

Finding Hope

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When problems arise and life gets difficult, it is often hard to find hope. It seems like life will always be hard or that whatever is currently occurring will forever taint the future even if it can be survived. Depression or despair can set in, and people think that they will be forever stuck in this moment or to the situation. The counseling process is designed to help individuals and couples who are experiencing a seemingly insurmountable problem to overcome those issues and to develop coping strategies to endure what life throws at them. As a Christian counselor, however, I believe that it is not enough just to endure hard times and survive more or less intact on the other side. I believe that it is of paramount importance to go on to find the redemption of that problem, in other words, to find how God can use that problem for our good or for the good of the world around us. Romans 8:28 says that "God causes all things to intermingle for the good of those that love Him." In her book, *Absolute Truth*, Susan Howatch says that what this means is that, as God's light plays off against the darkness of pain and suffering, it forms a pattern that has meaning, that "the darkness doesn't become less dark, but that pattern that the light makes upon it contains the meaning which makes the darkness endurable...human beings can endure almost anything as long as they believe their suffering has meaning." As we work together in the counseling process, counselor and client move toward this understanding together, finding God's redemptive use and transformation of problems. This truly sets us free to live a life of hope.