

*A Woman's Place Ministries*  
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## June 2000

First of all thank you so much for all your prayers during the recent writing of my latest book. Anything that could go wrong, did go wrong, and it was your prayers that helped me complete the book. It became obvious after awhile that our enemy did not want this book written. But praise and thanks to our God who is in control, and is still on the throne, and has all power over the enemy! Written for leaders and people who want to help, as well for those who are hurting, you will want to get your own copy when it is released later this summer. The title is APOSTOLIC COUNSELING. For those who are interested, new versions of LISA SAID NO, and LARISSA S SONG will also be released within the next few weeks. Drop me a line at [director@awpministries.org](mailto:director@awpministries.org) to reserve your copies.

This month I want to speak personally to you who are involved in helping other people. I know there are quite a few of you because I receive your email. One question you have frequently asked is, how much talking should you should listen to? Say you are working with a person and all they seem to do is re-hash all their old wounds. Is that appropriate? I hope the following will help you some.

### **What About Talking?**

This is where many helpers hit a blank wall listening to problems that, to them, could be so simply solved. Are there times when we really should listen while a person lets it all out? If so, when? How? There are people who really need to talk. It can be particularly difficult to sit with a hurting person as he/she lets it all out. Our tendency is to put a stop to it. You mustn't feel that way, is a common prescription. Who says? A male pastor, for example, and a hurting sister can make a very uncomfortable situation. A man, as a rule, hates it when the tears start. He'll do anything to stop the flow of feeling. Tears can make a person feel helpless and out of control. We must seek God's help to get us past this place. If we can recognize our own feeling of inadequacy and what is behind it, we are better equipped to sit quietly by as another human being weeps. As counselors, we must come to the place where we are not afraid of pain. We must not be afraid to sit quietly in the face of another's suffering. On the other hand, there are those people who should be discouraged from talking. There are those who do nothing but talk about their hurts. They hug them close like little teddy bears. It has come to be their primary way of gaining some kind of significance and importance. If their wounds were healed, they would not be able to endure the emptiness they feel in its place, and they are not ready to replace it with something really good. Some people seem always to be in one crisis or another. If they don't have a natural crisis, somehow they manage to create one. With these kinds of people, I discourage talking. I somehow end up with a feeling of having had garbage slung at me. They don't need to rehash their pain again and again. It is an easy and natural thing for a biblical counselor to immediately start bringing in the Word. If we do, however, we are typically met with a blank stare that says, I'm tuning you out. At that point, we can dismiss the person and be on our way or we can settle in for the long haul. The Bible says we must forget all those things that are behind, this counselor might quote. And that is what the Bible does indeed say. But that person who just tuned you out has to get to the place, first of all, where he is able to forget

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those things. There are some things we need to sort out before we can put them behind us and move on. What are those some things? How do they differ from the things we need to just slough off and get on with it? It would be ideal if we could just slough off everything that hurts us, but we can't. Too often, sloughing off, means that we have slapped the Band-Aid on the uncleansed wound, and an infection will set in. It is a simple thing to take most hurts and offenses to Jesus on the spot. Lord! we might cry out, that hurt. I don't understand it! And then give it to Him. We have to learn how to turn things over to Jesus. We have to learn how to let Him handle our hurts and offenses. Sometimes a person needs to talk about their pain. What is causing it? Who hurt them, and how? This is not to say we are encouraging a person to indulge in self-pity; we need to steer them away from that. But a person often needs to talk it out. This gets the hurt out of the darkness and into the light. As long as our hurts, real or imagined, remain hidden in the dark corners of our hearts, the devil can wreak havoc with them. They must be exposed to the Light, just as a natural wound must be exposed to the sunlight. Sometimes all a person needs to do is tell another human being his plight and still be loved and accepted. It is surprising how many problems and hurts just seem to dissipate when they are brought to the light in a nurturing setting just talking about the hurt, and realizing that the listener still loves and cares, can be very therapeutic. The devil will have us believe that our problem is different from everybody else's, and that we are worse than anyone else. The Bible clearly states this not to be so. (I Corinthians 10:13) The enemy's purpose is to isolate us. Wendell Miller offers the following advice: Remember, help that is really effective comes as the counselee applies biblical principles to her life. This is true whether the problem is a situation, an interpersonal relationship, or a personal area. This means that you will not be helping if the only thing that you do is listen. Your friend may feel better immediately after she tells you her problems, and each time that she rehearses them she may feel better temporarily; however, each time she repeats her problems and does not find a solution, her problems seem larger and an answer seems less and less possible. You can actually lead a person to despair by being a good listener --and not provide a solution to her problems! If you are to provide help for others that is effective and that provides God's strengthening, you must be able to: 1) discern the biblical principles that need to be used; 2) teach the biblical principles; 3) convince them to apply the principles to their lives; and 4) encourage them to apply the biblical principles diligently until God's results are attained. This God-given strengthening comes as the hurting person applies biblical principles to his life and to the situations that are causing the distress. Thus, after listening carefully and sympathetically to the counselee's problems, a biblical counselor endeavors to give 1) hope that there is an answer to the problem; 2) instructions on how to attack the problem biblically; 3) assurance that the biblical truths will be effective, if applied diligently; and 4) both courage and faithfulness to do diligently those things that will please God. It is during this time that the prayers of the biblical counselor are needed the most. This is a crucial time in the counseling session (Miller, Wendell E. 1998. Downloaded from [www.biblical-counsel.org](http://www.biblical-counsel.org). May be reprinted and distributed in quantities if distributed free or at cost, and if copyright, download, and permission information is included.).

I pray each of you will have a wonderful summer. I will be in Virginia mid-June, and in Texas and California in July. Hope to see you soon.

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God bless you,  
Your friend,  
Lynda Allison Doty

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