

ACBC Counseling Exam Questions 16-20

Tim and Emily (Case Study)

Tim and Emily come from a church across town, and have asked to meet you because of some help that you offered their friends several months ago. They are coming because of a persistent problem they have had in their marriage. They explain that in their six years of marriage Tim has always had a “short fuse.” He regularly “loses it” when he comes home from work which fills the evenings with tense communication. Their weeks are filled with arguments about everything from dinner being ready on time, to whether they should have kids. Tim thinks Emily is a good wife, admits the problems are his fault, but says he just doesn’t know how to “maintain control.” About a year ago Tim went berserk screaming at Emily, kicking the kitchen table and throwing plates on the floor in response to Emily’s complaint that he came home late without calling. Emily was always uncomfortable with Tim’s previous pattern of outbursts, but this was different. She was truly scared. Tim was too. In tears she told Tim that something had to change.

Tim talked to his pastor who told him that he needed to see a professional therapist. Tim followed the advice and made an appointment with the Christian counselor whom his pastor recommended. Tim met with the therapist for a few sessions, who ultimately recommended he see a psychiatrist for medical care. When Tim met with the psychiatrist he was told that he had bi-polar disorder and began to take the medications prescribed by the physician.

Tim was initially discouraged to learn that he had a disease that would likely last his entire life, but he was thankful to have a plan to deal with problem. Emily was also encouraged that there was now at least something they could do.

Their encouragement quickly gave way, however, when after several months on the medication Tim had still not really changed. While his temperament seemed milder in general the loss of control, and screaming were still present. It was at this point that Emily began to regret ever marrying Tim. All the arguments together with the couple’s lack of children were taking their toll. She realized she was in a marriage that she did not want to be in, but didn’t think she had any options.

Then last week Tim “went completely crazy.” Emily suggested on a Saturday morning that Tim should cut the grass because he had not done it the week before. Tim did more than scream and throw things this time. As he yelled and became more “worked up” he threw the phone at Emily. He missed her, knocking a hole in the wall, but they both knew he had crossed a line.

Emily said she couldn’t take it anymore and wanted out of the marriage. She told him that if something didn’t change very quickly she was going to leave. That is when he reached out to his friend who recommended you.

Tim and Emily both profess faith in Christ, and relate their testimonies of conversion in their teen years. Both are also terribly discouraged. Tim doesn’t know how to treat Emily better since he is “plagued” by this disease. Emily loves Tim and would like their marriage to work, but she is worn out with the lack of change. She feels badly about wanting to leave because she knows he has an illness, but she is increasingly convinced that God is telling her to divorce Tim.

ACBC Exam Study Guide
Counseling Exam 16 (see case study)

Q: How will you decide whether to pursue Tim and Emily as believers or unbelievers? What difference will their status as Christians make in your counseling?

Definitions:

Key Texts:

Matthew 7:15-23

James 2:14ff

1 John 1-5

Key Resources:

Jay Adams, *Ready to Restore* (P&R, 1981), 20-23.

Jay Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling* (Zondervan, 1979), 22-23.

Jay Adams, *A Christian Counselor's Manual* (Zondervan, 1973), 37.

Howard Eyrich & William Hines, *Curing the Heart* (Mentor, 2007), 187-193.

ACBC Exam Study Guide
Counseling Exam 17 (see case study)

Q: Describe, as fully as you are able, your strategy to help Tim and Emily think biblically about his diagnosis and their use of bi-polar and illness language.

Definitions:

Key Texts:

Genesis 4:3-7

Psalms 42 & 43

Proverbs 4:13

Matthew 7:24-27, 27:3-5

2 Corinthians 10:5

Key Resources:

Jay Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual* (Zondervan, 1979), 380-383.

Elyse Fitzpatrick & Laura Hendrickson, *Will Medicine Stop the Pain?*, (Moody, 2006), 50-51.

Garrett Higbee, "Tony and Bipolar Disorder" in Stuart Scott & Heath Lambert, eds., *Counseling the Hard Cases* (B&H Academic, 2012), 171-198.

Charles Hodges, *Good Mood Bad Mood* (Shepherd Press, 2013), 175-180.

Robert Smith, *The Christian Counselor's Medical Desk Reference* (Timeless, 2000), 216-219, 366-367.

Edward Welch, *Blame it on the Brain* (P&R, 1998).

ACBC Exam Study Guide
Counseling Exam 18 (see case study)

Q: Emily is “Convinced that God is telling her to divorce Tim.” Write out your word-for-word response to Emily on this matter. In your response, be sure to address the themes of biblical decision-making and permission for divorce and remarriage.

Definitions:

Key Texts:

Proverbs 21:1

Psalm 73:24

Deuteronomy 29:29

John 17:17 and Ephesians 5:26 with 2 Thessalonians 2:13 and Romans 15:16

Colossians 3:16 with Ephesians 5:16

John 16:8, John 17:17

Genesis 2:24-25

Deuteronomy 24:1-4

Malachi 2:16

Matthew 5:31-32

Matthew 19:3-12

Mark 10:2-12

1 Corinthians 7:10-17

Key Resources:

Decision-making

Jay Adams, *A Christian's Guide to Guidance* (Timeless, 1998).

Jay Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling* (Zondervan, 1979), 23-34.

Gary Gilley, *Is That You, Lord?* (Evangelical Press, 2007).

Stuart Scott, "Biblical Decision-Making" in *Biblical Manhood* (Focus, 2009), 59-78.

Divorce & Remarriage

Jay Adams, *Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the Bible* (Zondervan, 1980).

H. Wayne House, ed. *Divorce and Remarriage: Four Christian Views* (IVP, 1990).

John MacArthur, *The Divorce Dilemma* (Day One, 2009).

John Piper, *This Momentary Marriage* (Crossway, 2009), 157-176.

**ACBC Exam Study Guide
Counseling Exam 19 (see case study)**

Q: What strategy would you employ to see repentance, reconciliation, and restoration happen between Tim and Emily?

Definitions:

Key Texts:

Psalms 32 & 51

Luke 17:3-4

Ephesians 4:31-32

1 John 1:9

Key Resources:

Robert Jones, *Pursuing Peace* (Crossway, 2012).

Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker* 3rd ed. (Baker, 2004).

Ken Sande, *Peacemaking for Families* (Tyndale, 2002). (this resource overlaps greatly with *The Peacemaker* but contains some additional material and is easier to use for this type of counseling case).

Stuart Scott, *Communication and Conflict Resolution* (Focus, 2005).

Paul Tripp, *What Did You Expect?* (Crossway, 2010).

See also resources for Theology Exam question 17 regarding repentance

**ACBC Exam Study Guide
Counseling Exam 20 (see case study)**

Q: Describe a detailed plan of restoring marital communication that you would pursue with Tim and Emily.

Definitions:

Key Texts:

Proverbs 12:18, 15:1, 18:13, 15, etc.

Ephesians 4:15-32

James 1:19-20

Key Resources:

Jay Adams, *Competent to Counsel* (Zondervan, 1970), 211-241.

Wayne Mack, *Strengthening Your Marriage* (P&R, 1977), 55-90 (Unit 4).

Stuart Scott, *Communication and Conflict Resolution* (Focus, 2005),

Paul Tripp, *War of Words* (P&R, 2000).