

Book	1-Peter – Study 1
Topic	Comforting Others Module 1: Lesson from Jesus Conversation with the Samaritan Woman
Reference	
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We are going to break the discussion between Jesus and Samaritan woman and study it thoroughly and break it down therapeutically. Now that is something a lot of people don't do, and we are going to see what term the Samaritan woman around. So you are going to see some theological language and some therapy language.

What is counselling?

Counseling is a word which is very-very unclear.

- Professional counselling.
- Pastoral counselling.
- Lay counselling.
- Community based counselling.

"The moment you open your mouth and advise someone what to do with their lives you are already counselling."

So there is no such thing as harmless chitchatting. What you say people take to heart. So here is the problem, where is psychology with counseling. You go to conservative websites, the position is psychology is centered on man, they are not entirely wrong. So you cannot tie the two together. That's a very common position. Then there is another term, Christian-based counseling. What exactly does that mean, who does it and how to do it? Because when you have an issue, there are three domains. One is obviously psychological, or the bible word is soul. Soul care meaning the mind and the heart. Your heart is hurting because the mind is telling you something that affects the rest of you.

In modern language, this is psychological, but there is a spiritual dimension because we are spiritual beings and then a lot of this happens because there is a medical condition sometimes related to it. You have eating disorders, why, because you know because is no serotonin going to you. You have an addiction, the dopamine fix fires up in your prefrontal cortex, so every time you do it, your dopamine gets more numb. Science tells us all these things. So a lot of things happen. So the three things are interconnected.

When it comes to counseling, there are basically what we call four schools. The first is levels of explanation, God reveals himself generically and God reveals himself specifically. There is for example, let's say writing disorder, the person doesn't know why what is there. There is a neural reason for it. There is a science reason for it. There is also a pastoral reason for it. They call it levels of explanation. So there is on one level, a medical explanation for it. It could be placebo; it could be whatever. There is a pastoral or spiritual reason for it.

The most biggest school which most Christian counselors in Malaysia belong to is what you call the integration model. It is the merging of psychology and Bible. Moving into the fight is what we call Christian psychology. Christian psychology is very much headed by the Southern Baptist Convention. A lot of them adapt this. Last year in National Association of Christian Counselor, the key speaker was a Christian psychologist. A lot of their roots come from the desert fathers and they believe in things like a meditative silence. These are the things when it gets a bit, what we call, people get crazy about it, but let me give you an example.

For example, you go through a very painful time. I spent a bit of time with Raymond Koh's family last year. I spend time with Susanna and Esther. As you know, your husband has been missing and if you know Susanna, she cannot come to the term that her husband is dead. So when you talk to her, it is very painful, but now she comes round to it. You imagine the trauma; you don't know where your husband is. It affects the whole family. So there is a whole anxiety. You know what they did, they went for a silent retreat. So I spoke to Susanna, how did the silent retreat help you. They told me

In the beginning it was difficult to keep silence, but through the piercing silence I could hear the deep fears, anger, sadness and disappointments I face, not only recently but since childhood and finally my mask that I had put on came off and I could just be authentic. Once that happen, my heart was more open to God's word. I understood God in a more personal way than I can enjoy God's presence no matter where I am in my walk in life. No matter how bad I feel, he is the good shepherd.

Areas of Concern:

- Perception that counselling is the role of professional therapists. The church is not actively involved. Because most churches won't have a counseling department. FBC is one of the few that have it.
- The moment you open your mouth for counseling, where is accountability. So imagine a church where everybody decides to counsel anyway they want based on their own experience and what they understand from scripture.
- No platform in churches to review even in professional counseling. If any counselling given is biblical.

- Perceived stigma when one is advised to go for counselling.

So there is a person who has been hammered very badly throughout the childhood. So when that person starts a job and the boss hammers there is a trigger affect. You remember how your dad hammered you, boss hammers you, you link the two together and you propose that you don't amount to anything. That is a very simple psychoanalysis. Here is what I think the key issue is and I am going to quote Paul Tripp. He says,

Where is the gospel centered in this?

Now that is the question we have to ask. Now Paul Tripp is quite right. Because our lives are shaped by the gospel, then the gospel should affect every inch of your life including how you counsel people. So here is the other problem, if you counsel people, if they feel your counsel was right, they may become too dependent on you. They feel your counsel was wrong you may get blamed for their problems. So Paul Tripp says this,

The role of Gospel-Centred counselling is not so much to *fix you up* but to *root you in Christ* - *Paul Tripp*.

Christian counseling has to be centered on discipleship and that is what we are going to do today as we break it down. Now this is a very simple example to explain it,

⁵Let your gentleness be evident to all. **The Lord is near.** ⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

It is very simple, the diagnosis is anxious, the prescription is prayer and the result is the peace of God. Unless you experience the intimacy of Christ, emotionally and mentally, you can pray anything you want, it will not work. That is what the text is telling us. This is Gospel Centered counselling, to bring you in the intimacy of the Lord.

So we are going to list down few reasons of counseling and then we go to the case study.

1. Why Counsel?

Follow the Wonderful Counsellor (*Isaiah 9:2,6-7*).

*Put to death **daily** self centered counseling and shape your counselling by the Gospel (Matt 16:24)*

Self-centered counselling is when a person is tied to you and there is no connection back to God. Counseling is very dangerous; it is a simplest form of self-actualization. You counsel someone, the guy is very happy, praises you and your oxytocin level goes up. It is quite dangerous because we are supposed to lead people to the counselor. So you put to death daily any self-centered counseling and you shape your counseling on gospel.

How do you do it?

Matthew 11:28

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Now why is this verse interesting, because Matthew 11 follows to later on to Matthew 16. If Matthew 16 is to wrestle because you are to die daily to your sinful desire, Matthew 11 is to rest. Rest so you can wrestle and that's what we teach people. So biblical counseling tell people to rest.

Follow Him who speaks the truth that sets people free (John 8:32).

Normally people want a counselor to affirm them, because they are very hurt, but Christ tells us to speak the truth that sets people free.

Follow Him who knew what was in each person (John 2:25).

Now if you look at the pattern of Jesus, when he spoke to the young rich ruler he knew his heart. When he spoke to Zacchaeus, he didn't said the same thing, but he said I am going to come to your place for tea. He didn't rebuke Zacchaeus. So you find with Jesus every person he meets, like the woman caught in idolatry. He doesn't judge the woman. So you see there is a very contextualize way of how Jesus deals with every single person. There is no fix method, why because he knows a person and then he responds to it. A lot of us, we have a template and we just like to tell people a, b, c, d and e, because that's the way we have been doing it. We are just basically transferring ourselves over, but with Christ you find that his methodology is very different.

Follow Him who restores self esteem, especially in fallen leaders (John 21:15-23).

This is so encouraging as one of the most stories in the New Testament is how Peter fell and the way again Jesus restores Peter is very simple. Feed my sheep three times and Jesus affirms Peter in a certain way.

Follow Him who gives us the "Paracletos" (Counselor, Comforter, Advocate) (John 14:16-17) to help us when we try to counsel others.

As far as scripture is concerned, Counselor, Comforter and Advocate mean the same thing. Follow him as ambassadors of comfort.

Follow Him as His ambassadors of comfort (2 Cor 1:4,5:20).

The ambassadorship comes from 2 Corinthians 1 where you comfort others with the comfort of Christ. So you are to be His ambassador of comfort.

So counseling involves everyone sitting here. It is not the role just for the professional therapist. There is a place for them, which is very important. It is not the role of just the pastors or the elders, each one of Jesus’s disciple should be involved in this, because all of this refers to everyone who calls himself a believer.

CASE STUDY

We are going to contrast the Samaritan Woman with Nicodemus because the way Christ deals with two of them is very markedly different.

Nicodemus	The Samaritan Woman
He seeks Jesus at night .	Jesus seeks her out at day .
He is a Jew.	She is a Samaritan.
Male.	Female.
He is named.	She is not named.
He knows Jesus is from God.	She doesn’t know who Jesus is.
He comes representing others.	She is an outcast.
He is seen as righteous.	She is seen as morally questionable.
He is highly educated.	She is uneducated.
He becomes skeptical.	She progresses in her understanding.
He gradually disappears from the discussion.	She gradually shifts to active discussion.
He does not believe.	She believes.
Story ends with no response from Nicodemus.	Story ends with her sharing the good news.

You cannot read the story of the Samaritan woman without contrasting it with Nicodemus, so we will do that.

Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John— ²although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. ³So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee. ⁴Now he had to go through Samaria. ⁵So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. ⁷When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a

drink?"⁸ (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)¹⁰ Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."¹¹ "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?"¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?"¹³ Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again,¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."¹⁵ The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."¹⁶ He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."¹⁷ "I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband.¹⁸ The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."¹⁹ "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet."²⁰ Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."²¹ "Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem."²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews."²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks."²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."²⁵ The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."²⁶ Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he."

Diagnosis of the Emotional State of the Samaritan Woman

We are going to go from theology to be a therapy talk. She is trapped in a cycle of unfulfilling relationships. Now we don't know whether the husbands died or she got divorced. If you will understand the symbolism of John, it is very likely that she was divorced five times, but to be fair we don't really know. In my view, it doesn't really matter. The point is, for woman of that time in that society, you get divorced five times or you have five husbands, you are not exactly the most well respected woman in town. That's the point. So she is trapped in a cycle of unfulfilled relationships. Now it is not the husband that she is staying with. Now it is like any addiction, which affects the dopamine. Afterwards, you need a fix to be more kinky because the dopamine is being deaden. So one husband, two husband, three husband, four husband, five husband and after that just leave the husband part and stay together. This is what is happening. So it is spiraling downwards. That's the diagnosis of her condition. We need to understand the text, because John is quite detailed on it. Now there is a theological main theme because if you know John, he writes by giving us motives. He is very good at motives. There is a very clear motive here, which is thirsty. So that's the theme that is running right across the entire text.

Now it is actually a motive of food and drink. Now that's important because the next two chapters we have the feeding of the 5,000 and when you read the feeding of the 5000, In John 4, he tells you, if you drink of your water you will get thirsty but if you come to me, living water, you drink of my water you will never thirst again.

So we find ourselves, whether there is something similar. In John 6:26 it says this, do not work for food that spoils but for food that endures to eternal life. It is the same thing. Verse 35 says, I am the bread of life, he who comes to me will never go hungry, he who believes in me will never be thirsty. Notice the similarity, so you have to read chapter 4 and 6 and chapter 7 is the best. It is the festival of the feast where the Jews remember how they were rescued from curse in the Exodus journey and of course the very famous verse in the end at the last day, because they are trying to bring water from the Pool of Siloam, bring it back to the center and walk seven times around the city, he basically says, if anyone is thirsty let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me as scripture says, streams of living water will flow from within him. So you have this theme of food and water, hunger and thirst and Jesus is saying, if you come to me you will never go hungry and you will never go thirsty.

Now you need to diagnose it against that. You can take it back to Jeremiah because Jeremiah says this in 2:13

for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.

The have forsaken God but they still have desires but they are not coming to me for their desires. They are going to sex and money and relationships and five husbands and whatever it is and these things won't satisfy because they cannot hold water. That is the point. So lets do some introspection. Introspection in therapy terms is basically 'lets look within.

Outward Symptom: All her marriage relationships did not last. Current relationship is one of living in sin. She is shunned by her own community. Why, is that so? Because she goes to get water by herself. Woman at that time don't go and get water by themselves.

Inward Need: Desire for stable marriage relationship (*motif of thirst that needs to be quenched repeatedly*). Scholars believe she got divorced five times. Why, every husband doesn't work. She has thirst, its quenched and she gets thirsty again. That is the parallel. Now how do we know this, because in Nicodemus the motif is night and day. So that is how the language which John is using.

Spiritual Prognosis: She has *desires* that she wants fulfilled to be happy but looking in wrong places (Jeremiah 2:13). She is like all of us, she wants a happy marriage,

she wants kids, she wants her husband to love her, but she has forsaken God and she has cisterns that doesn't hold water. She is like anyone of us. On marriage day, she expects a perfect life but down the road it becomes hell. That's the story of the Samaritan woman.

Common pitfalls: There are two extremes you go, one is obsession with desire (hence 5 marriages) we would have thought that she would have learned her lessons, instead she goes worse. The new guy she has is not her husband. It is an obsession. The second one is religious people, it is called repression of desire (wrong worship- bury your pain in endless church activities). You find it there because the worship text is there. Why do you think the worship text is there? Out of the blue suddenly the worship goes in there. It is connected to her condition. How do we know that? Because at the end of it in therapy terms, she is cured. So the understanding of the worship text is critical to understanding the idea of the thirst. The worship text is tied to chapter 7. Basically Jews are doing meaningless rituals, seven times around town, take water from the Pool of Siloam. The woman asked where to worship, Jesus said it doesn't matter. Wrong worship is you bury your pain in endless church activities. Because there is a void that they want to fill. Why, they don't want to go to home to an empty house. That's the prognosis. Loneliness is a real grapple. You can become stoic about it, I am going to do Bible study, I am going to do prayer, I am going to do everything but the sin doesn't go away. It is all outward. So there is oppression and there is repression.

Spiritual Cure: Come to Jesus and you will not thirst (v13). This I like to propose to you is gospel centered counseling.

Jesus has a plan and process to counsel the Samaritan Woman (no quick fix).

Breakdown of Jesus conversation with the Samaritan woman:-

- Request for water as Jesus was thirsty. That was strategic.
- Discussion that evolves around literal and spiritual waters. Every commentator has said, she probably doesn't quite understand Him just like Nicodemus.
- Revelation of the marital status of the Samaritan woman.
- Discussion about true worship.
- Jesus reveals himself as the Messiah.
- The Samaritan woman excitedly shares about Jesus to other Samaritans.

Now if we compare with conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus had a real go at him. Jesus conversation with Samaritan woman starts, the first part is low risk conversation. I get into the shallow water with you. From shallow water, Jesus pulls it to a high-risk conversation, now that is what we are going to learn today. Then afterwards she being smart shifts the topic, but Jesus continues with the worship and interestingly despite the shift in the conversation topic, Jesus gives the remedy and she responds. Now that is what we are going to learn.

Jesus deliberately went through Samaria and the Samaritans didn't like Jews; the Jews didn't like Samaritans. It is intentional.

1. You have to be intentional in seeking out those who are hurting.

So here is the first thing that I want to implore on all of us. There are people amongst us in church who are hurt, you don't wait for them to come to you, you go to them that is the call of discipleship. That's the Great Commission. You see people lonely, you see people poor, you think they have issues you go to them, because Jesus went out of the way into Samaritan territory, went to a particular town, set at a particular well, waited for woman to come at noon for her salvation.

2. You establish a dialogue in a non-threatening platform.

Not necessarily helpful to always ask *"Are you OK? How are you? Do you want to talk about any issues?"* Jesus starts of, 'I am thirsty'. Now you also look at the tone of it and you got to compare that because the body language and tone is very important, because Jesus basically goes up to her and says, I am thirsty. With Nicodemus if you read it, he basically shuts Nicodemus halfway off and reads him theology. It is important to read the two, why, because Jesus knows Nicodemus is a proud man, but this is a hurting woman with low self-esteem.

⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

3. If you establish dialogue with those who are hurting outside your comfort zone

You see, Jesus reach out to the Samaritan woman against the cultural norms of the day and this is the challenge to us, because a lot of times if we see someone hurting, you want to say call the pastors or elders, but no, a walk of faith requires you to step outside. It is completely against the culture that day for a man to talk to a woman, a Jew to a Samaritan in a foreign town but Jesus doesn't care. He saw past all of that and saw a hurting person. The woman

¹⁵ The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

Jesus keeps talking about spiritual water, but she keeps coming back to him on physical water. Commentators says, she doesn't quite get him you know, why, the dialogue identifies the need. Jesus is using that as a vehicle to get to her. The vehicle is that, she is having difficulty getting water because woman

went in groups to get water. She had to go alone because she is socially stigmatized. Talk to man about their work and how they struggle at work, it is non-threatening. Talk to woman about their kids, don't go to them and say you got problem. So you notice the way it flows, there is a pattern there. It is nonocclusive, very open ended, the body language is very soft, it is intentional, and it goes to something which she is interested. She wants to get water.

The conversation between Jesus and Samaritan woman is bouncing between physical and spiritual water and then just naturally slips to a territory which is a bit more riskier and she opens up. So you sustain the dialogue by open-ended questions that lead to some hard truths. She is a bit confused, but before you get to clarity you need to get to confusion but what confusion does is it opens up your preconceptions. So what Jesus is doing, it is breaking her down from a routine and asking her to basically just open up.

Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband.¹⁸ The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."

Now Jesus never said to her to repent, because the first thing he sees the pharisees he say, you repent. He tells Nicodemus, anybody who doesn't like the light hides in the darkness, has not seen the light. Here what is very obviously missing is that there is no call to repentance, not explicit. Why, what he is doing is what people call as recasting. Basically she has shared something private to him, he has taken it back and he has recasted it back in an affirmation. You are right, that is positive affirmation. He has taken her truth and expanded it. So she basically sustains the dialogue by gentle affirmation yet exposing sin. Now what he is not doing which is important to a hurting person is he doesn't focus on the flaws.

The story of the Samaritan woman is a story of an outcast. So everywhere she goes, she fills herself as an outcast, I am not loved, I can't even get married right. So I have given up getting married, I am just going to live with any guy. Now that is interesting, this part is the classic,

¹⁹ "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

It is like says, wow! You are very smart. What do you think of Donald Trump? Should we spend money on the wall in Mexico. This is exactly what she is doing. Now basically intentionally or otherwise, she changes topic after sin is exposed. Now commentators are divided. Some believe she deliberately shifted it because she was exposed. Conservatives commentators said, no, it is because she realizes he is a prophet. So she wants to really know this.

That's not the point. The point is Jesus's response. He doesn't go back to the topic. That's very critical. He knows to back off. Now that's important. Now what Jesus is doing also is that he doesn't forced the conversation back to the sin, he continues on the discussion of worship. What he is doing is that, he is actually giving her empowerment, because he is not dictating the terms of the conversation, she is.

In the gentleness of wonderful counselor, he is letting this Samaritan woman guide the conversation. Jesus is going with the flow of the Samaritan woman, but what is interesting is the intelligence and the wisdom behind it, because even through the discussion of worship, Jesus is able to bring a spiritual truth that ties it back to condition. Now that is the key because a lot of scholars like to read a section on worship in isolation. You cannot do that.

How is the discussion about worship link back to bringing the Samaritan woman to repentance and you got to tie this again to chapter 7. Jesus is basically saying, look come to me, not to five husbands, not to all of this, not to all this rituals, come to me and you will not thirst. This is what Jesus is saying, because both chapters have the same thing. In chapter 4 what he is telling her is that, it doesn't matter if you worship in this temple or that temple. In modern English, it doesn't matter if you come to FBC every Sunday, it doesn't matter if you come to Gamma, it doesn't matter if you do all these rituals but if you don't come to me for your desires or these things, you are just repressing your problem. That is what Jesus is saying and basically chapter 7 actually picks that up. Let anyone who is thirsty. The diagnosis is, you must recognize your thirst and that's why Nicodemus doesn't get it, because Nicodemus is not thirsty.

What Jesus is telling her, the need for immediate gratification for your deep longings usually will lead you to sin or in simple English, it is going to lead you to a life you are going to hate. That's why sometimes people think they are quickly going to be in something, they are going to be very happy, but that happiness will last only six months and you are going to have 20 years of bitterness. That's what Jesus is saying.

Her desires (for human intimate relationship) is NOT fulfilled in this broken world. BUT Jesus gives her a foretaste of a deeper more intimate relationship that satisfies (soul care).

Nicodemus is not thirsty hence he thinks he doesn't need any soul care.

²⁶Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he."

So here is a woman who doesn't really know who this person is, who is utterly rejected by society. In her mind, if society can reject her God will reject her. That's the point of the text. If my own countryman rejects me, I have no place

with God and then she realizes, this man who gives her water, who is very gentle to her. So you move the dialogue to how God sees the other party and not as how they perceive themselves. That's critical, but suddenly there is a shift. It is no longer important, but my sense of self worth is not determined by my own failure, now my sense of worth is determined by God who loved me so much that he gave his only begotten life to me. That is the point of text, that's how chapter 3 and 4 flows together. It is very-very powerful. So you end the dialogue by pointing the person to Christ and not to you.

Secular counseling teaches you to look inside, Christ teaches us to look to him before you look inside. Why is that procedure important? Because when you look to him first, grace filters how you look at yourself. The process is wholistic. Jesus approaches from every level.

- *"Come to me and you will never thirst again"* - **addressing the need for intimate relationships that last.**
- *"I am He!"* - **addressing the issue of social rejection, but acceptance by God.**
- *"How can you ask me for a drink?"* - **addressing the need of self-esteem.**
- *"You are right"* - **addressing her problem of sin but in affirming manner.**
- *"Worship in spirit and truth"* - **addressing the powerlessness of meaningless church rituals, and the power of true worship.**

Meaning what Jesus does is, Jesus approaches the whole issue emotionally, mentally, psychologically, socially and spiritually. That's why this is such a powerful text. Every area, because that is why we are a whole person.

We all want the picket fences and a nice life, the text is telling you, in this broken world sometimes it doesn't happen, because the text is not telling that she is going to get a new husband, but Jesus giving her a foretaste, come to me and you will not thirst and that's why you go back to Philippians, let your gentleness be evidenced to all, the Lord is near. The purpose of every form of counseling is to lead people to Christ who fulfills that their thirst, their desires for life, for everything, they can get a foretaste. Does it mean that disappointments go away? No they don't. You deal with that in life, but it is easier to move through. So all the bitterness and all the pain and all the struggles, they are still there in this world but once you taste his living water you have hope for eternity. It powers you to go through, it powers you to see others.

Paul Tripp says,

Gospel centered communities including hurting people, comforting other hurting people.

So every single one of you, whatever you are going through in your life, you can help others.