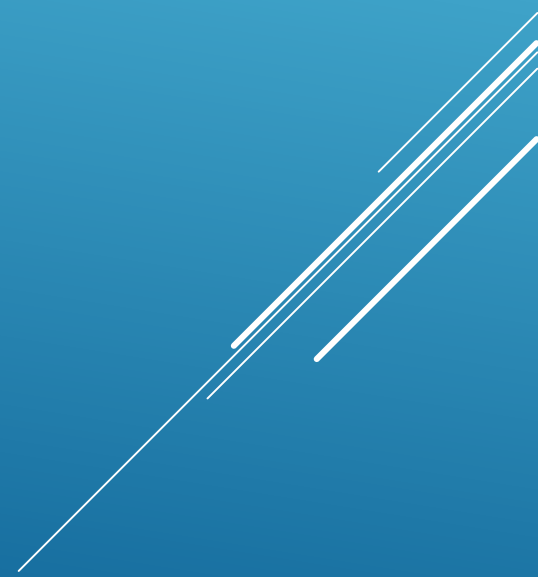
8. Depression

9. Stealing

10. Physical abuse

11. Cheating

12. Financial mismanagement




B. There are surface causes.

C. There are underlying attitudes.

D. There are root problems or causes.

If problems are going to be solved in a permanent way, the root must be discovered and dealt with (Mt. 3:10; 7:15-20; 12:33-35).



II. There are common roots to a variety of problems.

A. The Bible makes reference to several roots of sinful behavior.

1. The love of money (I Tim. 6:10)

2. The love of self (II Tim. 3:2)

a. There are those that say that we cannot love others until we can properly love ourselves (Mt. 22:39).

This viewpoint is exemplified in such books as *Love Yourself* by Walter Trobisch.

One statement that is made in this book is as follows, “It was difficult for her to love others because she did not love herself enough. It is impossible for us to accept the other one as he is if we have not accepted ourselves as we are” (Intervarsity Press, 1976, pg. 10-11).

It is important for us to know that the Bible never teaches this.

The image features a solid blue background. In the top left, there is a bold white text statement. In the bottom right corner, there are several thin, white, parallel diagonal lines that create a sense of motion or a graphic element.

b. The Bible presumes that we do love ourselves (Eph. 5:28-29).


When it says that we are to love our neighbor as ourselves it means that we are to love our neighbor as we already love ourselves.

God's kind of love is characterized by the following:



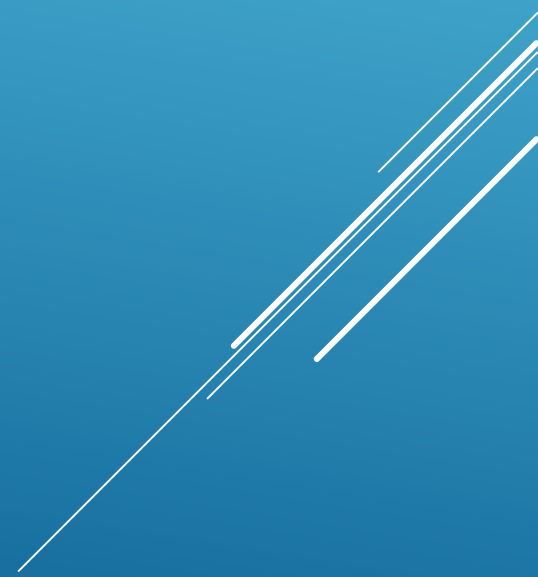
- It is an unconditional love (Rom. 5:6-8).
- It is a volitional love (Deut. 7:7-8).
- It is an intense love (Eph. 5:1-2, 25).
- It is an unending love (Rom. 8:38-39; Jer. 31:3; Heb. 13:5; Deut. 31:8).
- It is an unselfish love (Phil. 2:1-7).
- It is a purposeful love (Eph. 5:25-27).

We constantly have to remind people that the road to true happiness and lasting fulfillment is one of service to God and others (Mark 10:43-45).



- c. The Bible presumes that we all tend to look out for ourselves (Phil. 2:3-4, 21).
- d. The Bible teaches that we are to die to ourselves (Mt. 10:38-39; 16:24-25; Luke 9:23; Gal. 2:20).
- e. The Bible tells us that we are to love as Christ loved (I John 4:7-11).

This kind of love is always giving and always puts the needs of others above its own sense of comfort and satisfaction.



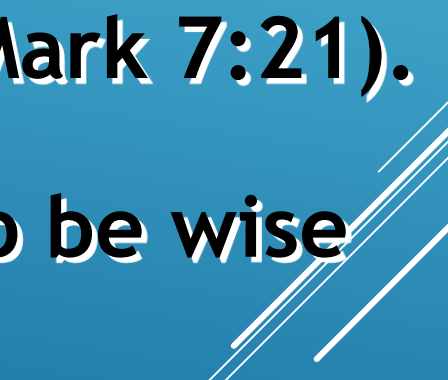
3. Pride (Pro. 16:18)

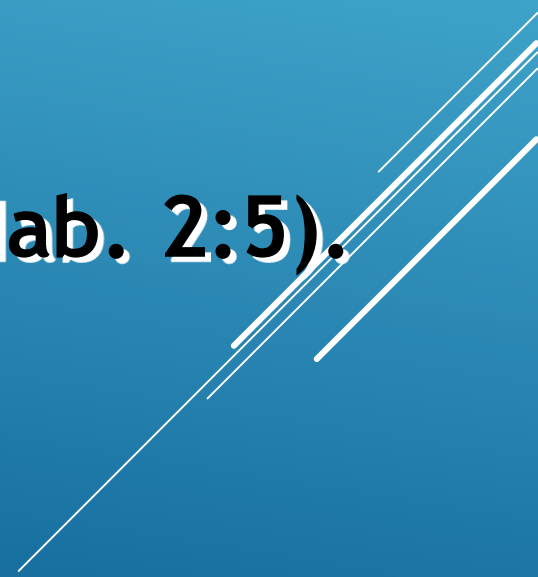
Pride was the original sin found in Satan (Is. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:17).

There are many characteristics of the proud as seen in the Bible:


- They are dependent on their own abilities (Dt. 8:11-18; Obad. 3).
- They are confident in the wealth (Ps. 52:7; Rev. 3:17).

- **They are boastful (I Sam. 2:3; Ps. 10:3; 73:8).**
- **They promote themselves (Pro. 17:19; 30:13; Mt.23:12).**
- **They glory in self accomplishment (Pro. 25:27; I Cor. 4:6-10; Gal. 6:3).**
- **They despise the less fortunate (Ps. 10:2; Pro. 11:12; 14:21; Zeph. 2:10).**
- **They do not seek God (Ps. 10:4).**

- **They do not trust in God (Ps. 52:7).**
 - **They are pure in their own eyes (Pro. 30:12).**
 - **They are disobedient (Ps. 119:21, 69).**
 - **They think evil thoughts (Mark 7:21).**
 - **They believe themselves to be wise (Rom. 1:22).**
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- **They reject correction (Pro. 10:17; 15:5).**
 - **They despise instruction (Pro. 15:5).**
 - **They are mockers (Pro. 3:34).**
 - **They are quarrelsome (Pro. 13:10; 28:25; I Cor. 4:6).**
 - **They are never satisfied (Hab. 2:5).**
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B. All of these root conditions amount to the same thing—pride, selfishness, self-centeredness.



III. There are many things that can compound a person's problem.

A. There are lifestyle issues.

1. Time management

2. Financial management

3. Relationship issues (e.g. in-laws)

4. Occupational stress (e.g. police, fireman)

B. There are stress factors

1. Death of a loved one

2. Personal tragedy

3. Natural disaster


4. Relocation

5. Job loss

6. Financial reversal



C. There are physical issues.

1. Physiological changes (e.g. puberty, menstrual cycle, pregnancy, change of life).
 2. Sleep issues
 3. Disabilities
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IV. Complex problems must be broken down into smaller parts.

A. This involves identifying specific problem areas (Refer to Supplement 1).

1. Specific problems can lead to specific solutions.

2. Generalization must be clarified by the counselee.



- B. This involves pinpointing underlying attitudes.**
 - C. This involves tracing the problem back to the root.**
 - D. This often involves prioritizing problems and taking them on one issue at a time.**
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