



Develop a PLAN to Help Hurting Children

We live in a world with evidence of the Fall all around, a world where people are hurting. From conception through the elder years, people are often hurt by someone who is charged with loving and protecting them. Those who have been hurt are more likely to continue the cycle of hurting others. Scripture describes the end times in 2Tim 3:1-5:

But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power....

So how will this cycle end? How can we intervene to help children who are being hurt by others, especially those who should be protecting them? Does Scripture really have answers for the hurting children that we may know or that God puts in our life? Will our ministry to these children really make an eternal difference? How can we help them learn to cope better with difficult circumstances they may be facing right now, but to do so in a way that points them to their Creator God?

Let's develop a PLAN that points children to the only source of lasting help – Jesus!

God's PLAN for Helping Hurting Children

P – Pray and Pursue (*Change Element #1 - Deciding to Get involved*)

Pray about Who/When/How to Pursue – Gal 6:1-10

Pursue God through Prayer – Vertical Pursuit

Wisdom – to deeply understand God's heart – Jas 1:5, Ps 111:10

Compassion - to graciously reveal God's heart – Isa 49:13-16

Power – to boldly live out God's heart – 2Pe 1:3-11

Pursue the Child in Love – Horizontal Pursuit

Principles of Horizontal Pursuit:

The Good Shepherd Principle – Jn 10:1-18

The Good Samaritan Principle – Lk 10:25-37

The Shared Burden Principle – Mt 11:30, Gal 6:2

Compassionate Boldness to Pursue – 2Tim 3:16,17; Jn 17:17

Target of the Horizontal Pursuit

The Heart of the Child – Pro 4:23, 22:6 (most saved ages 7>12yr.)

A Growing Faith is the Goal – 2Thes 1:3; Col 1:9

Sanctification is the Result – Col 2:6-15

Process of the Horizontal Pursuit

Building a Relationship with Each Child

Building Hope in the Midst of Trials – Rom 5:3-5; Jas 1:2-4

Building Bridges of Support for Hurting Children – Local Church, Family, Kids' Clubs, Various Social Agencies, etc.

L – Listen and Learn

Listen (*Change Element #2 - Data Gathering*)

Ask good questions to identify emotions, behaviors, habits, beliefs, and heart motivations.

What do they desire most of all? (3 Wishes/Changes Game)

What is NOT said? (Avoiding talk of certain people or topics)

HOW is something said? (Tone, emotions)

Data gathering with kids questions or open-ended sentences

Learn (*Change Element #3 Determining the Problem*)

Where God fits into their life and desires, or doesn't?

What life events have contributed to their problem? (5 Motivations)

What answers from God's Word would change their life?
What/who programmed the child's conscience?

Learn how to skillfully bridge the gap between their problems and
God's solutions

A – Actions and Accountability (*Change Element #4 - Determining Helpful Solutions*)

Actions: What steps will help to address their struggle?

We must help them move from faulty beliefs or root issues that created the problems to Biblical thinking and scriptural solutions.

What does the Bible say he needs to "put off"? (Repentance)
What does the Bible say he needs to "put on"? (Replacement)
What is his response to things out of his control? (Many of these troubled kids don't know Who God really is, so they don't know they can trust Him!)
What changes are in his control? (Heart attitudes, thoughts and actions)

Accountability: Who is helping them follow through?

(Eccl 4:9; Pro 27:17; Eph 5:22, Col 3:16)

Your follow through needs to reflect the 3 different heart attitudes that a child might exhibit - 1Thes 5:14:

Lacking Character – 1Cor 15:33, Pro 1:10, 15, Ps 1
Lacking Encouragement – Rom 15:5
Lacking Knowledge – Ps 119:9-11; Proverbs - wisdom vs foolishness

Your follow through needs to respond correctly to the 3 different heart attitudes they might exhibit – Gal 6:1-5

Challenge their thinking. (Knowledge) – 2Pe 3:18
Correct their behavior. (Character) – Eph 4:1-3, 1Tim 4:8
Coach their emotional response. (Encouragement) – Col 3:16

N – Next Steps (*Change Element # 5 – Holistic Homework*) Lk 2:52, 1Cor 10:31, Col 3:17

How God fits into all the various aspects of life. (Faith/Action Chart)
Kids need to see how the dots of life connect, not just one pat answer to fix their problems. They must develop a Biblical way of thinking and living!

What “assets” does this child have to help and how can you contribute?
(Developmental Assets handout)

What achievable action step comes first?

- Get them in the Word to see and know a God they can Trust
- Sanctification Chart – start with faith & salvation

Make projects and assignments reasonable, definable and reportable

With children, change happens outside in and inside out

- Balance admonition and nurture – Eph 6:4
- Circle of God’s blessing – Eph 6:1-3
- Rewards and consequences to encourage Biblical change
(Behavior Goals chart)

Visit BiblicalCounselingCenter.org for more resources.