EQUIPPING LAY LEADERS IN THE BASICS OF BIBLICAL

COUNSELING AT CHRIST FELLOWSHIP,

EVERSON, WASHINGTON

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A Project

Presented to

the Faculty of

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

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by

Kenneth Dale Van Kooten

May 2013

APPROVAL SHEET

EQUIPPING LAY LEADERS IN THE BASICS OF BIBLICAL

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To Sally,

the love of my life and the girl of my dreams.

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PREFACE

An undertaking of this magnitude represents the work of numerous individuals who have sacrificially labored behind the scenes. To each of them I am profoundly grateful.

I am deeply indebted to Dr. Heath B. Lambert for his wisdom and commitment. As my reader, his patience and guidance spurred me on to pursue excellence in writing and biblical counseling.

I am thankful to my sister-in-law Jan Van Kooten, who meticulously examined each chapter, making a host of thoughtful and necessary suggestions. Without her assistance this work would have suffered immeasurably.

I am obliged to Rodney G. Gullberg, who was my supervisor for five years in the Breath Test Section of the Washington State Patrol. He provided invaluable assistance and advice on how to interpret and present the statistical research data.

In addition, I would like to thank the leadership of Christ Fellowship, who encouraged me and allowed me the freedom to complete my doctoral work.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my wonderful wife, Sally, who consistently encouraged and supported me throughout this process. She is a precious gift, and I thank God for her.

I commit this project to the Wonderful Counselor whose name is above all names, and at whose feet every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess, that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Phil 2:9-11).

Kenneth Dale Van Kooten

Everson, Washington

May 2013

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this project was to train group leaders from Christ Fellowship in the basics of biblical counseling so they may effectively address the spiritual needs of small groups at Christ Fellowship in Everson, Washington.

Goals

Four goals served to evaluate the effectiveness of this project. The first goal was to equip leaders to embrace the sufficiency of Scripture. God has provided all that people need through His Word in order to handle the non-organic problems[1] in life and live in a way that is pleasing to him (1 Cor 5:9; 2 Cor 10:31; 2 Pet 1:3; 2 Tim 3:16-17).

The second goal was to increase the confidence of small group leaders to know the Word and be able to minister the Word to others. Ministering the Word to counselees means leaders must understand the circumstances of the counselees and be willing to listen, ask, probe, and walk with them in their suffering. The leaders must know Scripture well enough to carefully apply selected passages to the themes of sin and responsibility.[2] Counseling is communicating love, care, grace, and relevance to the lives of people dealing with problems (2 Pet 1:3-4; Eph 5:1; Phil 1:27). Ministering the Word is applying and explaining Scripture simply, plainly, and accurately with care and sensitivity.

The third goal was to engender a desire in leaders for continued study and

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[1]Non-organic is defined as non-physical for this project.

[2]Heath Lambert, *The Biblical Counseling Movement After Adams* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 66.

growth in biblical counseling. An excellent way to accomplish this goal would be for leaders to become certified as biblical counselors through the National Association of Nouthetic Counselors (NANC).

The fourth goal, a personal one, was to become more effective as a biblical counseling teacher and help others to be ministers of the Word. Ephesians 4:11-13 states that Christ gave pastors and teachers for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, for the building up of the body of Christ. Many problems in the church are doctrinal problems based on an inadequate view of God, a wrong view of sin, or an unbiblical view of self. Training counselors to be effective ministers of the Word can do much to diminish these problems.

Ministry Context

Christ Fellowship was founded in 1958 as Nooksack Valley Baptist Church (NVBC) in a small town called Everson located in the northwest corner of the state of Washington in Whatcom County.

NVBC began with the desire to promote Baptist theology in an area predominantly influenced by Reformed theology. Three beliefs differentiated NVBC from the other churches in the area. The first was "believer's baptism" which is the belief that baptism by immersion is the signifying act by a person who publicly professes faith in Jesus Christ. Second, NVBC embraced a "fundamental" doctrine, which includes the inerrancy of Scripture, the virgin birth, substitutionary atonement, the bodily resurrection, and the imminent return of Jesus. Third, the church believed in a premillennial eschatology that affirms the church will be raptured at the beginning of a seven-year tribulation period followed by the one thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ on the earth. These three distinctions served as focal points for the founding members of NVBC. Although most Reformed churches agreed with these fundamentalist views, they stood in opposition to the convictions of believer's baptism by immersion only and premillennial eschatology.

From the beginning, NVBC embraced a conservative Baptist theology concerning separation from the world. The command to "go out from their midst, and be separate from them" was carefully applied in formal association with other churches (2 Cor 6:17).[3] Any church that did not agree with the three distinctives mentioned above was not considered a sister church. This commitment to separation and a precise doctrinal stance was formalized early on when NVBC aligned itself with the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches (GARB), a fellowship founded by R. T. Ketcham in the 1930s. The GARB was a protest to the liberal stand of the American Baptist Convention on such issues as modernist tendencies, denying local congregations independence and self governing, the inequality of representation in the assemblies of the convention, and the control of missionary work by convention assessment and budget.

NVBC still embraces these three distinctive beliefs mentioned above, although they may not be voiced as deliberately as it used to be. Today, NVBC realizes that good and godly people may often differ on points of doctrine, but this does not automatically give occasion for separation on those issues.

When NVBC was founded, it built a model of ministry that was similar to that of other churches in the area. Programs included Sunday morning worship service with Sunday school for all ages, Sunday evening service, and a prayer meeting on Wednesday night. In the early 1980s, NVBC added a children's program called Approved Workmen Are Not Ashamed (AWANA) specifically targeted towards young people in our community. From the beginning, this program drew hundreds of children from the surrounding area.

The mission of NVBC was simple: Make disciples of Jesus Christ. The goal was to provide programs that attracted unbelievers and give them the good news of Jesus

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[3]All Scripture references are from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

Christ as well as promoting spiritual growth in believers. Church members were encouraged to bring their friends and family to church, and as a result the first thirty years of NVBC was marked by significant numerical growth by conversion as well as church transfer. This growth eventually caused NVBC to unify around the goal of building additional facilities.

From 1959 to 1968, NVBC prospered under the leadership of two pastors. In 1969, the church called Pastor Jones,[4] who ministered in the church for about twenty years. NVBC flourished spiritually and numerically under his leadership to the point that it became a leader in the GARBC as well as one of the larger churches in the rural area of Whatcom County. This was both good news and bad news. The good news was that the church began to draw non-believers through programs and through the sheer size of the worshipping body. The bad news was that most of the numerical growth was at the expense of neighboring and equally faithful churches.

In the late 1980s, it was revealed that Jones had engaged in immoral behavior and was immediately released as pastor of NVBC. For the most part, the church remained stable numerically; however, all were deeply grieved over the loss of Jones. Concurrently, Pastor Smith, the associate pastor, was asked to take over the role of senior pastor.

God continued to bless NVBC through the energy, leadership, and vision of Smith and the church continued to grow numerically, maintaining its position in the county as an innovative church. Slowly, a sense of restoration and joy began to return to the fellowship. Unfortunately, within six years, it was discovered that Smith had also engaged in immoral behavior and was subsequently dismissed.

I began attending NVBC in 1995, two months before the immorality of Pastor Smith was discovered. In 2002, I accepted a full-time staff position as Associate Pastor

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[4]The names Pastor Jones and Pastor Smith are used to protect the identity of the actual pastors.

of Christian Education.

The church grieved once again over the immorality of a pastor but rallied and made plans to call another pastor. After a year of searching and healing, NVBC called Pastor Craig M. Hardinger, who was then pastoring a northern California church. In December of 1996, he came to NVBC as the senior pastor.

The congregation that greeted Hardinger was genuinely happy to have him in the pulpit, but also present were ample doses of apathy, suspicion, and cynicism. NVBC had endured what they viewed as the betrayal of two trusted and capable men. Many were reluctant to place their trust and affection in yet another pastor.

Hardinger preached what he called a "big God" (Rom 11:33-36). His leadership effectively brought the church through the grief and mistrust that inevitably follows immorality. In spite of this, approximately two years after Hardinger's arrival, a popular youth pastor left and eventually went on staff at a church about twenty miles away. NVBC had stoically weathered the storm through two previous transitions, but this turbulence caused about 200 people to leave the fellowship in one weekend and attend other churches in the county. In general people left for two reasons. First, some were weary of problems with the pastoral staff and wanted to start over by attending another church. Second, some in the church believed the departure of the youth pastor could have been avoided with better leadership. Ironically, very few of those who left followed the youth pastor to his new church.

This exodus paved the way for the church to move back to its original mission. Years of mistrust, upheaval, change, and uncertainty had unintentionally led the congregation to become introverted. Reaching out to the lost in the community was difficult when those who were supposed to do the reaching remained directionless and frozen in mistrust. For years, the church had been diverted from its primary mission.

Pastor Hardinger consistently worked to move the congregation towards its primary mission. His vision encompassed three approaches: be Christ-centered in all

areas of ministry, endorse and advance a new small group ministry called Christ Groups that emphasized the priesthood of all believers and diminished the perception of a pastor-centered church, and train leadership to minister God's Word effectively to others.

From its beginning, Christ Fellowship was a pastor-centered church, meaning, the majority of the spiritual and physical needs of the church were channeled through the pastoral staff. The goal of Christ Groups was to greatly diminish this approach and create a God-centered church emphasizing the priesthood of all believers (1 Pet 2:9).[5] In addition, the vision included equipping godly leaders with the ability to meet the spiritual and physical needs of their groups. As a result, Christ Groups have grown and met the needs of their members at a pace never before experienced.

In 2006, with the support of the leadership, Hardinger initiated a biblical counseling ministry at Christ Fellowship designed to effectively train leaders to minister God's Word to others. There are currently five leaders certified with the National Association of Nouthetic Counselors (NANC) and three more in process.

Beginning in September 2008, the congregation of Nooksack Valley Baptist Church agreed to change the name of the church to Christ Fellowship. There were two primary reasons for the name change. First, the congregation no longer held Baptist affiliations although it does remain associated with the GARBC and continues to embrace baptistic doctrine. Second, the congregation desired to be Christ-centered in all areas of ministry including the name by which it was known.[6]

General Demographics of Whatcom County

When the first American settlers moved into the Nooksack Valley region in the

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[5]Jay E. Adams, *Competent to Counsel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 42.

[6]Craig M. Hardinger, "The Year of Living Dangerously: An Examination of the Old Testament Observance of the Year of Jubilee with an Application to Reigniting a More Missional Focus in the Twenty-First Century Local Church" (D.Min. project, Bakke Graduate University, 2009), 69-76.

early 1850s, they came not just for the land but also for land that was free. When the settlers arrived they immediately came into contact with two groups of people who had already settled there—the Lummi and Nooksack Indian tribes. Within a few years both the Indian tribes and the American settlers were competing for ownership and use of the land. Native customs and practices greatly shifted due to the overwhelming expansion of the settlers. Over time, containment sites were established for the Indian tribes in order for differing people groups to maintain their own respective cultures.[7]

Very little has changed today. Instead of having three or four people groups in the area, there are now many additional groups with each maintaining a cultural boundary of their own. As a result, it is becoming more and more difficult to reach people due to differing geographic, racial, cultural, and spiritual barriers.

Christ Fellowship is a church purposefully planted in a rural portion of Whatcom County. As Figure 1 shows, several different towns surround the church.[8] The congregation is comprised of people from Lynden, 7 miles away; Sumas, 4 miles away; Maple Falls, 15 miles away; and, Deming, 5 miles away. Scattered throughout these small towns are several other smaller settlements called Paradise, Peaceful Valley, Van Zandt, Glacier, and Kendall, each containing hundreds of people. This analysis excluded three American Indian reservations and several migrant housing facilities located within a 20-mile radius of the church campus because any demographic or household information is not deemed reliable.

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[7]David Tremaine, *Indian & Pioneer Settlement of the Nooksack Lowland, Washington to 1890* (Bellingham, WA: Center for Pacific Northwest Studies Western Washington State College, 1975), 3.

[8]Washingtonmaps.com, "Whatcom County Washington Map," http://washingtonmaps.net/Whatcom_County/ (accessed December 4, 2010).
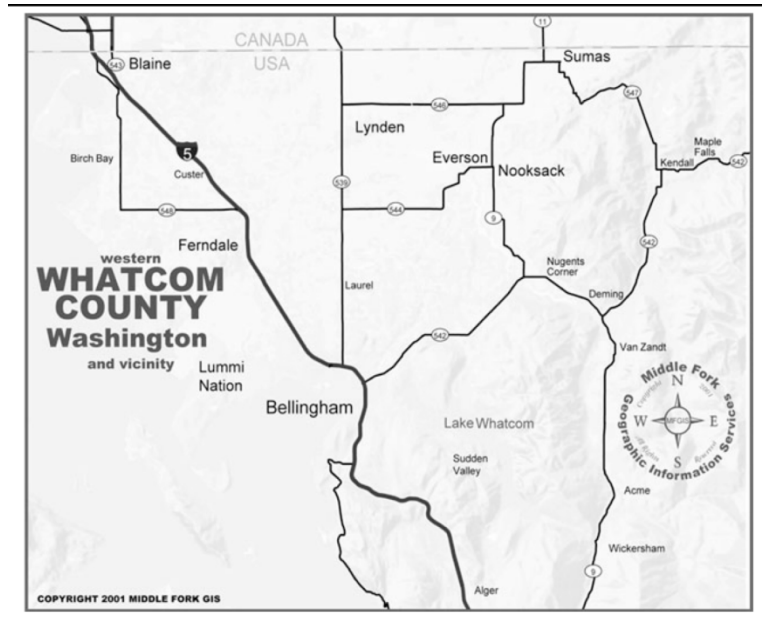
Figure 1. Map of Whatcom County

Another factor unique to the church is that five different school districts are represented in the congregation as well as several families who home school. On occasion this diversity has sparked some good-natured rivalry and competition.

When Christ Fellowship was founded, it was planted with the intention of reaching out to the surrounding local community. Over the years, the "local community" has grown larger and more spread out than most would have imagined. The majority of membership lives relatively close to the church in Everson (77 family units). Lynden (34 family units) and Sumas (22 family units) are not far behind and represent opposite ends of the county geographically. Bellingham, located 18 miles away, is the largest city in Whatcom County (67,171)[9] and represents 18 family units. Smaller towns and communities are 6 to 15 miles away and represent 18 family units.

The ongoing challenge for Christ Fellowship is to shepherd and nurture families

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[9]National Relocation, "Washington," http://profiles.nationalrelocation.com/ Washington (accessed December 4, 2010).

who are scattered over hundreds of square miles within Whatcom County. This reality is an opportunity and a challenge as the Word of God is ministered to families. The demographics of some of the key cities and towns that make up Christ Fellowship are not unlike many other rural settings throughout America. As Table 1 shows, by comparison, some cities are fairly large while others are very small.[10]

Table 1. Demographics and household information as of 2010

	Everson	Deming	Lynden	Nooksack	Sumas
Population	210	2,035	9,020	851	960
Median Income	$52,292	$35,313	$42,767	$44,000	$29,297
Married	125	1,400	6,783	610	684
Single	18	289	1,195	156	170
Age	35	30	37	29	30
Blue Collar	74	921	4,062	381	389
White Collar	75	442	2,983	243	262

The majority of our church growth has come from Deming and "hill towns" in the more remote mountain areas of Whatcom County. Deming is much larger than Table 1 indicates because this area contains a rather large Nooksack Indian reservation comprising significant residential neighborhoods. Ironically, little or no growth has come from larger towns such as Lynden or cities in which our church is located, such as Everson and Nooksack. A primary reason for this is that each of these cities or towns has a strong Reformed background. Most within the Reformed tradition would not attend a church containing "Baptist" in the name.

Table 1 shows that much of Whatcom County contains a younger population, the majority of whom are blue collar. Cities like Sumas experience a noticeable decrease in median income primarily because it is in the extreme northeast portion of the county, completely separated from other towns that have significant commerce and tourist traffic.

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[10]Ibid.

Table 1 also reveals that Lynden has the largest population, yet Nooksack and Everson maintain the highest median income. This is due, in large part, to the real estate prices in the area. Over the years Lynden has remained a wonderful place to buy a home and raise a family; however, in the past decade real estate prices have been significantly lower in areas like Everson and Nooksack luring some white-collar workers away from the city to a more affordable rural location.

The various ethnic groups within Whatcom County have worked hard to maintain distinctive qualities of their original culture. Although many groups live in the same county, they cultivate their own specific identity. These groups resist becoming part of a "melting pot" where various cultural groups melt into one larger pot called the American culture. Today, over one hundred years after the first American settlers built their homes in Whatcom County, distinct ethnic groups continue to live culturally separated from one another.[11]

Table 2. Ethnicity statistics

	Everson	Deming	Lynden	Nooksack	Sumas
White	196	1,784	8,516	791	834
African American	3	20	44	6	9
Hispanic	6	373	427	56	75
Asian	1	34	234	19	49
American Indian	8	77	72	14	37
Other	3	192	280	35	48

Rationale for Establishing Christ Groups

In 2001 Christ Fellowship made a decision to discontinue the evening worship service. In its place, small groups, called Christ Groups, were launched. Several factors led to this decision. First, Christ Fellowship believes in the "priesthood of all believers"

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[11]Ibid.

(1 Pet 2:9) and wanted to intentionally and practically de-centralize a portion of ministry to give people a place where they could be of service and grow in their relationship to the Lord in a visible, tangible, and active way. A Christ Group leader is the shepherd who guards, protects, and cares for a flock.

Second, the attendees of Christ Fellowship were in the habit of contacting the church staff for most needs associated with family, friends, or acquaintances. The needs of the church eventually got to the point where the staff was unable effectively to attend to these needs. To a large extent, Christ Groups replaced the staff when attending to the desires of their group. This shifted the group mentality from a pastor-centered church to more of a member-centered church.

Third, from August 2008 through August 2009, Christ Fellowship observed a Year of Jubilee (Lev 25), suspending all church programs with the exception of Sunday morning worship, Christ Groups, and one weekly youth activity. Jubilee also challenged the notion of a pastor-centered or professional-centered church. In part, the purpose of Jubilee was to find large and small ways to send the message that Jesus, not the senior pastor or his staff, is the Head of the church. De-centralizing ministry advanced at Christ Fellowship when men were encouraged to personally baptize their own children and lead the congregation in weekly communion.

Fourth, as the ministries at Christ Fellowship grew less centralized, it became apparent that Christ Groups were encountering problems that had previously been addressed by the professional or counseling staff of the church. The leaders of Christ Groups were increasingly exposed to a host of counseling problems: finances, illnesses, addictions, end of life concerns, marital problems, child rearing, and others. It quickly became apparent that many leaders were ill-equipped to properly help.

Soon after Christ Groups were established at Christ Fellowship it became abundantly clear that the high quality of care within the groups has yielded a more fruitful ministry than a professional staff could ever achieve. The concept of Christ

Groups will remain an integral part of the ministry at Christ Fellowship. Therefore, it is essential that Christ Group leaders receive training so problems encountered within their groups may be addressed in a biblical and God-honoring manner.

Christ Group leaders were offered classes focusing on the necessity of biblical counseling, the sufficiency of Scripture, and ministering the Word. Specific instruction was given on a host of topics including anger, depression, guilt and repentance, forgiveness, trials and suffering, fear and worry, and sexual sin.

The purpose of this project was to equip leaders at Christ Fellowship to minister the Word to those who are hurting. In the words of Paul, "entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim 2:2).

Definitions and Limitations

For the purposes of this project, the term *biblical counseling* describes intensive discipleship. It deals personally and specifically with non-organic problems by using God's Word to change thinking and behavior for the benefit of the counselee and the glory of God.[12] This term is discussed in more detail in chapter 3. *Progressive sanctification* is the gracious work of God, in cooperation with believers, enabling them to replace works of the flesh with works led by the Spirit, thereby causing them to become more and more like the Lord Jesus Christ.[13] This process of spiritual growth continues over the course of a Christian's lifetime and is, therefore, neither instantaneous nor complete, but gradually occurs as he or she appropriates God's sanctifying truth, which is found solely in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (2 Cor 3:18).[14]

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[12]Mark W. Dutton, "Developing a Biblical Counseling Ministry in a Local Church" (D.Min. project, Bible Baptist Seminary, 2003), ix.

[13]NANC, "Progressive Sanctification," http://www.nanc.org/ Theological_Considerations/Progressive_Sanctification.aspx (accessed December 4, 2010).

[14]Ibid.

The third term is *the sufficiency of Scripture.* The sufficiency of Scripture embraces the truth that all the resources pertaining to life and godliness are through Jesus Christ and his Word. According to David Powlison, "Scripture's way of explaining and engaging people has been largely displaced."[15] He contends that the recovery of the centrality of Scripture for the cure of souls demands two things: conviction backed up with content. The conviction is that the riches of Scripture are sufficient to help people and understand them. Content refers to applying the truths of Scripture to the problems, needs, suffering, and struggles of real people with genuine problems.

The final term is *discipleship*, which is the process of helping a person grow in the exercise of his or her spiritual gifts and respond to trials and temptations in a biblical manner. A disciple is someone who displays Christ-likeness coupled with a desire to be obedient to God's Word.

This project was limited to fifteen weeks. The first week was used to recruit the members of the target group. The second week was used to research attitudes and competency in biblical counseling. This was followed by eleven weeks of classes on a variety of subjects in biblical counseling. The final portion of this project took one week to obtain feedback from the members of the class on the effectiveness of the teaching followed by one week to evaluate the project. The participants had to be a leader of a Christ Group, an apprentice to the leader, or the wife of the leader or apprentice.

Research Methodology

The classroom instruction was intended as an introduction to a variety of biblical counseling topics to help Christ Group leaders become aware of how to apply the truths of the Bible to their own lives and then to the lives of fellow Christians who are

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[15]David Powlison, "The Sufficiency of Scripture to Diagnose and Cure Souls," *Journal of Biblical Counseling* (Spring 2005), http://cnu.ruf.org/site_content/ attachments/0000/7311/Sufficiency_of_Scripture.pdf (accessed December 1, 2011), 2.

struggling with problems. It was not the intent of this project to train Christ Group

leaders to be proficient in biblical counseling or to be certified as biblical counselors.

Time constraints would not allow for proficiency or certification. This instruction

exposed leaders on how to improve their listening skills (Prov 18:13), gave suggestions

on how to ask appropriate questions, and offered guidance in applying Scripture to

problems. The counseling topics were flexible enough to take into account the variety of

situations in which it could be implemented. The goal was to increase the confidence of

leaders providing genuine, effective, spiritual help to hurting Christians.

       This venture consisted of six components. The first was to invite, through a

letter and phone call, each individual leader of a Christ Group (see Appendix 1). Those

who responded were asked to make a commitment to attend eleven training classes of one

hour each, which met over eleven consecutive Sunday mornings after the worship service.

       The second component was to administer a short questionnaire at the

beginning of the project to measure group leaders' level of confidence in helping others

with personal problems (see Appendix 2). This pre-course test was meant to ask specific

questions on how willing the participants would be to engage and help someone with

personal problems.

       The third component was the development of the curriculum for training the

leaders of Christ Groups in the basic principles of biblical counseling. Each lesson

included an outline of the material to be covered, homework assignments that could be

utilized by the leaders, and a time for questions and answers. The class size allowed for

an interactive presentation and not merely a lecture. Each lesson included specific Bible

passages that speak to the counseling issue addressed in that lesson.

       The fourth component was a post-training evaluation (see Appendix 5), which

assessed the level of knowledge the student gained as a result of the training. The

students who completed the training took the pre-test again, as a post-training

questionnaire, in order to compare the results.

The fifth component of this endeavor was to impart to the participants a desire for further study in the area of biblical counseling. Further study can be achieved as I make available helpful literature on counseling, encourage further training through NANC certification, and my continuing to be a resource for leaders as different counseling issues come to light.

The final component of this project was my own personal improvement in the area of biblical counseling and in my ability to instruct others in counseling. At the end of the classes the students were given the opportunity to evaluate the training. Proficiency in counseling and instruction evolved as I studied, built curriculum, taught, and answered questions during the eleven weeks of classes.

CHAPTER 2

THE SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE FOR
SPIRITUAL PROBLEMS OF LIFE

The mission statement of Christ Fellowship is "Making disciples of Jesus Christ." The church utilizes several different ministries to accomplish this goal: men and women's ministries, Sunday school, youth ministries, preaching, small group studies, and more. The common theme in all of these ministries is Bible study. It would be unthinkable for any ministry in our church to use any book other than the Bible as the standard for life and living.

The ministries at Christ Fellowship are generally healthy and vibrant; however, there is no ministry that exclusively uses Scripture to address the spiritual problems of life. The ministries at Christ Fellowship believe in the sufficiency of Scripture but lack the training on how to minister the Word effectively to those who are hurting. The leadership recognized this omission and responded by starting a biblical counseling ministry. This ministry provides the template for all other ministries by giving an example of how to minister Scripture effectively, and nothing but Scripture, to those who are having problems.[1] Anything less than total confidence in the sufficiency of Scripture would diminish the church's confidence in God's Word, prayer, fellowship, and preaching as a means through which the Spirit of God works to change lives.[2]

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[1] Science can certainly make helpful and necessary observations about the human body (for example, the effects of sleep deprivation or excessive dieting/overeating); however, scientific insight is often lacking in areas concerning issues of the heart, sin, repentance, and forgiveness.

[2] Scripture itself claims to be sufficient for the mental, emotional, relational, and behavioral needs of man (Ps 119:9, 24, 98-100; John 1:16; 10:10; 1 Cor 3:19-23; 2 Cor 3:5; Eph 3:14-21; Phil 2:1-11; Col 1:10-12; 2:3, 8-10; Heb 4:12-13; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:2-15).

The leadership is aware that in the wider culture those who embrace psychology as the answer to problems are far greater in number than those who do not.[3] In other words, believing in the sufficiency of Scripture for people's problems is a minority view. Nevertheless, the leadership believes it is imperative for believers to return to the early Church's faith in God's Word as being all-sufficient for the spiritual needs of human beings.[4]

This chapter will argue three subjects concerning the use of God's Word by ministers seeking to help people in need of change. First, Scripture is sufficient because God inspired all of Scripture and states that his Word is sufficient for the problems in life (2 Tim 3:16-17; Heb 4:12-13). Second, because God has inspired Scripture and declared the Bible sufficient for the problems of life, a counselor must know how to effectively use Scripture in counseling (2 Tim 4:1-2). Finally, because God's Word is useful and

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[3]Stanton L. Jones and Richard E. Butman, *Modern Psychotherapies* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991), 14, write, "Psychotherapy has assumed a position of high visibility and importance in many sectors of our American society." John D. Carter and Bruce Narramore, *The Integration of Psychology and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 9, believe, "Christianity is in the throes of an encounter with psychology. On academic and popular levels alike, psychology is making inroads into areas traditionally considered the domain of Christianity. And the signs of this encounter are everywhere about us." Mark R. McMinn and Clark D. Campbell, *Integrative Psychotherapy* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007), 21-22, write, "Psychology and counseling have attracted enormous attention in recent decades. Graduate programs in psychology and counseling have proliferated, both in mainstream universities and in distinctively Christian settings. In 1973 the American Psychological Association (APA) accredited 118 doctoral programs; by 2001 the number swelled to 346 programs. Today's membership in the APA is approximately one thousand times greater than its membership in the early twentieth century. . . . Of course these changes have affected Christianity. Many churches have psychological counseling centers or extensive referral networks of mental health professionals in the community. . . . With all the interplay between psychology and religion, it seems regrettable that prevailing personality and counseling theories have not been influenced much by the Christian faith." Ed Bulkley, *Why Christians Can't Trust Psychology* (Eugene, OR: Harvest, 1993), 23, notes, "Fully persuaded that psychological training is necessary to counsel effectively, most pastors today refer their parishioners to psychologists and psychiatrist for treatment of serious emotional and behavioral disorders."

[4]Paul Tautges, *Counsel One Another: A Theology of Personal Discipleship* (Leominster, UK: Day One, 2009), 110.

sufficient, it has the ability to sanctify a person away from sinful patterns of life to act

and think more like Jesus (Eph 4:22-24; Gal 5:22-23; Phil 2:3-4).

God Inspired Scripture and His Word Is Sufficient
(2 Tim 3:16-17; Heb 4:12-13)

The apostle Paul writes about the usefulness of Scripture saying it is absolutely

sufficient for every good work. A classic text that speaks to the sufficiency of Scripture

is 2 Timothy 3:16-17, which states, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable

for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of

God may be competent, equipped for every good work."

The idea that all of Scripture is God-breathed contains three specific

components. First, Paul's use of the term "Scripture" is a reference to the Hebrew

Scriptures of the Old Testament. [5] Philip Towner states that the term "Scripture" in the

New Testament is usually a reference to the Old Testament. [6]

The second component is "all Scripture," meaning all the writings that were

recognized by the Church as canonical[7] or authoritative. In the Old Testament the phrase

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[5]W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, and William White, Jr., *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1985), 552. "Scripture" (*graphe*) is described as referring to the whole Old Testament Scriptures (those accepted by the Jews as canonical) and all those of the New Testament that were to be accepted by Christians as authoritative. These latter were to be discriminated from the many forged epistles and other religious "writings" already produced and circulated in Timothy's time. Such discrimination would be directed by the fact that "every Scripture," characterized by inspiration of God, would be profitable for the purposes mentioned (2 Tim 3:16-17).

[6]Philip Towner, *The Letters of Timothy and Titus*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 86. The term can also be called "holy Scriptures." Peter uses this term in reference to the writings of Paul in 2 Pet 3:16.

[7]The criteria that were used by the church to establish the New Testament canon consisted of five areas: (1) The authority of Jesus (John 7:46; 6:68). Jesus was considered a "standard" or "canon" of authority long before his words were written down, collected, and canonized by the church. Arthur G. Patzia, *The Making of the New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1995), 103. (2) Apostolicity. What ultimately surfaced was that a writing produced during the apostolic age could be considered for canonization if one of the following applied: (a) An apostle wrote it; (b) The document was indirectly

"thus says the LORD" appears hundreds of times. These words were spoken by a host of different people but were understood by the listeners to come with God's authority. God often spoke through a prophet; thus what the prophet says in God's name, God says.[8] When a prophet used this expression his words were absolute authoritative words from God or else he would be seen as a false prophet (Num 22:38; Deut 18:18-20; Jer 1:9; 14:14; 23:16-22; 29:31-32; Ezek 2:7; 13:1-6).

God eventually commanded Moses and other prophets to write their words in a book. Paul says these writings were "God-breathed" in a similar fashion that Paul's writings were written as "a command from the Lord" (1 Cor 14:37) and should be viewed as Scripture (2 Pet 3:16).

In the book of Timothy, Paul is writing late in life with a clear awareness that his own ministry is drawing to an end (4:6-8). Paul understands that difficult times are ahead (3:1-9), and he wants to teach Timothy how to determine what is true and what is false. Paul gives two answers to this question. The first is to imitate his life and doctrine (vv. 10-14). The second is to turn to Scripture. The Scriptures convey wisdom (3:15)

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connected with an apostle or non-apostolic author who associated with an apostle; (c) Teachings in a document with uncertain authorship were considered orthodox and sound by the standards set forth by the apostles. Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development and Significance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 289-93. (3) The usage in the church. Believers accepted certain Christian writings as authoritative for their faith if the document achieved special status and was utilized both frequently and universally by the church. (4) Orthodoxy. Orthodoxy is the apostolic faith that was set forth in their writings and maintained in the churches founded by the apostles. The early church existed under the threat of false teachings (Gnosticism, Docetism, Montanism). It was necessary to protect the truth of the gospel by appealing to apostolic teaching and traditions (Col 2:6, 8; 2 Thess 2:15; 1 John 1:5), the Word of truth (2 Tim 1:14; 2:15; 3:8), good doctrine (1 Tim 4:6), sound teaching and doctrine (1 Tim 6:3; 2 Tim 1:13; 4:3 Titus 1:9; 2:1), the faith (2 Tim 4:7; Jude 3, 20), and testing the spirits (1 John 4:1-4). See Joel B. Green and Scott McKnight, *The Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1992), 97. (5) Inspiration. Inspiration is the enabling by the Holy Spirit to utter the Word of God; the vocabulary was the authors; the message was from God (2 Pet 1:20-21; 2 Tim 3:16).

[8]Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 74.

and bring salvation through faith in Christ.[9] Paul viewed all Scripture as authoritative

because God's authority is absolute and Scripture is God's personal Word to Christians.

When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, he taunted him to relieve his

hunger by turning stones into bread. Jesus replied by quoting Deuteronomy 8:3: "Man

shall not live by bread alone, but by *every* word that comes from the mouth of God"

(Matt 4:4). Jesus implied that everything God reveals in Scripture is necessary to

spiritual life.[10] The power of the Spirit energizes *all* of Scripture, for all of Scripture is

God's redemptive message, God's gospel.[11]

The third component discusses the idea of God-breathed. Jay E. Adams writes,

> When God says that He breathed out His Word, He means that what is written is as
> much His Word as if He had spoken it audibly by means of breath. If the reader
> could hear God speak, he would find that God said nothing more, nothing less,
> nothing different from what is written.[12]

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[9]John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Word of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2010), 124.

[10]Ibid., 211.

[11]Ibid., 355.

[12]Jay E. Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 17. See also Kenneth L. Barker and John R Kohlenberger III, eds., *Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary*, Premier Reference Series, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 915. "All Scripture is God-breathed." The adjective used here is *theopneustos,* which is a combination of two other Greek words: *theos* (God) and *pneo* (breathe). Ibid., 1068. Barker and Kohlenberger also state, "Second Peter 1:21 describes how divine inspiration took place: Each prophecy originated in God, not in the will of a human being. No prophet wrote his own private ideas. . . . Peter's statement 'men spoke from God' implies the dual authorship of Scripture—a teaching also implied in the Old Testament (see 2 Sam 23:2; Jer 1:7, 9). The human prophets spoke, but God so worked in them that what they said was his Word. It was not through a process of dictation or through a state of ecstasy that the writers of Scripture spoke but through the control of the Spirit of God—'as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.'" Ibid., 1068. Fritz Rienecker and Cleon Rogers, *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 647, state that "God-breathed means "breathed into by God, inspired." The rabbinical teaching was that the Spirit of God rested on and in the prophets and spoke through them so that their words did not come from themselves, but from the mouth of God and they spoke and wrote in the Holy Spirit. The early church was in entire agreement with this view."

Regarding 2 Timothy 3:16 theologian Wayne Grudem writes,

> Since it is writings that are said to be "breathed out," this breathing must be understood as a metaphor for speaking the words of Scripture. This verse states in brief form what was evident in many passages in the Old Testament: the Old Testament writings are regarded as God's Word in written form. For every word of the Old Testament, God is the one who spoke (and still speaks) it, although God used human agents to write these words down.[13]

The Scripture in its present form is all that God wanted it to be.[14] Scripture constitutes the infallible rule of faith and practice for humanity.[15] Divine inspiration applies evenly to all texts, passages, and stories of Scripture. What should be emphasized is the books that eventually constituted the inspired Bible are not inspired because the Church made an official decision to recognize them as inspired.[16] On the contrary, the sixty-six books, by their very contents, immediately attest themselves to the hearts of all Spirit-indwelt people as the living oracles of God (Rom 3:2).[17]

Since God breathes out the Scriptures, they are "profitable," meaning "useful, beneficial, and advantageous."[18] Scripture is ultimately profitable because it makes one

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[13]Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 74-75. Barker and Kohlenberger note that 2 Tim 3:16 is one of the greatest texts in the New Testament describing the inspiration or the "God-breathed" aspect of the Bible. Barker and Kohlenberger, *Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary*, 915.

[14]F. F Bruce, a scholar who devoted much of his life to a study of the canon, states, "That the New Testament consists of the twenty-seven books, which have been recognized as belonging to it since the fourth century, is not a judgment; it is a statement of fact. Individuals or communities may consider that it is too restricted or too comprehensive; but their opinion does not affect the identity of the canon. The canon is not going to be diminished or increased because of what they think or say: it is a literary, historical and theological datum." F. F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988), 250. See also Glen W. Barker, William L. Lane, and J. Ramsey Michaels, *The New Testament Speaks* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969); and D. A. Carson et al., *New Bible Commentary*, 21st ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994).

[15]William Hendriksen, *Timothy*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1970), 302.

[16]The Decision of the Council of Hippo, A.D. 393, and of Carthage, A.D. 397.

[17]Hendriksen, *Timothy*, 302. The process whereby men recorded God's words in described 2 Pet 1:19-21.

[18]Tautges, *Counsel One Another*, 111.

wise to salvation; it is a sure guide on the way towards eternal life.[19] Scripture is profitable

in four areas: "teaching" Christian truths; "rebuking" or convicting of sin; "correcting"

error; "training" in how to live both inwardly and outwardly in righteousness.[20] Each of

these four uses of Scripture will be discussed separately. First, "teaching"[21] stands at the

head of this series structurally and its purpose is expressed in verse 17, "for every good

work" (1 Tim 5:17). [22]

The second use of Scripture is for "rebuking," a term that has been variously

translated as "convicting of sin," "censure," or "reproof." "Rebuking" covers a range of

activities all related to the process of making someone aware of sin, beginning with the

educative act designed to produce self-awareness of sin[23] and then proceeding to the

more immediate disciplinary act of admonishing someone for specific misbehavior.[24] The

final stage of rebuking occurs when it becomes so harsh it is viewed as punitive.[25] The

term *elegmos*[26] may refer to a rebuke that exposes the error of false teachers[27] or to a

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[19]Benjamin A. Atkinson, *Acts to Revelation*, Matthew Henry's Commentary, vol. 6 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2000), 682.

[20]Barker and Kohlenberger, *Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary*, 915.

[21]Colin Brown, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), s. v. *didaskolos.* "*Didaskolos* is widely used in Greek in the sense of teacher or tutor. The term covers all those regularly engaged in the systematic imparting of knowledge or technical skills. . . . Since the teacher's activity is confined to specific areas (reading, writing, the art of war, a trade, etc.), the word *didaskalos* is often more closely defined by the subject he teaches."

[22]Walter L. Liefeld, *1 & 2 Timothy/Titus*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 281.

[23]"Conviction of sin" (2 Tim 4:2); refutation of error (Titus 1:9).

[24]"Reproof or rebuke" (1 Tim 5:20; Matt 18:15; Lev 19:17).

[25]Towner, *The Letters of Timothy and Titus*, 91.

[26]William Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 2nd rev. ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 249, renders *elegmos* as "reproof, censure, correction."

[27]God rebuked Balaam by using "a speechless donkey [that] spoke with human

reproof in a person's personal life (1 Tim 5:20; Titus 1:9, 13; 2:15; cf. Ps 19:11; 38:14; 39:11). Either usage can show sinners their failures, clarify the essence of their mistake(s), and lead them to a new sense of peace and wholeness.[28]

The third use of Scripture is for "correction."[29] As used in 1 Timothy, the word means "setting up straight."[30] The terms "correcting" and "training"[31] show a positive use for Scripture. God's Word teaches people how to get back on the right track so they can be useful for Him.[32] This emphasis frequently appears in the wilderness experience of Israel (Deut 8:2-3, 5). Negatively, Scripture is helpful for convicting the misguided and disobedient of their errors and restoring them to the right path (Dan 12:3).[33]

A final profitable use of Scripture is to provide moral training that leads to

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voice" (2 Pet 2:16).

[28]Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1, 2 Timothy & Titus*, The New American Commentary, vol. 34 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 237.

[29]Vine, Unger, and White state that correction (*epanorthosis*) is "a restoration to an upright or right state . . . referring to improvement of life and character." *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*, 130. MacArthur states, "'Correction' (*epanorthosis*) literally means 'to straighten up' or 'lift up.' In other words, Scripture restores a person to a proper spiritual posture." MacArthur, *Our Sufficiency in Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 126.

[30]Rienecker and Rogers, *A Linguistic Key*, 647.

[31]According to Vine, Unger, and White, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*, 97, *paideuo* "primarily denotes 'to train children,' suggesting the broad idea of education. 'Instructing' is a training gracious and firm; grace, which brings salvation, employs means to give us full possession of it; hence, 'to chastise,' this being part of the training, whether (a) by correcting with words, reproving, and admonishing, 1 Tim 1:20; 2 Tim 2:25, or (b) by 'chastening' by the infliction of evils and calamities, 1 Cor 11:32; Heb 12:6-7, 10; Rev 3:19." Arndt and Gingrich describe "'training' as, 'upbringing, training, instruction' chiefly as it is attained by discipline, correction, of the holy discipline of a fatherly God." Arndt and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 603.

[32]In 2 Sam 12:1-15 the text explains that "the Lord sent Nathan to David" for the purpose of reproving him for his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband Uriah. In this passage we see how the words of God delivered to David brought forth the fruit of reproof—correction and repentance.

[33]Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy & Titus*, 237.

righteous living. Training has to do with the education (*paideia*) of believers in the Scriptures that leads to a holy life-style. *Paideia*[34] was a dominant concept in Greco-Roman culture, encouraging the attainment of the virtues (self-control, piety, uprightness, seriousness, etc.), which were considered the foundational virtues for civilization.[35]

Paul ends 2 Timothy 3, "The man of God [is to] be competent, equipped for every good work."[36] Some versions render the phrase, "thoroughly equipped" to describe someone who is super-equipped, complete, capable, proficient, or completely furnished to do whatever God calls him or her to perform. Paul says that the man of God should be furnished with all that is necessary to carry out his appointed work.[37] The Scriptures are completely sufficient for the work of teaching, reproving, correcting, and training for the work of discipleship.

In addition to 2 Timothy 3:16-17 a passage that speaks directly to the sufficiency of Scripture and its power to work in people's hearts (where true change happens) is Hebrews 4:12. This passage begins with the little word "for": "For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart." In this context, the word "for" is a conjunction that logically connects this verse with the

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[34]Rienecker and Rogers render *Paideia* as "training, instruction, discipline." Rienecker and Rogers, *Linguistic Key*, 647. MacArthur states, "The Greek word translated 'training' is *paidion*, which elsewhere in the New Testament is translated 'child' or 'children' (see Matt 2:8; 14:21). So this verse pictures God's Word training believers as a parent or teacher would train a child. From spiritual infancy to spiritual maturity, Scripture trains and educates believers in godly living." MacArthur, *Our Sufficiency in Christ*, 127.

[35]Towner, *The Letters of Timothy and Titus*, 91.

[36]Rienecker and Rogers render the phrase "competent, equipped for every good work" as "completely outfitted, fully furnished, fully equipped, fully supplied. The word was used of documents which were completely outfitted or of a wagon which was completely outfitted or of a completely outfitted rescue boat." Rienecker and Rogers, *Linguistic Key*, 647.

[37]Tautges, *Counsel One Another*, 114.

preceding verse where the topic of disobedience is under consideration.[38] The point being

emphasized is that the Word of God can never be disobeyed with impunity precisely

because it is the Word of God, and it cannot be idle and without effect.[39]

The author of Hebrews describes five qualities of Scripture in this verse that

are convincing the sufficiency of God's Word for counseling. First, the Bible is "the Word

of God," the very words of God in written form and, as such, they are completely

authoritative.[40]

God's Word is also described as "alive" or "living,"[41] from the Greek verb

meaning "to live (*zao*)."[42] God's Word is alive and not locked within the covers of a book.

Being alive, it is also life-giving, true, and able to save the soul (Jas 1:21; Jer 15:16; Ps

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[38]Bruce notes, "For God's Word—that Word which fell on disobedient ears in the wilderness and which has been sounded out again in these days of fulfillment—is not like the word of man; it is living, effective and self-fulfilling; it diagnoses the condition of the human heart . . . and it brings blessing to those who receive it in faith and pronounces judgment on those who disregard it. . . . All that our author says here about the Word (*logos*) of God is in line with the Old Testament witness." F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 80.

[39]Philip E. Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 163.

[40]Tautges, *Counsel One Another*, 116. Note also that Jesus Christ himself considered Scripture to be so authoritative that he quoted it to Satan when tempted (Matt 4:4, 7, 10).

[41]Robert L. Sumner, *Hebrews* (Raleigh, NC: Biblical Evangelism, 2003), 109, states, "God's Word is *quick* and *powerful*; that is, it is alive and active. . . . God's Word is living and, when hidden in our hearts and minds, drives us onward in a life of full obedience."

[42]James Strong, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1996), 2198. See also Rienecker and Rogers, *Linguistic Key*, 676, who describe "living and active" as "alive, living, energetic, active, productive. The word is used of activity which produces results and is used often for divine activity which produces effective results." Barker and Kohlenberger, *Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary*, 958, state, "'Living and active' shows that there is a dynamic quality about God's revelation. It does things. Specifically, it penetrates and, in this capacity, is likened to a 'double-edged sword' (cf. Isa 49:2; Eph 6:17; Rev 1:16; 2:12; 19:15)." Vine, Unger, and White, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*, 374, translate the Greek verb "*zao*" as "quick" or "living" in Heb 4:12.

119:50; John 17:17). The words "living and active" show that there is a dynamic quality

about God's revelation. God's Word is not static, it does things. Specifically, it penetrates

like a double-edged sword (Isa 49:2; Eph 6:17; Rev 1:16; 2:12; 19:15). The writer of

Hebrews is saying that God's Word can reach to the innermost recesses of people.[43] God

knows the physical and nonmaterial aspects of lives equally. Biblical counselors must

place their confidence in the ability of the Word of God (in the hands of the Spirit of God)

to perform the work of God in conforming disciples to Jesus Christ.[44] God never sends

his word without accomplishing something for his glory (Isa 55:9-11).

The author of Hebrews likens the Word of God to a sword[45] because it exposes

the intentions of the heart and renders one defenseless before God's scrutinizing gaze.[46]

Those who remain insensitive to the voice of God in Scripture may discover that God's

Word is also a lethal weapon.[47] Anytime a person is confronted by the truth of God's

Word and is standing on the edge of belief but fails to step over in faith, there is a risk of

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[43]Barker and Kohlenberger, *Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary*, 958. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 83, states, "We may conceal our inner being from our neighbors, and we can even deceive ourselves; but nothing escapes the scrutiny of God; before Him everything lies exposed and powerless."

[44]Tautges, *Counsel One Another*, 117.

[45]Christ the incarnate Word is never said to be a sword but to wield a sword (citing Josh 5:13; Rev 1:16; 2:12; 19:15 where a sharp, two-edged sword similarly describes his penetrating Word which issues from his mouth). Conversely, John Owens, *Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1968), 73, notes, "This sword is often mentioned with respect unto the Lord Christ. 'Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword;' it is Christ who Himself makes His word powerful and sharp; He acts in it and by it." Sumner, *Hebrews*, 109, states, "God's Word is *sharper* than any two-edged sword; that is, the sharp, piercing point and edges of His Word divide soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It grips hearts, changes lives, produces repentance, and attains other results that are miraculous and eternal."

[46]William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 47 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991), 102.

[47]Ibid. Israel failed to listen to the voice of God and fell by the sword when they disobeyed God's commands (Num 14:39-45). John MacArthur states, "The Word of God is not only saving and comforting and nourishing and healing, it is also a tool of judgment and execution." John MacArthur, *Hebrews*, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1983), 105.

falling away from that place of sensitivity to the Spirit of God.[48] The writer of Hebrews

presents the solution to this problem, which is to submit to the authority of Jesus Christ

and to become transformed by the power of Scripture.

God's Word is also described as piercing and penetrating. The adjective

"sharper" originates from the primitive root *temno*, meaning, "to cut."[49] The Word of God

has cutting power[50] with the ability to pierce through the innermost recesses of man.[51]

The phrases "soul and spirit," and "joints and marrow"[52] are not part of the heart but

represent the innermost recesses, the most secret and hidden parts of people. John Owens

states,

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[48]MacArthur, *Hebrews*, 105.

[49]Strong, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, 5114. In addition, Vine, Unger, and White discuss the Greek word *dichotomeo*, which literally means "to cut into two parts": "Some take the reference to be to the mode of punishment by which criminals and captives were 'cut' in two; others, on account of the fact that in these passages the delinquent is still surviving after the treatment, take the verb to denote 'to cut up' by scourging, to scourge severely, the word being used figuratively" (*Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*, 142).

[50]MacArthur states, "The sword of the Spirit, God's Word, is the only offensive weapon Paul mentions in that passage [Heb 4:12]. Like any weapon, it must be used skillfully to be most effective. That is implied in the Greek word Paul used for 'sword.' It isn't *rhomphaia*, which refers to a broad sword, but *machaira*, a small dagger. And the Greek term translated 'word' is *rhema*. It speaks of a specific statement. Just as a small dagger is applied with skill and precision to a vital area of the body, so we must use the Word carefully and expertly, applying specific principles from it to every situation we face." MacArthur, *Our Sufficiency in Christ*, 129.

[51]Ibid., 96. MacArthur states, "Scripture does what psychoanalysis can't do: it pierces the heart. It penetrates deep into a person's soul and judges his motives. To see yourself in the light of Scripture is to see yourself as you really are. And only God's Word can promise real spiritual rewards to those who obey its counsel. No other form of therapy or counseling can make a person whole." Ibid.

[52]Bruce states, "The words 'dividing of soul and spirit, of both joint and marrow'—are to be understood as a 'rhetorical accumulation of terms to express the whole mental nature of man on all its sides. . . .' The Word of God probes the inmost recesses of our spiritual being and brings the subconscious motives to light is what is meant. It is 'discriminative of the heart's thoughts and intents.' 'In all these examples it is a sifting process that is at work; and what winnowing-fan can vie with the gales of the Spirit blowing through the Word? With the function here ascribed to the Word of God we may compare the epithet 'heart-knowing' applied to God Himself in Acts 1:24; 15:8." Burce, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 82.

> All this teacheth us that the Son of God has absolute power to judge of the rectitude and crookedness of the ways and walkings of the sons of men under a profession of religion, from the inward frames of their minds and hearts under all their outward duties and performances, either in perseverance or backsliding.[53]

These images from Paul are designed to show the totality of the human condition and the depth to which the Word of God is able to reach as it penetrates the core of each person.[54] No separation could be more intimate than that between soul and spirit or between joints and marrow. Nothing is so deeply hidden that the efficacy[55] of the Word does not penetrate through it (cf. Luke 16:15).[56]

As the Word of God penetrates to the innermost recesses of a person's being, it does so as a "critic" or judge, discerning (i.e., passing judgment on) the thoughts and intentions of the heart.[57] Humanly speaking there is nothing more inaccessible and intangible than the depths of a person's heart. Nothing exists that can detect and discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart. God's Word weighs and judges the reflections of the mind and the affections of the heart in order to show right from wrong (Jer 17:10; Ps 119:130).[58] Only God's Word can pierce, penetrate, and judge this intangible realm. The heart describes the deep fount of a person's life in all its aspects: spiritual, intellectual, moral, and emotional.[59]

Hebrews 4:13 continues, "And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account." This verse clearly

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[53]Owens, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 73.

[54]Alan C. Mitchell, *Hebrews,* Sacra Pagina Series, vol. 13 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1989), 101.

[55]Vine, Unger, and White, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*, s.v. "*energes*." *Energes* is described as effectual, active, powerful, able, and strong.

[56]Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 165.

[57]Ibid., 166.

[58]Tautges, *Counsel One Another*, 119.

[59]Ibid.

describes every person's total exposure and utter defenselessness in the presence of God. The images of nakedness and exposure express vividly the plight of anyone who believes he can deceive his creator and judge.[60] Owens believes that this is an allusion to the bodies of sacrificed beasts, which were flayed, opened, and cut to pieces, and thus perfectly exposed to the view of the priest before being offered up.[61] God knows and sees all things exactly as they are. William Lane describes the omniscience of the Word of God: "The surveillance predicated of God is exhaustive; nothing escapes his scrutiny."[62]

Biblical counselors must faithfully, rightly, and liberally employ the power of God's Word. No other document contains the power and ability to penetrate and judge the innermost recesses of the heart and mind.

The Effective Use of Scripture in Counseling
(2 Tim 4:1-2)

Biblical counselors must see to it that the teaching of the Word of God does not consist in merely imparting knowledge but also in training disciples to live for God "in righteousness," which sometimes comes about painfully by correction "through vexations."[63] Righteousness leads to peace, quietness, and confidence (Isa 32:17). As the Word convicts and corrects, it shapes new life patterns and habits that please God so

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[60]Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 103.

[61]Owens, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 73. Regarding the phrase "naked and exposed" in Heb 4:13, Rienecker and Rogers state, "*gumnos* is naked, open. The phrase 'exposed' means to lay bare, to expose. The figure of speech behind the word is not clear. It has been suggested that it refers to the bending back the neck of a sacrificial victim making ready for the final stroke or it may refer to the wrestler's art of seizing one by the throat rendering him limp and powerless." Reinecker and Rogers, *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, 676. MacArthur states, "The Greek word translated 'laid bare . . .' was used of criminals who were being led to trial or execution. Often a soldier would hold the point of a dagger under the criminal's chin to force him to hold his head high so everyone could see who he was. Similarly, Scripture exposes us for who we really are and forces us to face the reality of our sin." MacArthur, *Our Sufficiency in Christ*, 125.

[62]Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 103.

[63]Tautges, *Counsel One Another*, 113.

that believer's may live according to His pleasure.[64] Biblical counselors are freed from

the burden of creating personal standards of godliness.[65] Instead, Scripture is used to

correct those in error and lead them to obey God's commands, which "are not

burdensome" (1 John 5:3; Pss 139:23-24).

Scripture states that God's Word "has granted to us all things that pertain to

life and godliness" (2 Pet 1:3); therefore, the complex problems that people encounter

should be seen as challenges to deepen the understanding and application of God's Word

to specific situations. Counselors have the ability to grow in knowledge and accurately

apply God's Word because Jesus left a "helper" or "advocate," the Holy Spirit, a

parakletos,[66] as a guide (John 14:15-27).[67] This Helper is of the same essence as Jesus

(Rom 8:27) and possesses all the attributes of deity such as emotions (Eph 4:30) and will

(Heb 2:4).[68] Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as "the Spirit of Truth" (John 14:17). It is

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[64]Ibid., 113-14.

[65]Ibid., 113.

[66]Rienecker and Rogers, *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 251; this source renders *parakletos* (paraclete) as an "advocate, helper." Arndt and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 249; this source renders *parakletos* as "one who is called to someone's aid." Vine, Unger, and White, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*, 111, state, "*Parakletos* is literally 'called to one's side,' i.e., to one's aid. . . . and suggests the capability or adaptability for giving aid. It was used in a court of justice to denote a legal assistant, counsel for the defense, an advocate; then generally, one who pleads another's cause, an intercessor, advocate, as in 1 John 2:1, of the Lord Jesus." Brown says, "*Parakletos* means helper, intercessor, advocate or paraclete. *Parakletos* has a range of meaning from call in, send for, summon, to exhort, encourage, comfort or console. . . . The *parakletos* is not called in but sent (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7), given and received (John 14:16f). He does not merely put in a good word, but brings active help." Brown, *The New International Dictionary,* s.v. "*parakletos.*"

[67]John MacArthur and Wayne Mack, *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically* (Nashville: Nelson, 2005), 81. In *Our Sufficiency in Christ*, 103, MacArthur insightfully describes the Holy Spirit as "a spiritual attendant whose role is to offer assistance, succor, support, relief, advocacy, and guidance—a divine Counselor whose ministry to believers is to offer the very things that so many people vainly seek in therapy!" In addition, MacArthur states, "[Jesus Christ promised] that the Holy Spirit would assume the same role He had filled in His disciples' lives for the years of His earthly ministry—that of divine teacher, friend, guide, helper, and comforter." Ibid.

[68]Vine, Unger, and White, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*, 111, state,

this member of the Godhead who guides and imparts truth. Apart from the Holy Spirit it is impossible for sinful humans to know or understand any spiritual truths.[69]

Jesus echoed the words of Psalm 19:9 in John 17:17: "Sanctify them in the truth; your Word is truth." These and similar verses teach that everything the Bible says is true.[70] The Bible is sufficient, trustworthy, and reliable to address whatever problems arise in the counseling session; however, it is the Holy Spirit who guides, directs, controls, convicts, and reveals truths within God's Word. Throughout this project, goals and methodology in counseling are often discussed and the impression could be given that the Holy Spirit has been supplanted by human techniques. This is neither desired nor intended. For biblical counselors to be successful their methodology, techniques, and skills must all be consonant with the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit employs God's Word as the principal means by which Christians may grow in sanctification, the process whereby they mature throughout life to become more and more like Jesus Christ. Counseling cannot be effective apart from the Scriptures.[71] The attendance of the Holy Spirit in counseling implies the presence of the Holy Scriptures as well.[72] Conversely, counseling without the Scriptures can only be expected to mean counseling without the Holy Spirit.

Second Timothy 4 makes a focused examination of Paul's final charge to Timothy and constitutes his last recorded words. In verses 6-8, it becomes plain that Paul

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"In the widest sense, [Comforter] signifies a 'succorer, comforter.' Christ was this to His disciples, by the implication of His Word another (*allos*, 'another of the same sort,' not *heteros*, 'different')."

[69]MacArthur, *Our Sufficiency in Christ*, 108, states, "Sanctification is the Holy Spirit's role. No therapist can accomplish what He can do in transforming the soul. And no therapy devised by men can possible bring someone to repentance or repair the life broken by sin. Those who see therapy as the best means to cure a sick or wounded soul are trying to substitute fleshly devices for the work of the Spirit."

[70]MacArthur and Mack, *Counseling*, 164.

[71]Jay E. Adams, *Competent to Counsel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 24.

[72]Ibid. See Rom 15:4, 13.

does not expect to live much longer and will be put to death because of his faith in Christ.[73] This discussion will be limited to the first two verses of chapter 4. Verses 1-2 are, in part, the final will and testament of Paul to Timothy and the Church.

Paul's words resound with passion: "In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge" (2 Tim 4:1). What Paul is saying is enhanced in urgency and solemnity by invoking what is in fact an eternal, unchangeable reality—the actual presence of God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ.[74]

Verse 2 opens with five commands: Preach the Word, always be ready to preach the Word, correct, rebuke, and encourage.

Preach the Word

"Preach the Word" is basic to the other four imperatives and has also been rendered "to herald,"[75] or "to proclaim" (see Matt 10:27). Literally, "herald" is to make a matter of great significance known officially and publically. According to Scripture, "heralding" or "preaching" is generally the divinely authorized proclamation of the message of God to men.[76]

Men of the Bible who are said to have "heralded" include Noah, "God will

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[73]Liefeld, *1 & 2 Timothy & Titus*, 286.

[74]Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 242.

[75]Hendriksen states*,* "In Paul's writing the verb 'to herald' occurs in the following passages: Rom 2:21; 10:8, 14-15; 1 Cor 1:23; 9:27; 15:11-12; 2 Cor 1:19; 4:5; 11:4; Gal 2:2; 5:11; Phil 1:15; Col 1:23; 1 Thess 2:9; 1 Tim 3:16; 2 Tim 4:2; 1 Pet 3:19; Rev 5:2. The noun 'herald' is found in 1 Tim 2:7 and 2 Tim 1:11; 2 Pet 2:5. Proclamation by the herald or 'heralding' is found in Matt 12:41; Luke 11:32; Rom 16:25; 1 Cor 1:21; 2:4; 15:14; 2 Tim 4:17; Titus 1:3. Synonyms are 'to announce good tidings' and in certain contexts 'to proclaim, declare.'" Hendriksen, *Timothy*, 309.

[76]Ibid. Hendriksen, *Timothy*, 309, also notes that "words have a history. It is, therefore, not surprising that also this verb, like so many others, is at times used in a more general sense, namely, with respect to a proclamation or heralding that is *not* divinely authorized, Mark 1:45; 7:36."

destroy the world. Turn away from your sins!" (2 Pet 2:5; cf. 1 Pet 3:19); Jonah, "Yet

forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" (Jonah 3:4; cf. Matt 12:41; Luke 11:32);

John the Baptist, "Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand!" and "Look, the Lamb

of God, who is taking away the sin of the world!" (Matt 3:1-2; John 1:29); the Healed

Gerasene Demoniac, "God has done great things for me!" (Luke 8:39); the apostle Paul,

"Jesus is the Christ!" (Acts 9:20), "Far be it from me to boast, except in the cross of our

Lord Jesus Christ!" (Gal 6:14); and "But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the

firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep!" (1 Cor 15:20; cf. vv. 55-58; 1 Thess 4:13-18).

Others who are said to have "preached" or "heralded" are the twelve disciples, Philip the

evangelist, Peter at Cesarea, and Christ who was bringing God's message to man.

The proclamation of the gospel reflects the conviction that God's Word is

infallible and inerrant and stands against all falsehood (2 Tim 4:4).[77] This act must be in

sharp contrast with the often-stealthy infiltration of Satan and his servants (2 Tim 3:6).

Preachers of the gospel must be open and above reproach before the One who brings

good tidings and peace (Nah 1:15; Rom 10:15). Pastors, evangelists, teachers, and

counselors should be spurred on to greater diligence knowing that Jesus Christ himself

will judge their service (Eph 4:11; Jas 3:1). This fact is not a frightening word for those

who are faithful, but rather a clarion call for devotion, urgency, and commitment.

Much has been said about the imperative, "Preach the gospel," yet it needs to

be clarified that this action does not mean that an ordained minister must stand behind a

stately pulpit and expound Scripture. Paul is calling Timothy to a public heralding of the

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[77]In *Our Sufficiency in Christ*, 135, MacArthur states, "That solemn charge [of 2 Tim 4:2] came as the apostle, knowing his death was imminent (vv. 6-9), passed the mantle to his son in the faith. He commanded Timothy to stick with the confrontive preaching of the powerful Word. When he says 'be ready' (v. 2), he uses a military term meaning 'to be at one's post.' Faithfulness to duty is the idea it conveys. It is a call to seize every opportunity 'in season and out'—whether convenient or inconvenient, popular or unpopular. . . . The tone of such preaching is to 'reprove,' which has the idea of refuting and deals with the mind; 'rebuke' confronts the emotions as sin is exposed; and 'exhort' emphasizes the call to repentance and obedience."

gospel message, whether done in a mass meeting or person-to-person.[78]

Adams contends that all Christians, not simply ministers of the gospel,[79] should engage in nouthetic confrontation (2 Tim 3:16-17; Col 3:16).[80] Preaching the gospel, whether behind the pulpit or in counseling, must place Jesus Christ at the center of the message. Adams states, "Any counseling which moves Christ from that position of centrality has to the extent that it has done so ceased to be Christian."[81]

Be Ready in Season and Out of Season

The second imperative is to "be ready in season and out of season." This means that "when the time is convenient [and] when the time is inconvenient."[82] A faithful preacher must proclaim the Word when it is popular or convenient and when it is not; when it is fitting, and when it seems not. The dictates of culture, community, or church must not alter a preacher's commitment to proclaim God's Word faithfully.

Correct, Rebuke, Encourage

The final three commands form a neat group—a triple ministry: "correct, rebuke, and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction" (2 Tim 3:16). Philip

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[78]Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy & Titus*, 243.

[79]The term "gospel" has a wider reference than a mere explanation of the plan of salvation. It refers to the message of salvation along with the truths and moral demands that accompany it and support it.

[80]Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 41. The words *nouthesis* and *noutheteo* (admonish, warn, teach, exhort) are the noun and verb forms in the New Testament from which the term "nouthetic" comes. Nouthetic confrontation, in its biblical usage, aims at straightening out the individual by changing his patterns of behavior to conform to biblical standards. Ibid., 46. The overarching goal of nouthetic confrontation is God's glory and to bring men into loving conformity to the law of God. Nouthetic counseling stresses turning to God in repentance. Instead of excuse-making or blameshifting, nouthetic counseling advocates the assumption of responsibility and blame, the admission of guilt, the confession of sin, and the seeking of forgiveness in Christ. Ibid., 55.

[81]Ibid., 41.

[82]Towner, *The Letters of Timothy and Titus*, 600.

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Hughes notes, "If you enjoy correcting and rebuking, you are likely not fit for the ministry. But if you do not do it, you are a shirker."[83] Modifying each of the three imperatives is the beautiful phrase, "with complete patience and teaching."[84] This type of patience is a distinctly Christian virtue (2 Cor 6:6; Eph 4:2; Col 1:11; 3:12). It should be noted that both patience and teaching go together in this case; neither is complete without the other.[85] Reproof, rebuking, and exhorting must be teamed up with patience and careful teaching, or they will be unprofitable.

Sanctification through God's Word

The preceding discussion has elaborated upon the sufficiency and use of Scripture in counseling (2 Tim 3:16-17; Heb 4:12) and the effective ministry of God's Word to others (2 Tim 4:1-2). The final area to investigate is how to engender in Christians a desire to be more like Jesus Christ.

When someone becomes a believer in Jesus Christ he or she should strive to be obedient to the Word and throughout life become more and more like the Savior. This process is known as sanctification. All believers are in the process of being progressively sanctified, albeit at individual stages. According to Bruce Demarest,

> Sanctification is a cooperative venture; the Spirit blesses believers with sanctifying grace, but the latter must faithfully cooperate therewith. Faith alone justifies; but faith joined with our concerted efforts sanctifies. . . . Sanctification, then, results from the initiative and grace of God to which is joined the diligence of believing people.[86]

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[83]Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 246.

[84]A similar combination is seen in 2 Tim 2:24-25, "[Do] not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness."

[85]An example of patience and teaching working together can be seen by the manner in which Paul dealt with the Corinthian fornicator (1 Cor 5:1-8, 13; 2 Cor 2:5-11) and Nathan's treatment of David (2 Sam 12:1-15).

[86]Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1997), 425.

Anthony A. Hoekema defines sanctification as the "gracious operation of the Holy Spirit, involving our responsible participation, by which He delivers us as justified sinners from the pollution of sin, renews our entire nature according to the image of God, and enables us to live lives that are pleasing to Him."[87]

Sanctification is a progressive work of God and human beings that increasingly frees them from sin and progressively makes them like Christ in their actual lives.[88] Biblical counseling, in its fullest sense, is simply an application of the means of sanctification. The prerequisite for sanctification is the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of a regenerate person.[89]

When Adam and Eve first sinned at the Fall, the image of God in humans was greatly distorted but not lost. As one grows in true understanding of God, His Word, and His world, one begins to think more and more the thoughts that God himself thinks.[90] The goal of counseling is for the counselee to become more and more conformed to the image of Jesus Christ (Rom 8:29). Sanctification is a goal achieved over a lifetime when one leaves behind former patterns of sin and grows into the stature of Christ (Eph 4:13). The Holy Spirit indwells believers in Jesus Christ and enables them to put off the old patterns of life and put on new biblical patterns. Christians should grow in grace daily, by "trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord" (Eph 5:10).[91]

For counselors, a significant part of the sanctification process is the ability to minister, or apply, the Scriptures in counseling. For counseling to be authentically

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[87]Anthony A. Hoekema, *Five Views on Sanctification* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 61.

[88]Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 746.

[89]Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 73.

[90]Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 445.

[91]Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 74.

Christian, it must be carried on in harmony with the regenerating and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. One of the means the Spirit uses to accomplish his work is the ministry of the Word (2 Tim 3:16-17). Since the Holy Spirit employs his Word as the principal means by which Christians may grow in sanctification, counseling cannot be effective apart from the use of the Scriptures. Ministering the Word is more than merely prescribing or doling out verses like a doctor handing out prescriptions. The Word commands those who use the Bible to "exhort, urge, persuade, teach, apply, rebuke, and convict" and to apply the Word accurately to different situations (cf. 2 Tim 4:2; 2:15).

Numerous admonitions in Scripture underscore the importance of sanctification. One such warning is against bad associations [people and actions] (Prov 13-20; 20:19; 22:24-25). When counselees pray in faith for change, their faith should extend to works that are consistent with that prayer.[92] If people desire to quit smoking, they should stop buying cigarettes. If people want to overcome impure thoughts, they should abandon all sources that might promote impurity (magazines, computer, and television). Likewise, if people want to be rid of a bad temper, they should abandon the company of others with similar problems. Of equal importance is putting into place a structure that will enhance and nurture the new practice they wish to develop. If one wants to keep family problems current rather than allow resentments to build up, they should wisely set aside daily time with the family for settling matters. If people are seeking to develop regular habits of Bible study and prayer, they should schedule time for them. Finally, if they desire to make new Christian friends who may act as positive models for behavior, they must regularly gather where such people can be found.

Another warning commands believers to put off sinful habits and replace them with righteous deeds (Eph 4:17-32). Paul calls for genuine change in the person, not

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[92]Jay E. Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973), 195.

merely in actions. He exhorts believers to put aside their old way of life and "put-on" a

new life that is pleasing to God (Col 3:8-12).[93] God expects this change and has made it

possible by the Holy Spirit and the Word. God is eager to help believers grow and change

(Phil 1:6; 2:13; Rom 8:28-29; 1 Cor 6:9-11; 2 Pet 1:4). There is no sin or habit that cannot

be overcome by his grace.

People should be able to see a difference between Christians and non-Christians

because of the way Christians live. Paul told the Ephesians to leave behind the old life of

sin, since they were followers of Christ. Although believers, once saved, do have a new

nature, they do not automatically think only good thoughts and express only right

attitudes when saved. Belonging to Christ involves repudiating an old life and embracing

a new one. The image is that of taking off frayed clothes and putting on new ones.

As believers become more and more sanctified, they increasingly demonstrate

the virtues called the "fruit of the Spirit" through the power of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22-

23; cf. Col 3). In addition, sanctified believers are called to unity of mind and mutual

consideration of others (Phil 2:3-4). A counselor knows people are making progress in

sanctification when they strive to have unity with others and consciously attempt to live

in humility, counting others as more significant than themselves. These qualities are not a

new list of laws or moral codes that must be kept; they are the result of living and being

led by the Spirit.[94]

It is clear that Scripture emphasizes the importance of sanctification. To

further the sanctification of a counselee, what should be the focus of biblical counseling?

First, instruction within counseling must be biblically-based. God's Word is a

positive source for teaching (*didaskalia*) Christian doctrine and instructing people what to

believe about God and humanity. Biblical counseling strongly embraces the tenet that

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[93]Ibid., 162.

[94]Ibid.

counseling must be biblically-based just as preaching must be biblically-based. Both

activities involve helping others to love God and their neighbor. The Bible is the basis for

Christian counseling because counseling should be about changing lives to glorify God by

changing one's values, beliefs, relationships, attitudes, and behavior. No other source

exists that instructs on how to make life changes that please God. Adams rightly says,

> The Christian's basis for counseling and the basis for a Christian's counseling is
> nothing other than the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. It is essential for
> counseling to habitually teach from Scripture whether the audience comprises
> members of the local church or the community at large. The Bible is a counseling
> textbook. [95]

Biblically-based counseling affords unbelievers the opportunity to come to a

saving faith in Jesus Christ (Rom 3:23-24; 10:9-13; Eph 2:8-10; 1 Tim 2:1-6; Titus 3:3-5;

1 John 1:5-10; 3:7-10) and be transformed into his image (Rom 6, Eph 4, Col 3).[96] God's

Word "grants to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of

Him who called us to His own glory and excellence" (2 Pet 1:3).

There are two extremes to avoid within counseling. The first is the idea that

counseling only involves instruction, that is, if someone has a particular problem, all one

needs to do is find the Bible verses that apply to it and give the person a sermon on the

subject.[97] This is a myopic approach to counseling and ignores essentials such as

developing a helping relationship with the counselees, instilling hope in their lives, and

walking with them in deep and meaningful relationship.

The other extreme is the idea that counseling involves little or no instruction.

This approach assumes that people know the answers to their problems and the role of the

counselor is to merely ask questions, listen, and provide support. Through this method the

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[95]MacArthur and Mack, *Counseling*, 91. See also Rom 15:4; 1 Cor 9:10; 10:11.

[96]Jay E. Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), xiii.

[97]MacArthur and Mack, *Counseling*, 162.

counselees will eventually find their own solutions and work out their own problems. This approach sharply contrasts with Scripture, which states that instruction plays a necessary and important role in every person's spiritual growth and is indispensable in the process of solving problems (Gal 5:22-23; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 4:1-2; Heb 3:12-13; 4:12-13).

Conclusion

Instruction from the Bible must be Bible-based and practical. Scripture is a thoroughly sufficient source of Truth whereas human knowledge is unable to address the problems faced in life effectively.[98] There exists no other source that can inspire that kind of confidence.[99]

Since Christian holiness is the restoration of the "image and likeness of God" (cf. Eph 4:23-24), all holiness comes from God and reflects his holiness. It must be an important goal for Christians to share, in part, the holiness of God in their daily living. The

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[98]Ibid., 163. MacArthur and Mack state, "As humans we cannot discover absolute truth apart from the special revelation of God. An observation made or opinion developed without referencing God's Word may be true, but we cannot be certain that it is true because we are finite and fallen creatures" (164). They also state, "The chief contribution of Sigmund Freud, the father of modern psychology, was to devise a psychology as a substitute for religion. He utterly divorced the study of man from the spiritual realm and thus made way for atheistic, humanistic, and rationalistic theories about human behavior" (7). Also in MacArthur and Mack, "The basis of modern psychology can be summarized in several commonly held ideas that have their roots in early Freudian humanism. 1. Human nature is basically good. 2. People have the answers to their problems inside them. 3. The key to understanding and correcting a person's attitudes and actions lies somewhere in that person's past. 4. Individuals' problems are the result of what someone else has done to them. 5. Human problems can be purely psychological in nature, unrelated to any spiritual or physical condition. 6. Deep-seated problems can be solved only by professional counselors using therapy. 7. Scripture, prayer, and the Holy Spirit are inadequate and simplistic resources for solving certain types of problems" (Ibid). See *Our Sufficiency in Christ* where MacArthur states, "The word 'psychology' literally means 'the study of the soul' which originally carried a connotation that has distinctly Christian implications. But psychology cannot really study the soul; it is limited to studying human behavior. Outside the Word and the Spirit there are no solutions to any of the problems of the human soul. Only God knows the soul and only God can change it." MacArthur, *Our Sufficiency in Christ*, 30.

[99]MacArthur states, "The view that man is capable of solving his own problems, or that people can help one another by 'therapy' or other human means, denies the doctrine of human depravity and man's need for God." MacArthur, *Our Sufficiency in Christ*, 72.

goal of sanctification is love, i.e., love toward God and other people through conformity to the commandments of God. Habitual holy living is God's purpose for his children; therefore, as His children, it should be our purpose as well.[100]

God has inspired Scripture and has stated that his Word is sufficient for the problems in life. Therefore, it is critical that biblical counselors know how to use Scripture in counseling effectively so that counselees can become sanctified by the Word and become more like Jesus.

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[100]Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 164.

CHAPTER 3

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING

For forty-eight years I was content to sit in the pew, worship, listen to sermons, teach adult classes, and thoroughly enjoy being part of the fabric of the Christian community. What happened next transpired in a relatively short amount of time. I graduated from seminary, became ordained as a Baptist pastor, and was subsequently offered a full-time pastoral position. Life was good! The dust had barely settled in my new office before people began to come in and ask if they could speak to me about "an issue."

Within a week it became abundantly clear that others viewed me as competent to counsel simply because I was a pastor. I had no idea what to do. What made my predicament more acute was the knowledge that even though I possessed twelve years of Christian education and decades of teaching and sitting under excellent preaching, I felt helpless. Something is dreadfully wrong when someone has extensive background and experience yet is unable to minister the Word to those in need.

In response I began a serious study of biblical counseling. Early on in my studies I read the words of Jay E. Adams who said, "Like many other pastors, I learned little about counseling in seminary, so I began with virtually no knowledge of what to do."[1] I quickly realized that being a faithful pastor also meant being a competent counselor (1 Pet 3:15). Heath Lambert notes, "I realized that there was no arbitrary distinction between the public ministry of the Word in preaching and the personal ministry of the Word in counseling."[2] It was these initial lessons that spurred me on to eventually pursue

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[1]Jay E. Adams, *Competent to Counsel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), xi.

[2]Heath B. Lambert, "The Theological Development of the Biblical Counseling Movement from 1988" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009), 7.

a Doctor of Ministry in Biblical Counseling. Just as there is a history to my personal experiences with biblical counseling, so the biblical counseling movement has a history.

This chapter chronicles the history of counseling that eventually led to the biblical counseling movement. This analysis is not meant to be a detailed discussion of the ebb and flow of theological reflection over the centuries; rather, this investigation will chronicle the major events that caused counseling to emerge in its present form.[3] This chapter will examine four critical elements in the development of biblical counseling including the Puritan approach to counseling (1600's), the decline in the theological community's ability to counsel, the formation of the mental health establishment, and the emergence of the biblical counseling movement.

The Puritans

The name "Puritan" came to be used to describe members of the Church of England who wished to purify it of all resemblance to the Roman Catholic Church, especially regarding the liturgy, vestments, and episcopal hierarchy. The Puritans emphasized that they did not wish to destroy the Church of England, nor did they want to separate from it. Their sole aim was to restore the church to its original purity. In pursuing this goal the Puritans, who sailed to Massachusetts Bay in 1630, established "a

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[3]For a detailed analysis of how "soul care" evolved into secular counseling, integrative (Christian) counseling, and biblical counseling, see three works. E. Brooks Holifield, *A History of Pastoral Care in America* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1983) traces the history of pastoral care from the seventeenth century to the middle of the twentieth century. Holifield's work chronicles the historical shift in pastoral care from primarily a biblical approach to an integrationist approach. The work of Holifield led to the next important project: David Powlison, "Competent to Counsel? The History of the Conservative Protestant Biblical Counseling Movement" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1996). Powlison chronicles the historical development of the nouthetic counseling movement that began in the 1960s. His analysis of the movement extends through the 1980s. The third work is by Heath B. Lambert, "The Theological Development of the Biblical Counseling Movement from 1988" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009), which begins where Powlison left off but is different in that it does not chronicle history, but evaluates the thinking behind the movement. By comparison, the work of Powlison is topographical and the work of Lambert is developmental.

city upon a hill" as an example of how godly people should live.

The Puritans were heirs to the Calvinist tradition and emphasized that suffering was necessary for redemption from original sin and that hard work not only produced wealth but strong moral character as well (the "Puritan Ethic"). Those who did not devote themselves to hard work were in mortal danger of falling into evil ways.

The Puritans initiated a particularly rich period in personal ministry or counseling.[4] It is impractical to survey all the applicable Puritan sources but a few examples are appropriate. An excellent introduction to the works of the Puritans would be the writings of Richard Sibbes (1630)[5] who says that God's children are bruised reeds (a reference to Isa 42:1-3) before their conversion and oftentimes after:

> The bruised reed is a man that for the most part is in some misery, as those were that came to Christ for help, and by misery he is brought to see sin as the cause of it, for, whatever pretenses sin makes, they come to an end when we are bruised and broken.[6]

Richard Baxter was a pastor who helped people deal with their problems in life:

> . . . but with most [people] it will be necessary to speak with the greatest plainness and power, to shake their careless hearts, and make them see what it is to dally with sin; to let them know the evil of it, and its sad effects as regards both God and themselves.[7]

Baxter placed a high premium on family and individual visitation for conversion of the soul and teaching in the principles or essentials of the Christian faith.[8]

William Bridge (1648) wrote about the work of a true physician of souls.

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[4]Lambert, "The Theological Development of the Biblical Counseling Movement," 7.

[5]The complete works of Richard Sibbes were published in seven volumes in the Nichol Series between 1862 and 1864, and again by the Banner of Truth Trust between 1973 and 1982.

[6]Richard Sibbs, *The Bruised Reed* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1998), 3-4.

[7]Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1989), 104.

[8]Ibid., 172ff.

Bridge dealt with believers suffering from spiritual depression. Through his pastoral work, he gained great insight into the causes of the saints' discouragements such as great sins, weak grace, failure in duties, temptation, desertion, affliction, and a need for assurance. Not only did Bridge make a correct diagnosis regarding the causes of the saints' discouragement, but he also gave directions for applying the remedy. A couple of comments by Bridge are worthy of mention:

> Every condition is too narrow a vessel to hold the love of God in. Therefore God leads His people into several conditions, that so He may have the fuller vent for His love. So long as you are in one condition, you do not see or observe your own self and behaviour therein, and therefore God leads you into a new condition, that you may see what you were like in your former condition.[9]

Bridge also asserted that the general causes of spiritual depression are the same in every age:

> To hope in God is to expect help from God; to trust in God is to rely or rest upon God for help; and to wait on Him is to continue and abide in this expectation or reliance. . . . Trusting in God is the recumbency or the reliance of the soul upon God in Christ, for some good thing that lies out of sight.[10]

Writing in the Puritan tradition in America, Jonathan Edwards wrote *Religious Affections* to deal with the pastoral issue of discerning true works of the Spirit and false ones.[11] Other notable Puritan ministers and writers include Samuel Ward, Thomas Goodwin, John Cotton, Thomas Hooker, John Owen,[12] and Ichabod Spencer.[13] This represents a small sampling of the available writings by Puritan authors that apply scriptural truths to the sins and suffering of God's people.

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[9]William Bridge, *A Lifting Up for the Downcast* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1995), 242.

[10]Ibid., 262-63.

[11]Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards: Religious Affections*, vol. 2, ed. John E. Smith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959).

[12]John Owen, *The Mortification of Sin* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2004).

[13]Ichabod Spencer, *A Pastor's Sketches* (Vestavia Hills, AL: Solid Ground, 2001).

The Puritans are a rich resource for counselors for a number of reasons. [14] First, the Puritans were committed to the functional authority of the Scripture. For them it was the comprehensive manual for dealing with all the problems of the heart. Second, they developed a sophisticated and sensitive system of diagnosis for personal problems, distinguishing a variety of physical, spiritual, temperamental, and demonic causes. Third, the Puritans developed a remarkable balance in their treatment of people because they were not invested in any one "personality theory" other than biblical teaching about the heart. Fourth, they were realistic about difficulties of the Christian life, especially conflicts with remaining, indwelling sin. Fifth, they looked not just at behavior but also at underlying root motives and desires. [15] Finally, the Puritans considered the essential spiritual remedy to be belief in the gospel, used in both repentance and the development of proper self-understanding.

In many respects, careful and uniquely Christian reflection about the task of interpersonal ministry came to an end when the Puritan writers passed from the scene. [16] It would be a century before writings like this would again appear.

The Decline of Counseling in America

There are undoubtedly many explanations for the absence of Christian thought in offering guidance on helping people with problems of life. This discussion will detail

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[14] Adapted from Tim Keller, "Puritan Resources for Biblical Counseling," *The Journal of Pastoral Practice* 9 (1988), http://www.ccef.org/ puritan-resources-biblical-counseling (accessed January 24, 2011).

[15] Ibid., 11-41. Keller displays an excellent treatment of idolatrous desires.

[16] Lambert, "The Theological Development of the Biblical Counseling Movement," 9. Lambert makes a clarifying point when he states, "The point advanced here is not that Christians were not involved at all in the task of thinking about interpersonal ministry. The point is rather that this involvement was not as careful and uniquely Christian as it had been. Before this, Christians were thinking inside their community and using their resources to think through counseling issues (though they would not have called it counseling). After this, Christians were taking their lead from secular thinkers and bringing in biblical principles almost as an afterthought." Ibid.

six specific historical forces from within the church and the environing culture for the decline of theological reflection from the nineteenth to the twentieth century.[17]

The first historical force involves the religious revivals that swept across America during the 1700s. The goal of revivals was twofold: first draw a crowd and then preach the gospel so that sinners would be saved out of hell and into heaven. Over time, this emphasis delivered a devastating blow to the interpersonal ministry of counseling because revivals and counseling emphasized opposing elements. Revivals emphasized crowds whereas counseling focused on individualized ministry and conversation. Revivals had the goal of conversion while counselors often focused on discipleship. Revivalists concentrated on immediate change measured by conversions while counselors tended to work through change (progressive sanctification) over time. When the emphases of revivalism are understood, it is not difficult to see how a Christian culture that was consumed with revivalism would have difficulty reflecting upon and embracing the need for interpersonal ministry.

Modernism was the second force that confronted the church during the nineteenth century. Modernism raised questions regarding the absolute integrity of the Bible. This controversy served to undercut the confidence ministers and lay people had in the authority of the biblical text.[18] In response, the leadership of the church

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[17]Stuart Scott and Heath Lambert, "Introduction to Biblical Counseling" (classroom lecture notes, 80551-*Introduction to Biblical Counseling*, July 2009). A more complete discussion of these historical factors can be found in Lambert, "The Theological Development of the Biblical Counseling Movement," 24-35.

[18]In addition to the historical factors discussed in this paper, three philosophical influences that affected Europe as well as America are worth noting: the Enlightenment, Higher Criticism, and Liberal Theology. The grand dream or assumption of the Enlightenment was that by using reason people could figure out anything and no longer needed revelation. They could obtain all their answers by reason and logic. Faith and revelation, previously received through the church (and Scripture), were now suspect and not to be totally trusted. "Higher Criticism" (Hcm) is the perspective that does not assume the Bible is true, assumes the Bible has contradictions, and does not assume it is from God. Higher Criticism took hold and began to flourish in the western world during and after the Enlightenment. This was a time when people moved away from revelation and faith to having science and reason tell them what they know. The "critical approach" to the study

immediately began to defend the faith;[19] however, while this was happening, modernists incrementally took over the counseling of the church using secular approaches.

Third, two important leaders propelled the growth of the psychological movement. The first was Wilhelm Wundt, who contended that everything begins in the body whereas the Bible states everything begins in the heart. The second person was Sigmund Freud who initiated the "talking cure." Historically, pastors had provided the biblical guidance, wisdom, and help to those who were suffering. Freud contended that the church had failed in this area. Wundt and Freud formed the foundation for the decline of counseling that used theological reflection. Eventually, their work caused a massive number of pastors to shift away from counseling biblically.

The fourth transformation occurred from the 1800s to the 1900s as the American economy experienced two important changes: Americans began to move from rural into urban areas, and Americans began to move from agrarian to more white-collar work.[20] Over time this shift contributed to the Industrial Revolution where large companies were formed which needed huge amounts of labor. The more employees a company hired, the larger was the need to keep those employees happy, cooperative, and productive.[21] Holifield states,

> [The new American] working as members of staffs, faculties, committees, and management teams . . . needed to be adept at handling people and manipulating

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of the Bible became common in scholarly circles. Liberal theology is an effort to defend the Christian faith as basically true even if the Bible is not true in detail. Liberal theology came about because of the questions asked by Hcm. Liberal theology and Hcm both believe the Bible is not from God, it is not authoritative, and it is not revelation.

[19]Works that were produced to defend the fundamentals of the faith against liberal attacks included Benjamin Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1948) and R. A. Torrey and A. C. Dixon, eds., *The Fundamentals* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993)

[20]Lambert, "The Theological Development of the Biblical Counseling Movement," 31.

[21]Ibid., 18

abstract symbols. Their task was to maintain the morale and high motivation of the people who worked under them, adapting themselves to the expectations of superiors who valued "well-rounded personality." . . . [This kind of economy] could not have been better designed to stimulate interest in the nuances of "personal relations." . . . Large corporations began to value good scores on "personality tests" as much as experience or intellectual ability. . . . [On the other hand], churches presented themselves as preservers of the family or as havens of friendliness.[22]

In short, psychology was viewed as cutting edge work while the church remained distracted with winning souls and defending the faith.

The American Civil War (1861-1865) brought about a fifth change in the church and culture. This war called for one American to fight another American leaving no segment of the population untouched. The Civil War toughened the country and served to emphasize certain masculine virtues like strength and bravery above activities like conversation and discussion, which came to be viewed as effeminate. Holifield refers to this phenomenon:

By promoting a cult of masculinity in intellectual circles, the war raised a question about the cure of souls: Was the whole enterprise perhaps unmanly? The question implicitly equated pastoral care with genteel and refined conversations that proceeded delicately in parlors and sitting rooms. Such an image of pastoral labor embarrassed ministers who had come to admire the "bold virtues."[23]

The final historical force that contributed to the decline of theological reflection was the two World Wars. By the end of World War I the United States government realized that military psychologists were effectively overwhelmed with the workload of counseling soldiers with problems stemming from violence on the battlefield.[24] Thousands of chaplains were enlisted as counselors, which helped curb the problem of effeminacy, but oddly, chaplaincy involvement created another problem: lack of competency.

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[22]Holifield, *A History of Pastoral Care*, 167-68.

[23]Ibid., 167.

[24]Lambert also states, "What was called shell shock in World War I came to be called combat fatigue in World War II. Presently this identical problem is known as post-traumatic stress disorder." Lambert, "The Theological Development of the Biblical Counseling Movement," 20.

For well over 100 years secular psychology had been gaining prominence and acceptance with intellectuals and businessmen, while biblical counseling had consistently been in decline. When America called upon the theological community to aid in the war effort, their failure to adequately counsel resulted in more lost ground for those who were committed to a biblical philosophy of helping people.[25]

By the middle of the twentieth century the combined effect of these historic forces caused most Christians to align methodologically with secular counselors. The church experienced an overwhelming loss in the area of counseling that would take decades to address effectively.

The Formation of the Mental Health Establishment

After the Civil War and into the twentieth century, secular psychologies and liberal Protestant theologies were ascendant.[26] Conservative Protestants rejected and criticized the deficiencies in the prevailing doctrine and presuppositions of modern psychologies; however, their options were to either accept this new methodology or revert to the primitive means that characterized their own versions of pastoral care: "prayer-and-Bible-verse prescriptions," rationalistic persuasion, moral condemnation, or casting out demons.[27] Fundamentalist-revivalist pastoral care regressed into what might be termed an anti-counseling mode. Problems in people's lives were addressed by a hybrid of highly rationalistic,[28] moralistic, mystical, and emotional kinds of persuasion that aimed to accomplish a miraculous, instantaneous, and absolute change. The dropouts, failures, or burnouts either suffered in silence or covertly found their way into the secular mental

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[25]Ibid., 21.

[26]Powlison, "Competent to Counsel?" 64.

[27]Ibid., 61.

[28]Holifield, *A History of Pastoral Care*, 161-64. He briefly discusses the rationalistic tendencies of modern fundamentalism.

health system.[29] In short, the theological community was nearly bankrupt intellectually, methodologically, and institutionally in its ability to provide organized resources for the counseling task. Although the mainstream of American conservative Protestants traced their roots back to the Puritans and Jonathan Edwards, no conservative Protestant had set forth a systematic counseling model since Ichabod Spencer in 1859.

The first conservative Protestant institutions to take on the care of troubled people did not arise out of the mainstream of indigenous, American conservative Protestantism. The (Dutch) Christian Reformed Church founded Pine Rest Sanitarium in Grand Rapids in 1910 and began the first psychiatric services, largely for their own constituents. Around mid-century, Mennonites also began to institutionalize psychiatric services utilizing some 1500 Mennonite conscientious objectors to work in state mental hospitals. During this same time the long-ignored cultural and social task of helping the hurting was gradually emerging into the evangelical purview. Though conservative Protestant seminaries and pastors continued to neglect counseling, some conservative Protestants began to acquire graduate education and became licensed mental health professionals.

In an effort to publicize the needs of the mental health movement, there arose Christian foundations, seminaries, speakers, and writers.[30] The 1970s proved to be a

[29]Powlison, "Competent to Counsel?" 62.

[30]In the 1950s Clyde Narramore founded one of the first psychological foundations, The Narramore Christian Foundation, provided a vehicle for publicizing mental health and distributing self-help literature, training pastors and other Christian workers, and offering counseling services. What the Narramore Christian Foundation was in the 1950s and 1960s, Focus on the Family became in the 1970s and 1980s: a clearinghouse for mental health information, advice on childrearing or school difficulties, self-help for common life problems such as low self-esteem and marital unhappiness, counselor referrals, evaluations of television and movies, and information on drug abuse. In 1965, Fuller Theological Seminary started its Graduate School of Psychology. In 1969, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, IL, hired Gary Collins as its first psychologist as a professor of pastoral psychology. In 1970, with the help of the Narramore Christian Foundation, the Rosemead Graduate School of Professional Psychology was opened. This graduate school was one of the first freestanding schools of psychology in the United States offering both Psy.D. (Doctor of Psychology) and Ph.D. (Doctor of

decade of significant professional advance for psychologists, seen in their growing

popular influence, increasing presence in seminaries and other higher education

institutions, an expanding professional association, and new journals.[31] The principal

task of the educational movement was to integrate modern psychology and evangelical

theology whose core assumptions were largely opposed to one another. (The core

assumptions of modern psychology and biblical counselors are discussed later). The

amalgamation of psychology and biblical counseling was intended to produce methods

that psychotherapeutic professionals might bring to an evangelical public struggling with

life's problems.

The Emergence of the Biblical Counseling Movement

Jay E. Adams was a 41-year-old Presbyterian pastor and Westminster

Theological Seminary professor when, in 1970, he published a controversial book about

counseling called *Competent to Counsel.* This book was primarily written for theologically

conservative Protestants such as seminary students and pastors. Adams' dispute with the

mainstream psychiatric establishment was centered on their dominance over the church's

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Philosophy) programs that had gained accreditation both regionally and with the American Psychological Association. Clinical psychologist Bruce Narramore, Clyde Narramore's nephew, became the founding dean. Less than ten years later Narramore was joined by John Carter, who gained a reputation as a theoretician of integration and as one of the most systematic critics of Jay E. Adams. In 1975 Dallas Theological Seminary hired two psychiatrists, Frank Minirth and Paul Meier, to teach counseling in the practical theology department. The most significant impact made by Minirth and Meier would not occur in the seminary classroom. In 1976 they founded the first Minirth-Meier Clinic, an outpatient psychiatric clinic. In the 1980s Minirth-Meier pioneered proprietary in-patient psychiatric services by and for evangelicals. Clyde Narramore was an educational psychologist (Ed.D., Doctor of Education) from Columbia University who published numerous books on marriage, child-rearing, teenagers, and mental health in the late 1950s. In 1970 evangelical child psychologist James Dobson wrote a hugely successful book on parenting called *Dare to Discipline*. Other authors, writers, or speakers include William Backus, Gary Collins, and Larry Crabb to name a few. In 1973 the integration movement published its first journal called the *Journal of Psychology and Theology*. This was later followed by a second integrationist journal called *The Journal of Psychology and Christianity.*

[31]Powlison, "Competent to Counsel?" 117.

thinking and practice in the area of counseling which Adams viewed as an inappropriate invasion into pastoral ministry. He objected to the prevailing notions of mental illness and mental health that essentially defined men and women as basically not responsible for themselves or unaccountable to God. Adams claimed the goal of the psychiatric community was to produce patients with un-troubling emotions and un-troubling behavior. Adams did not think that either peace of mind or socially acceptable behavior prescribed an adequate goal for the "cure of souls."[32] Rather, he asserted the church should understand the vast majority of life's problems in terms of an explicitly moral model. In Adams' eyes, the systems of education, training, and licensing, as well as the instruments of publication and public relations and the agencies that delivered services, were all enemies of the beliefs and purposes of conservative Protestant churches.[33]

Adams's redefinition of the counseling task as explicitly "pastoral" sought to relocate people's problems to pastors and pastoral theologians and away from mental health professionals. In his view, the church was the primary institution and pastors were the primary practitioners in the reconstruction of the counseling ministry.

Adams believed that counseling was intrinsically theological:

All counseling, by its very nature (as it tries to explain and direct human beings in their living before God and in a fallen world) implies theological commitments by the counselor. He simply cannot become involved in the attempt to change beliefs, values, attitudes, relationships, and behavior without wading neck deep in theological waters. . . . These theological commitments may be conscious or unconscious, biblical or heretical, good theology or bad, but—either way—they surely are theological. . . . The relationship between counseling and theology is organic; counseling cannot be done apart from theological commitments. Every act, word (or lack of these) implies theological commitments.[34]

Adams firmly believed that the counseling task was intensely theological, deeply rooted

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[32]Ibid.

[33]Ibid., 4.

[34]Jay E. Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 14-15.

in Scripture, and rightly resided under the umbrella of the church.

This approach to counseling brought a problem into focus for Adams. As he looked over the counseling landscape, he saw a field full of compromise in the counseling arena.[35] For more than 100 years there existed a barrenness of theological reflection on counseling. This infiltration of thoroughly secular thinking upon counseling had created a bulwark of educational enterprises advanced by foundations, seminaries, speakers, and writers. As a result this way of thinking had also permeated the church. To combat this reality, Adams needed to supply information in two areas: an intelligible critique of the secular approaches to counseling and a constructive and practical approach to biblical counseling.

The following discussion examines three separate topics: integration counseling, biblical counseling, and the primary differences between them.

Integration Counseling

Counseling which seeks to reference the Scriptures while including the thoughts of secular psychology have been variously referred to as "Christian" or "integrationist counseling."[36] The catchword "integration" resists being precisely defined and contains a range of views and opinions, but its common denominator could be found in the emergence of a new kind of professional, new both in ecclesiastical and mental health circles: a conservative Protestant psychotherapist who intends to take both halves of that designation with equal seriousness.[37] According to John Carter and Bruce Narramore most of the

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[35]Lambert, "The Theological Development of the Biblical Counseling Movement," 23.

[36]Many Christian schools are convinced that psychology and the Bible must be integrated in counseling if the church is to remain relevant to contemporary culture. Among them are Denver Seminary, Talbot Seminary, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Liberty University, Moody Bible Institute, Fuller Theological Seminary, Dallas Seminary, and Colorado Christian University, to name a few.

[37]Powlison, *Competent to Counsel?* 68.

efforts towards integration are based on one essential philosophical underpinning: the

belief that all truth is God's truth, wherever it is found. This proposition is frequently

referred to as "the unity of truth."[38]

Both Christian and non-Christian authors have attempted to define "integration"

or "integrationist" with varying success. During the last two decades the word

"integration" has come to refer to the interaction between, or "interface" of, psychology

and theology.

Mark R. McMinn and Clark D. Campbell have written a book on integrative

psychotherapy because they believe it is possible to provide therapy that is informed by

both Christian theology and psychological science:[39]

> To what extent should counseling and our view of persons be influenced by both the
> Christian faith and contemporary psychology? Some believe that faith is enough, that
> psychology is irrelevant and perhaps dangerous. Others believe that psychology is
> enough, that faith ought to be left outside the counseling office. Integrationists
> believe that some sort of reciprocal interaction between faith and psychology is the
> best way to gain a comprehensive understanding of personality and counseling. This
> is not to say that psychology carries the same authority as the Christian faith, but
> that understanding and wisdom can be discovered in both.[40]

McMinn and Campbell are proposing a mixture of counseling that includes

both psychology and aspects of the Christian faith. This reciprocal interaction involves

the assumption that caring for people's souls is best done by bringing together truth from

both sources.[41]

Stanton L. Jones and Richard E. Butman contend that there are a number of

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[38]John D. Carter and Bruce Narramore, *The Integration of Psychology and Theology*, Rosemead Psychology Series (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 13. For further discussion of "all truth is God's truth," see Jones and Butman, *Modern Psychotherapies*, 27-28.

[39]Mark R. McMinn and Clark D. Campbell, *Integrative Psychotherapy: Toward a Comprehensive Christian Approach* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), 22. Emphasis in original.

[40]Ibid., 22-23.

[41]Ibid., 23.

different approaches to understanding the integration of Christian faith with the discipline of psychology. In their book *The Integration of Christianity and Psychology,* they utilize the term "humanizer or Christianizer of science integration" as their framework for examining psychotherapy theories. This approach involves the explicit incorporation of religiously based beliefs as the control beliefs that shape the perceptions of facts, theories, and methods in social science.[42]

For some secular practitioners the term "integration" remains confusing. Robert C. Roberts writes,

> Integration is a process by which elements of psychologies and a Christian system of thought and practice are adapted to one another to form a somewhat new system of Christian thought and practice; the resulting system can also be called an integration.[43]

The authors espousing an integrationist approach to counseling believe that all truth is God's truth wherever it is found. One of Satan's ruses is to convince those who claim theological sophistication to accept error under the slogan, "All truth is God's truth."[44] Of course all truth is God's truth; however, there is only one touchstone for determining whether a given statement claiming to be true is, indeed true: Does it square with God's standard for truth contained in the Bible?[45]

Mark R. McMinn reflects on the meaning of integration by stating simply, "Integration is bringing spirituality, as well as psychology and theology, into the Christian counseling office."[46]

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[42]Stanton L. Jones and Richard E. Butman, *Modern Psychotherapies* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1991), 20.

[43]Eric L. Johnson and Stanton L. Jones, eds., *Psychology and Christianity: Four Views* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2000), 138. Contributions were from Gary R. Collins, David G. Myers, David Powlison and Robert D. Roberts.

[44]Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling*, 8.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Mark R. McMinn, *Psychology, Theology, and Spirituality in Christian Counseling* (Downers Grove, IL: Tyndale, 1996), xii.

Biblical Counseling

Attempts have been made to define biblical counseling for many years.[47] To

those not involved directly in counseling as ministry, the terms "biblical" and "Christian"

may seem misleadingly synonymous, but from the perspective of most adherents of

biblical counseling, a world of difference exists between the two groups.[48]

Biblical counseling is often called "nouthetic" counseling, meaning

"admonishing" counseling. The words *nouthesis* (admonishment) and *noutheteo*

(admonish) are the noun and verb forms in the New Testament[49] from which the term

"nouthetic" comes. In his book *Competent to Counsel*, Adams defines biblical counseling:

> The three ideas found in the word nouthesia are confrontation, concern, and change.
> To put it simply, nouthetic [biblical] counseling consists of lovingly confronting

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[47]Powlison, Ed Welch, and the *Journal of Biblical Counseling* have numerous articles dedicated to defining biblical counseling. Examples are John Piper, "God's Glory Is the Goal of Biblical Counseling," *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 20 (2002): 8-21; David Powlison, "Affirmations & Denials: A Proposed Definition of Biblical Counseling," *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 19 (2000): 18-25; idem, "Answers for the Human Condition: Why I Chose Seminary for Training in Counseling," *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 20 (2001): 46-54; idem, "Counseling Is the Church," *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 20 (2002): 2-7; idem, "Critiquing Modern Integrationists," *The Journal of Biblical Counseling* 6 (1993): 24-34; idem, "Queries & Controversies: What Is the Place of the Gospel and God's Grace in Biblical Counseling?" *The Journal of Biblical Counseling* 14 (1994): 53-54; David Powlison and Steve Viars, "A Nouthetic Philosophy of Ministry: Interview with Steve Viars," *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 20 (2002): 2-15; and William P. Smith, "Authors and Arguments in Biblical Counseling: A Review and Analysis," *The Journal of Biblical Counseling* 15 (1996): 9-20. Many other articles are available addressing the relevant issues separating integrationists from biblical counselors.

[48]Greg W. Cook, "Introducing Biblical Counseling Distinctives to Those with Limited Time and Relentless Demands" (D.Min. project, Westminster Theological Seminary, 2010), 20.

[49]W. E. Vine, Merrill Unger, and William White, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1985), s.vv. "*nouthesia*" and "*noutheteo*." "[These terms] are used, (a) of instruction, (b) of warning. It is to be distinguished from *paideuo*, 'to correct by discipline, to train by act,' (Heb 12:6; cf. Eph 6:4). The difference between 'admonish' and 'teach' seems to be that, whereas the former has mainly in view the things that are wrong and call for warning, the latter has to do chiefly with the impartation of positive truth (cf. Col 3:16), they were to let the Word of Christ dwell richly in them, so that they might be able (1) to teach and 'admonish' one another, and (2) to abound in the praises of God." See also Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 41.

people out of deep concern in order to help them make those changes that God requires.[50]

The Scriptures are useful for the nouthetic purposes of reproving, teaching, correcting, and training men in righteousness (Col 1:28; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 4:2).[51] The New Testament uses four different words to emphasize how one-on-one counseling can take place within the church in the discipleship-making process: *parakaleo, protrepo, noutheteo,* and *paraineo*. The meanings and uses of these words help us to envision a well-rounded ministry that is geared toward helping people change.[52]

First, *parakaleo* has a range of meanings including "call for, send for, summon, exhort, encourage, comfort, or console." It means calling to one's aid. It is first found in a legal context in the court of justice, meaning legal assistant or advocate.[53] It is used for every kind of calling which is meant to produce a particular effect, hence the various meanings such as "comfort, exhort, desire, call for."[54]

John refers to the Holy Spirit as Paraclete (*parakletos*) or Counselor. The chief function attributed to the Paraclete is that of witness, revealer, or interpreter, which embraces both recalling the teaching originally given (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:14; cf. 1 John 5:6-8) and leading into new truth (John 16:12f.; cf. Isa 42:9; 44:7; 1 John 2:27).[55]

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[50]Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 44-51.

[51]Ibid., 51.

[52]Tautges, *Counsel One Another*, 20.

[53]Colin Brown, *The New International Dictionary of the New Testament,* vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), s.v. "*parakaleo.*"

[54]Vine, Unger, and White, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*, s.v. "*parakaleo.*"

[55]Colin Brown, *The New International Dictionary of the New Testament,* vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), s.v. "*parakletos.*" In 1: 88-89, Brown states, "*parakletos* means helper, intercessor, advocate or paraclete. *Parakletos* has a range of meaning from call in, send for, summon, to exhort, encourage, comfort or console. . . . The *parakletos* is not called in but sent (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7), given and received (John 14:16f). He does not merely put in a good word, but brings active help."

Peter uses this word when he urges Christians to abstain from fleshly lusts (1 Pet 2:11). The author of Hebrews uses this word when believers are urged to not forsake gathering together for mutual encouragement (Heb 10:25).

Second, the Greek word *protrepo* means, "to urge forward, to push on, to encourage."[56] This word implies motivating people to press on in their pursuit of applying biblical truth to life. An example of this occurs when Apollos desires to go to Achaia and the brethren "encourage" others to welcome him with grace (Acts 18:27).

Third, *noutheteo* means "to admonish or warn." It means to put God's word in the forefront of a believer's mind so as to "correct through instruction and warning."[57] This differs slightly from teaching in that it is normally a response to some kind of error, or it is a warning against spiritual danger, present or potential (Acts 20:31; Rom 15:14; Col 1:28; 1 Thess 5:12).[58] God's plan for making disciples requires believers to care and love others enough to confront, warn, or instruct them about biblical error or spiritual danger.

Finally, the Greek word *paraineo* means "to admonish by way of exhorting or advising."[59] Paul is seen doing this when he admonishes his fellow sailors and urges

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[56]Fritz Rienecker and Cleon Roger, *A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), s.v. "*protrepo*."

[57]Ibid.

[58]Tautges, *Counsel One Another*, 21. Brown states, "Teaching has primarily to do with imparting intellectual insight and knowledge, and education is often thought to be limited to a person's formative years. But to exhort means to exert influence upon the will and decisions of another with the object of guiding him into a generally accepted code of behaviour or of encouraging him to observe certain instructions. Exhortation always presupposes some previous knowledge. It consists of reminding a person of this with the intention that he should carry it out. To exhort is to address the whole man. Originally at least knowledge, emotion, and will are all involved. . . . By means of admonition, advice, warning, reminding, teaching, and spurring on, a person can be redirected from wrong ways and have his behaviour corrected. In contrast to *didasko* [teaching], which is concerned with the development and guidance of the intellect, *noutheteo* [to warn, advise] has to do with the will and the feelings of a man. . . . Warning and teaching belong inseparably together, as the constant counterpart of knowledge and action. The aim of this teaching and warning ministry is 'maturity in Christ' (Col 1:28)." Brown, *The New International Dictionary*, 1: 567-68.

[59]Vine, Unger, and White, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*, s.v.

them to keep their courage (Acts 27:9, 22). Spiritual growth requires believers to give

courage to their fellow companions on the journey of discipleship, especially when they

are in the midst of the storms of life.[60]

In each of these examples the believers are speaking words from a commitment

of biblical love. Although they do not necessarily possess a title, they are nevertheless

acting as "counselors." The basic requirement for a biblical counselor is character, not

academic training. A biblical counselor could be any person (pastor, teacher, husband,

wife, friend) who uses the word of God as the foundation for sharing truth with a person

who needs to escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires (2 Pet 1:4).

Biblical counseling is an intensely focused and personal aspect of the

discipleship process, whereby the more mature believer (counselor) comes alongside the

less mature believer (counselee) to help that person consistently apply Scripture to his or

her life, to warn, in love, of the consequences of sin, and to lead that person into ongoing

biblical change so spiritual reproduction can take place.

Nouthetic confrontation is, in short, confrontation with the principles and

practices of the Scriptures.[61]   Among counseling systems, nouthetic counseling uniquely

utilizes the centrality of Scripture, obedience to the Lord, human responsibility, and the

local church ministry.[62]

According to Ed Welch, biblical counseling is

"*paraineo*." Brown writes that *paraineo* means to advise, recommend, urge or exhort. Brown, *The New International Dictionary*, vol. 1, s.v. "*paraineo.*" See also William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), s.v. "*paraineo.*" Arndt and Gingrich define *paraineo* as "encourage, embolden or to be encouraged."

[60]Tautges, *Counsel One Another*, 21.

[61]Ibid..

[62]Powlison, "Competent to Counsel?" 18.

a hybrid of discipleship and biblical friendship. . . . It began with God speaking to His people; it was further established by kings, prophets, priests, and apostles as they applied God's words to particular situations. It has been practiced by wise pastors, friends, brothers, sisters, fathers, and mothers throughout history, and it continues today with men and women who, having studied what God says in His Word, both receive biblical counsel and offer it to others.[63]

David Powlison describes biblical counseling as intentionally helpful conversations where people talk about, and work through, the problems in life from the perspective of seeing God.[64] This is striving to see what God sees, to hear what God says, and to live as God would want us to live. The power of biblical counsel lies in the degree to which *our* words are filled with *the* word.[65]

Integration Counseling Versus Biblical Counseling

For many years the church experienced growing confidence in Christian psychology, or integration counseling, as the answer to its need for the ministry of counseling. Within a few short decades, the psychotherapy industry and evangelicals settled into a more or less guarded coexistence. Christians seemed intimidated by the world's overwhelming acceptance of psychotherapy. The psychotherapists believed they were privy to a higher knowledge and more effective therapies than traditional spiritual counselors could ever offer. They stated in no uncertain terms that spiritual counselors and the clergy should stay off their turf.[66] Consider the following attitude to pastoral counseling offered by a professional therapist in the 1950s:

It is [the pastor's] duty not to try to enact the role of the psychiatrist, but as quickly as possible, he must refer the sick person to the professional man. . . . The clergyman

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[63]Ed Welch, "What Is Biblical Counseling Anyway?" *The Journal of Biblical Counseling* 16 (1997): 2-6.

[64]David Powlison, *Seeing With New Eyes: Counseling and the Human Condition through the Lens of Scripture* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2003), 1.

[65]Paul Tautges, *Counsel One Another: A Theology of Personal Discipleship* (Leominster, UK: Day One, 2009), 21, emphasis original.

[66]John MacArthur, *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), xii.

must place himself under the direction of the psychiatrist. . . . Too often distressed persons come to the clergyman when they have been unsuccessful in their consultations with the psychiatrist, but it is an astute pastor who immediately turns them back to their psychiatrist. . . . In every such instance, the psychiatrist must be the mentor and the director of the treatment.[67]

Adams would rightly contend that a properly trained and qualified biblical counselor is more competent than psychiatrists or anyone else.[68]

Over time pastors largely capitulated to the thinking of the new Christian psychological movement. As a result the church adopted an anemic view of Scripture, prayer, fellowship, and preaching as a means through which the Spirit of God works to change lives. Too many have come to believe that a crucial realm of wisdom exists outside Scripture and one's relationship to Jesus Christ, and that some idea or technique from that extra-biblical realm holds the real key to helping people with their deep problems.[69]

What is wrong with integration counseling? Some contend that it is reasonable to utilize the best offered through secular avenues and unite these principles and techniques with the scriptural instructions of God. The danger is found in the integrationist foundation, which rests upon the psychological concept of man rather than the concept of man given by the Scriptures.[70]

The word "psychology" literally means "the study of the soul." Psychology today no longer speaks of studying the soul; instead it describes a diverse menagerie of therapies and theories that are fundamentally humanistic.[71] Sigmund Freud, the father of

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[67]Vergilius Ferm, *A Dictionary of Pastoral Psychology* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1955), 208.

[68]Referrals are discussed in Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 11-12, 18-19, 21, 62, 253, 268.

[69]John MacArthur, *Our Sufficiency in Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 58.

[70]Ed Bulkey, *Why Christians Can't Trust Psychology* (Eugene, OR: Harvest, 1993), 32.

[71]MacArthur, *Our Sufficiency in Christ*, 59-62.

modern psychology, was a non-Christian humanist who devised psychology in such a way that it is a substitute for religion.[72] Psychology is fundamentally anti-God even though psychologists have become more explicitly biblically-oriented in the 1990s than they were in the 1970s and 1980s.[73]

A true Christianity does not mix well with secular psychology. When people try to mix them, they often end up with a watered-down Christianity instead of a Christianized psychology. The infusion of psychology into the teaching of the church has blurred the line between behavior modification and sanctification.[74] A true study of the soul can only be done by Christians because they alone have the resources to understand the nature of human beings and how they can be transformed (2 Tim 3:16-17; Pss 19:7-14).

A core difference between integration counseling and biblical counseling resides in the definition of truth. Biblical counselors strongly contend that the Bible alone is sufficient to define and establish what needs to be known about the human condition. This group firmly believes that the only real help for hurting people is through the riches provided in Christ, including Scripture, prayer, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. MacArthur contends that every need of the human soul is ultimately spiritual and there is no such thing as a "psychological problem" unrelated to spiritual or physical causes.[75]

Conversely, integrationists often rally around a battle cry of "all truth is God's truth," thus opening the door for general revelation (specifically as discovered by social scientists) to be a guide in understanding anthropology and the human condition.[76] Adams writes in response, "Of course all truth is God's truth. But there is only one

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[72]MacArthur, *Counseling*, 7.

[73]Powlison, "Competent to Counsel?" 10.

[74]MacArthur, *Our Sufficiency in Christ*, 59.

[75]Ibid., 77.

[76]Cook, "Introducing Biblical Counseling Distinctives," 25.

touchstone for determining whether a given statement claiming to be true is, indeed true: Does it square with God's standard for truth—the Bible?"[77] God never sets up rival systems to the Bible, and God does not duplicate in general revelation (creation) what He gives us by special revelation (the Bible).[78]

Integrationists frequently refer to "psychological truths" which have been given to us by God through general revelation. What they fail to explain is *how* one determines what is "true" in the vacillating world of psychotherapy. Ultimately, each therapist becomes the final judge of truth and incorporates into his counseling system that which appeals to him personally.[79]

Bulkley is insightful when he states,

Psychologists promise that integration does not "infiltrate the church and weaken the gospel message," but when psychology has redefined salvation in terms of psychic feelings of well-being and being born again in terms of self-esteem, the gospel message is not only weakened, it is terminally stricken.[80]

This ominous prediction is echoed by Paul Tautges:

It is to be expected that, when a church or seminary departs from the doctrine of inerrancy, a rejection of the Bible's authority and sufficiency will follow not long afterward. And once the authority and sufficiency of the Bible are undermined, it soon follows that belief in the total depravity of man and his desperate need of redemption through Jesus Christ is replaced by the psychological gospel of self-improvement.[81]

Most Christian psychologists attempt to keep their faith separate from their discipline. This approach literally eviscerates the message and purpose of the cross of Christ. A man-centered philosophy of life is not the way to obtain God's blessings (Jer 17:5). The solution to man's problems is the same today as it was during the days of the

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[77]Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling*, 8.

[78]Ibid.

[79]Bulkley, *Why Christians Can't Trust Psychology*, 192.

[80]Ibid., 197.

[81]Tautges, *Counsel One Another*, 16.

apostles. Christians must teach a worldview that exalts Jesus Christ as the perfect Son of God, crucified and raised from the dead, who came to save sinners from the penalty and power of indwelling sin. Biblical counseling is a normal part of discipleship in teaching that worldview.

Biblical Counseling and the Church Today

Within the modern day church, some professing believers either do not recognize their need of others or no longer see the importance of faithful attendance to one church. Instead many attendees have an attitude towards church that is "me-centered." This attitude has been likened to a "Cafeteria Christian" describing a Christian who attempts to get the most amenities for the least commitment.[82]

Perhaps one of the more subtle ways Christians forsake the church is by succumbing to, or promoting, the professionalization of counseling.[83] These believers do not necessarily leave the church, but they do possess divided emotional loyalties. They contend that the church is unable or unwilling to understand their deep struggles, and as a result they may keep their distance from the very people who are biblically entrusted with their accountability. Instead, they become transparently honest with the professional counselor outside of the church who has no biblical mandate regarding the care of souls. Powlison states,

> The church is in trouble when its designated experts in the cure of souls are mental health professionals who owe their legitimacy to the state. Cure of souls is a decidedly *pastoral* function, in the broadest and deepest sense of the word. It is deeply problematic to operate as if the Word of God is useful, necessary, and sufficient for public ministry—preaching, teaching, worship, sacraments—but that training and credentialing in secular psychology are necessary for private ministry.[84]

[82]Joshua Harris investigates this subject in, *Stop Dating the Church* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2004).

[83]Tautges, *Counsel One Another*, 155.

[84]Powlison, "Competent to Counsel?" 30

In spite of its innumerable weaknesses, the church is God's ideal environment for intensely focused personal discipleship.[85] In his book *Spiritual Disciplines within the Church*, Donald Whitney concludes,

> Jesus Christ is the glory of the church. He loves the church and died for the church (Acts 20:28; Eph 5:25). With all of its spots and wrinkles, He is at work in and through the church. Regardless of how you view the general condition of the church today or the state of the individual churches in your area, the ultimate future of the church is glorious beyond imagination.[86]

In support of the church Powlison states, "Soul care and soul cure—sustaining sufferers and transforming sinners—is a vital part of the ministry of the church according to the Bible, however poorly we may be doing the job."[87]

Ideally, authentic biblical counseling is not something that is performed in the church; rather, authentic biblical counseling must be an integral part of the church. This means the Church is not merely about leading people to saving faith in Him by means of evangelism. It also requires a more personal ministry of coming alongside those who believe, to help them live out the reality of their new position in Christ by learning to walk in obedient faith.[88] Authentic biblical counseling is a fundamental part of the church when counseling is habitually moved out of the office and into all of life. Counseling covers honest friendships, child-rearing, marriage, discipleship, small groups, and all the "one-anothering" that Christians do with each other.[89] The grass roots always will and always should be the primary constituency for biblical counseling.

For decades the idea of Christians counseling one another has fallen into

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[85]Ibid., 170.

[86]Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines within the Church* (Chicago: Moody, 1996), 13.

[87]David Powlison, *Speaking the Truth in Love*: *Counsel in Community* (Winston-Salem, NC: Punch, 2005), 110.

[88]Tautges, *Counsel One Another*, 172.

[89]Powlison, "Competent to Counsel?" 13.

disfavor in the contemporary church. If one were to encourage the average believer to counsel others, the common excuse would often be, "I'm not a counselor," or "I'm not qualified." For the average person, counseling is not conceived as a significant aspect of personal ministry. Rather, it is an area viewed as complicated, messy, private, and reserved for the expert. As a result, this attitude has greatly diminished the personal ministry of the Word of God and gravely weakened the church.[90]

How has such a narrow and negative view of Christians counseling one another become so entrenched in the church? For many pastors, their seminary experience did much to cement the notion that theological training is insufficient to deal with the refined layers of the unconscious. Only a licensed psychotherapist has the educated insight to decipher the complexities of the psyche. When this occurs, a seminary has tacitly acknowledged that the Bible is at best a primitive psychology textbook, insufficiently sophisticated in matters of the soul.[91]

In addition, many seminaries teach that the primary duty of the pastor is to preach good sermons. Teaching individuals or congregations to counsel is secondary or non-essential. This view of pastoral ministry violates the ministry of discipleship seen in the New Testament church (Acts 20:20; Col 1:28-29) and portrays an inaccurate view of preaching. Modern-day preaching is customarily limited to expositional sermons from a church pulpit. However, the linguistic range of the word "preaching" in the New Testament is much more extensive and includes the meaning of the personal preaching of the word through counseling.[92] The preaching of the word from a pulpit is a common

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[90]Ibid., 10.

[91]Ibid.

[92]According to Rienecker and Roger, *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, "*kerusso*," means "herald" or "preacher." The herald was someone who had important news to bring. He often announced an athletic event or religious festival or functioned as a political messenger, the bringer of some news or command from the king's court. He was to have a strong voice and proclaim his message with vigor without lingering to discuss it. The herald's most important qualification was that he faithfully represent or report the word of the one who had sent them. He was not to be "original,"

and acceptable method of proclaiming the gospel; however, it has been shown that one-on-one counseling is another biblical technique for preaching through the Word.

While counseling is an essential part of the local church, it cannot be effective by conducting one hour of counseling per week. A comprehensive blueprint for ministry includes counseling as a synchronized part of the whole. The preaching ministry is used to teach and to motivate growth and change. The love and relational ties of the body of Christ assist, encourage, and develop accountability. The authority of the body provides discipline, oversight, prayer, and examples of what a leader should be. Counselees need the help and assistance of a church committed to following biblical principles in practical areas such as communication, finances, and dealing with problems.[93]

The task of the church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ through stimulating relationships with other Spirit-filled believers in the context of a community. There is no better place for the ministry of counseling than a Christ-centered, cross-driven, faith-stimulating community of faith.[94] Among counseling systems, nouthetic counseling uniquely respects the centrality of Scripture, obedience to the Lord, human responsibility, and the local church ministry.[95]

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since his message was to be that of another. In conjunction with Reinecker, see Vine, Unger, and White, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*, s.v. "*parrhesiazomai*." This Greek word means "to be bold in speech" and can be translated "to preach boldly" or "he spake boldly." *Laleo* means "to speak" and can be translated "preached" or "spoken" (Acts 8:25; 13:42; 14:25; 18; Mark 2:2). In Acts 11:19 what is indicated is not a formal "preaching" by the believers scattered from Jerusalem, but a general testimony to all with whom they came into contact." *Euangelizo* is almost always used of "the good news" concerning the Son of God as proclaimed in the gospel. In sharing the gospel the phrase "to bring, or declare, good, or glad, tidings" is often used. *Kerusso* signifies "to be a herald" or, in general, "to proclaim." Other Greek terms that acts as synonyms of "to preach" or "preaching" are (verbs), *proeuangelizomai, prokerusso, diangello, katangello, dialegomai, pleroo,* and (noun) *kerugma.*

[93]William W. Goode, "Biblical Counseling and the Local Church," in *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically*, 226.

[94]Tautges, *Counsel One Another*, 170.

[95]Ibid., 18.

Conclusion

With the passing of the Puritans, the theological community slowly drifted from embracing the sufficiency of Scripture as it relates to counseling. Pastoral care that used the Bible as the rule for life and living devolved to a point where the psychiatric community was the dominant establishment in the counseling arena. Counseling by pastors, and the churches they represented, was virtually non-existent. This shift away from the centrality of Scripture, obedience to the Lord, and human responsibility caused many within the Christian community to become aligned methodologically with secular counselors.

Currently a biblical counseling movement has emerged defining people's problems away from the mental health professional and towards the pastor and theologian as the primary counseling practitioner. This movement views the counseling task as theological, scriptural, and rightly under the authority of the church. Biblical counseling encourages and assists churches to consistently proclaim a faith in God that is Christ-centered, scripture-centered, and cross-centered.

For about 400 years the Church has largely abdicated their responsibility of applying Scriptural truths to the sins and suffering of God's people. Incrementally the sufficiency of God's Word has been replaced with the wisdom of men. Currently many within the Church promote the professional counselor above the pastor and the truths contained in Scripture. The vast majority of Christians are either unwilling or unable to apply Scripture to those with problems in life. Thankfully the biblical counseling movement is training men and women to affirm once again the sufficiency of God's Word. Like the Puritans,

> We have every reason to place our confidence in the sure, dependable, and entirely trustworthy revelation of God given to us in Holy Scripture because it contains a God-ordained, sufficient, comprehensive system of theoretical commitments, principles, insights, goals, and appropriate methods for understanding and resolving the non-physical problems of people.[96]

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[96]Wayne A. Mack, "What Is Biblical Counseling?" in *Totally Sufficient*, ed. Ed

The Church today desperately needs to embrace the message that Christ has given everything needed to counsel those with difficulties, trials, or sorrows. Is there sufficiency in Christ for the counseling task? Absolutely! His grace is sufficient (2 Cor 12:9). His blessings include every spiritual blessing (Eph 1:3). Christ indwells believers (Eph 2:22; Gal 2:20; Col 2:9), and "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence" (2 Pet 1:3-4). The Father of glory makes available a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, the hope of glory to which Christians have been called, the riches of his glorious inheritance and the incomparably great power for those who believe (Eph 1:17-19).

Hindson and Howard Eyrich (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2004), 50.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Chapter 4 describes the methodology used in this project, detailing the scope of the project as well as its implementation. The selection process, research instrument, pre-training evaluation, post-training evaluation, schedule of training, and the content of each lesson are stated and explained. A final analysis and evaluation of the training was conducted for the purpose of determining any needed changes or modifications.

Christ Fellowship is an established church that was founded about forty years ago. Over time this body has consistently grown and generally flourished. I have a good working relationship with the leadership of the church and have found this to be valuable in the process of identifying and screening those who would participate in this project.

The goal of this chapter is to provide enough information so someone could apply this information to another ministry context. The length of this project is fifteen weeks, which include eleven weeks of training in topics commonly encountered in biblical counseling. This discussion will outline what took place during each of the fifteen weeks.

Selecting and Screening Participants: Weeks 1 and 2

An important aspect of this project was to select participants who were mature leaders of small groups and faithful in church participation and attendance. These participants needed to have a concern for the process of discipleship and an inclination to counsel or mentor others within a small group setting.

The first week of this project was used to identify the participants in this

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venture. This undertaking embraced the presupposition that small group leaders are often exposed or confronted with counseling issues (marriage, finances, parenting, and others) within the group in a manner similar to that of a pastor of a small church; therefore, small group leaders should be trained in the basics of biblical counseling so that problems within the group can be addressed effectively, efficiently, and biblically. The names of potential participants were compiled through a list of previously successful Christ Group leaders with input from the senior pastor, the church board, and other pastors at Christ Fellowship. In addition, a few people volunteered to participate when they heard that a class on the basics of biblical counseling was being offered. The nature and scope of this plan was shared with the senior pastor and subsequently given to the Ministry Council. Each approved of the project's concept, scope, and implementation.

After the target group was identified I sent a letter to each couple or person to give them a general overview of the project and training (see Appendix 1). This was followed by a personal phone call encouraging them to attend. The phone call allowed me personally to give an introduction and overview of the project and allow the candidates an opportunity to ask specific questions. A total of eight couples and nine individuals agreed to participate in this endeavor.

After the participants were identified I used the second week to draft and administer a pre-training questionnaire, called a research instrument, designed to identify the participants' level of understanding in the basic principles of biblical counseling. This questionnaire was administered prior to the training and served to establish a base line from which the effectiveness of the training could be measured. The students filled out the pre-training questionnaire at the first training session (see Appendix 2).

The Project Outline: Weeks 3 to 13

The training component of this project was originally given to an audience of about 30 individuals; however, only 25 people were asked to attend the eleven successive weeks of instruction and fill out the pre- and post-training questionnaire because they were

the couples and individuals who had shown prior interest in being small group leaders.

Each session contained significantly more information than a person could absorb in one setting. I made this decision for two reasons. First, I wanted to expose the attendees to a wide range of counseling subjects, books, and materials. Second, I intended to give the students a handout containing a summary of the lecture for both future reference and to help solidify the material for the students. Each session lasted one hour.

Weeks 3 to 13 involved a variety of biblical counseling topics. The first training session was "The Essentials of Biblical Counseling" followed by two sessions on "Communication." The next sessions were entitled "Repentance," "Confession and Forgiveness" and "Parenting." The remainder of the classes were "Anger in Counseling," "Fear, Worry and Anxiety," "Depression," "Sexual Sins," and finally "Trials and Suffering." The following summaries describe what was taught in each of the eleven training sessions.

The Essentials of Biblical Counseling:
Week 3

The third week of this project was training on "The Essentials of Biblical Counseling." This session did not emphasize biblical counseling as a process separate and distinct from the overall ministry of the church but rather as a discipleship ministry to which God has called believers within the local church. My goal in this presentation was to give enough information to provide guidance when a discipling opportunity was presented yet be flexible enough to adapt to a variety of ministry contexts.

An essential in biblical counseling is to inspire hope in the counselee. A large share of the initial work of counseling may involve instilling biblical hope in those who come in desperation and despair.[1] For those who are hopeless there is hope because of

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[1]Jay E. Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973), 40.

God's promises. Robert D. Smith states, "If you are working with a depressed person, hope should ooze out of every part of your counseling because of God's promises."[2] If depressed people do not have sufficient hope the counselor must have hope for them and display hope in actions and speech. True hope increases in people as they grow in their relationship with Christ.[3] This includes thinking biblically, correcting, and enlarging their concepts of God and understanding that God did not come into the world to deliver believers from all psychological ills but to deliver them from the penalty and ruling power of sin (Rom 6:1-23). True hope can only be fully realized when one truly and fully confesses sin and repents, seeking God's forgiveness and help.[4]

Biblical counseling must also be God-centered. A God-centered person treats God as central to all of life's concerns, from the most simple and mundane to the most weighty and personal. Counseling approaches that attempt to lead toward healing without dealing with God are explicitly defective.[5] Interwoven with God-centered counseling is counsel that is habitually accompanied by prayer. Counsel that lacks prayer cannot be considered biblical counsel. Biblical counseling is Christ-exalting. All counseling issues involve the exaltation or the denigration of Jesus Christ. There is no true success in counseling if a person becomes socially functional without conscious

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[2]Robert D. Smith, *The Christian Counselor's Medical Desk Reference* (Stanley, NC: Timeless Texts, 2000), 209.

[3]Wayne Mack, *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 162-75. Biblical instruction plays a necessary and important part in every person's spiritual growth and is indispensable in the process of solving problems (Prov 6:23; Matt 22:29; Eph 4:11-12; 1 Thess 4:13; 1 Tim 4:6, 11, 16; 2 Tim 2:16-18; Titus 1:10-11).

[4]See Ps 51:17; Jer 3:10; 4:4; 29:13; Ezek 14:1-9; Joel 2:13; Matt 5:8; 15:8-9; Acts 8:21-22; Rom 2:5, 29; Heb 4:12 and Jas 4:8.

[5]John Piper, "Toward a Definition of the Essence of Biblical Counseling" (paper presented to the congregation of Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, December 12, 2001) http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/articles/ toward-a-definition-of-the-essence-of-biblical-counseling (accessed November 9, 2009).

dependence on and delight in Jesus Christ. Biblical counseling is cross-centered. Christ cannot be truly honored and exalted if the cross is not cherished. Cross-centered counseling treasures the suffering and sacrifice of Christ for sinners. His sacrifice provides humility and hope, never pride and despair.

Biblical counseling is Spirit-dependent. This type of counseling knows that it is useless to speak wisely and lovingly and bring about true wholeness apart from the decisive work of the Holy Spirit in the counselor and the counselee.

Biblical counseling holds to the absolute sufficiency of Scripture. Biblical counseling must not merely be Bible-based but rather Bible-saturated. Bible-saturated counseling makes the Bible the centerpiece, the core, and the focus of counseling. Only the Bible addresses man's fundamental problems—having to do with sin, salvation, and sanctification—whatever forms those problems may take culturally.[6]

Biblical counseling develops a healthy relationship with counselees. This entails discovering the causes of their problems and applying biblical principles to those causes. Counseling takes into account what people are experiencing and not merely what biblical truths come to bear on the problem.

Biblical counseling motivates counselees to change. There is no doubt that God uses the skills of honesty, advice, insights, and ability of the counselor to exhort.[7] It is not just what is said by counselors as ambassadors of Christ that God uses to encourage change in people; it is also who the believers are and what they do.

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[6]Jay E. Adams, *How to Help People Change* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 62.

[7]Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2002), 199-218. On how to speak the truth in love, Tripp states that "*rebuke* is the word the Bible uses for bringing truth to where change is needed, yet most of us don't react positively when we hear it" (p. 200). Tripp continues by saying, "Yet biblical confrontation is the goal: not to force behavioral change, but to encourage people's new natures with the gospel. We seek to open people's eyes to the full glory of Christ's grace as they see the gravity of their sin. The gospel is what turns idolaters into worshipers of God. It confronts people with Christ. Hope for change always rests on Him" (p. 218).

The goal of biblical counseling is to foster biblical change. It endeavors to foster the implementation and integration of biblical principles into people's lives so they will become consistently Christ-centered and Christ-like in every area of life including their desires, thoughts, attitudes, feelings, and behavior.[8]

Communication, Part 1: Week 4

The fourth week of this project consisted of training in the first of two parts on communication within marriage. As humans, talking is what we do, almost without interruption and usually without a thought about how important it is to daily living. Nowhere is communication more important than within the context of marriage. Who a person was prior to marriage, good and bad, is who the person will be during the marriage, and changes are often needed in order for the couple to live in harmony.

This session outlines four steps to produce a marriage that glorifies God. First, a marriage that communicates love, unity, and understanding is rooted in worship. Everything thought—desired, chosen, done, or said—is shaped by worship (Rom 1:19-25). People do what they do because of what or who is worshipped. A marriage completely rooted in the worship of God happens only when God is loved with all of one's heart, soul, mind and strength (Deut 6:4; Mark 12:29-31). At a foundational level, difficulties in marriage do not first come because a couple does not love each other enough. Difficulties happen because they do not love God enough, and when God is not loved enough, a couple will not treat one another with the kind of love that makes a marriage work.[9]

Second, a marriage that communicates love, unity, and understanding is one in which the couple regularly engages in confession of sin. Confession acknowledges specific sins, asks for forgiveness, and alters behavior (Jas 5:16; Prov 12:15; 16:2; 21:2,

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[8]Mack, *Counseling*, 190.

[9]Paul D. Tripp, *What Did You Expect?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 36.

29; Matt 5:23-25; Luke 17:3).

Third, a marriage that communicates love, unity, and understanding is one in which a spouse grants forgiveness when wronged. The Bible makes it very clear that believers must forgive as God has forgiven: freely and unconditionally (Matt 6:14; 18:21ff; Eph 4:32; Jer 31:34). The regular use of confession and forgiveness in a marriage ensures that a family will keep short accounts of sin in their midst (Eph 4:26-27).

Fourth, a marriage that communicates love, unity, and understanding is one in which the couple learns to control anger (Prov 15:1; 29:11, 20, 22; Rom 12:17-21; Eph 4:26-27, 31-32). External circumstances may give occasion for anger to surface, but what comes boiling over the top comes from the inside, not outside.[10] Scripture teaches that unrighteous anger comes from within; it comes from the heart (Mark 7:21-23; Luke 6:45).

Communication, Part 2: Week 5

The next training session is the second part of the discussion on godly communication within marriage. In Ephesians 4:15 and 25-32 Paul gives four guidelines or rules of communication (see Appendix 3).[11] They are meant to prevent and solve communication problems in the home, church, work, and with friends, as well as with spouses. The purpose for these rules is to address conflict and problems biblically and to promote unity in all relationships.

The first rule for godly communication is to be lovingly honest (Eph 4:15, 25). Some really like this rule because they pride themselves in being very honest (blunt) about the truth. Often this rule applies to everyone but themselves. They are quick to be honest about the sin in others but not in themselves.

The second rule for godly communication is to keep current (Eph 4:26-27).

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[10]Brian S. Borgman, *Feelings and Faith* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009), 103.

[11]Robert Smith, *Four Rules of Communication*, audio resource from the *Biblical Counseling Training Conference* (Lafayette, IN: Faith Baptist Church, 2002).

"Keeping current" means that problems are addressed in a timely manner. Verse 26 states in part, "do not let the sun go down on your anger." This seems to imply conflict(s) should be resolved the same day.

Common ways to fail in this area are to explode, change the subject, get self-righteous, ignore the relationship by giving the cold shoulder, or simply walking away. There are helpful questions to ask before attempting to keep current: Do I have the facts right? Is this issue a preference, a conviction, or a sin problem? Has God's word been violated? Do I have responsibility for that person? Is my timing right? Is my attitude right? Are my words loving, constructive, and solution-oriented? Have I prayed for God's help? (Prov 3:5-6).

The third rule for godly communication is to attack the problem, not the person (Eph 4:29-30). Attacking the person means to use unwholesome speech that attacks a person's character. Some examples include "stupid," "idiot," "lazy," "good for nothing," "jerk," "I expected that," "you are just like your dad/mom," "you are no good," "you are a slob," "worthless," "dumb," or "you can't do anything right." Conversely, when the problem is the focus, the character of a person is not assaulted. Rather, what a person says or does is addressed.

The final rule for godly communication is to act, not react (Eph 4:31-32). Ephesians 4:31 states that believers are to put off all communication that involves bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, and malice. Verse 32 tells the reader to replace sinful reactions with godly responses of kindness, tenderheartedness, and forgiveness.

Repentance: Week 6

The sixth week consisted in training on repentance. This session discussed remorse and penance versus remorse and repentance. What is repentance and penance? Is there a difference between them or not? Are they important? How do we know if repentance is true or not? These and other questions were addressed as well as the topics of repentance and penance from a biblical perspective.

Repentance is literally a change of mind, a rethinking towards God, oneself, and sin. It is coming to a new awareness, a new mindset, to see things differently (Job 42:6; Jer 31:18-19).

In the Old Testament two words are regularly translated "repent" or some near equivalent—*naham* ("be sorry, change one's mind") and *sub* [*shub*] ("turn back, return").[12] In the Old Testament repentance always refers to a change of mind, purpose, or conduct. It describes the action of a person who turns away from sin. External forms of repentance include fasting, sackcloth, ashes, scratching (Hos 7:14), and pouring out water (1 Sam 7:6). Cattle may also be made to fast and be garbed in sackcloth (Jonah 3:6-8; cf. Esth 4:16).[13]

Repentance in the New Testament has some similarities to that of the Old Testament. It affects the whole person; it is not just a change of mind or actions, but a change of one's entire being: mind, will, affections, actions, and behavior.[14] Repentance is a definite turning from evil and a resolute turning to God in total obedience. This involves a radical conversion both in salvation and sanctification. It is Spirit-generated, an act of God and a gift of God that encompasses the whole being (Acts 11; 2 Tim 2).[15] In the New Testament the notion of repentance as turning to the Lord (Hebrew *shub*) is expressed by the Greek word *metanoia*. There is nothing in this word about sorrow; indeed it does not speak of the emotions at all (Job, Zaccheus, and the Samaritan woman; see Luke 19; John 14). That is not to say that true repentance will not lead to sorrow (King David, the tax collector in Luke 18:13), but the word itself carries no such

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[12]D. R. W. Wood, ed., *New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), s.v. "repentance."

[13]Richard Owen Roberts, *Repentance* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002), 94.

[14]Stuart Scott, *Evaluating True Repentance vs. Penance* [CD-ROM] (Chesterton, IN: Sound Word, 2000), CDN0017.

[15]Ibid.

connotation.[16] It is possible to be sorry about sin without changing opinions, stance, or attitudes. Repentance refers to a change of heart—a new orientation of the inner man brought about by the Holy Spirit.[17]

Penance means a punishment undergone in token for sin. Penance is defined as a religious attitude prompting men to attempt to pay for their sin through good works and their suffering.[18] Penance tries to replace the sacrifice of Christ with deeds. When men attempt to work off their sin, God and his Word are not present in the process so the Holy Spirit is not operating. Penance, at best, is only a theory. It has no biblical foundation. There is no teaching in the New Testament supporting it.[19]

There are a number of differences between repentance and penance. First, penance centers on what people do. Self-justification is the goal, and in practice it means they have one more scheme for getting things right with God and their own conscience. Sinners doing penance always say in their heart, "Give me one more day, a new religious duty, another program, another set of human relationships, or a better education, and then things will come right side up."[20] Second, penance focuses on what people see and feel within themselves. Penance is centered in human emotions and perceptions. The result of penance is that people become sorry for themselves and not sorry for sin against a holy and loving God. By contrast, repentance to life (Acts 11:18) is God-centered.[21] Third, penance always leaves sinners powerless and imprisoned. It does not work because it is

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[16]Adams, *How to Help People Change*, 216.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Scott, *Evaluating True Repentance vs. Penance*, CDN0017.

[19]Roberts, *Repentance*, 93.

[20]C. John Miller, *Repentance and 21st Century Man* (Fort Washington, PA: CLC, 2003), 18.

[21]Ibid., 21.

founded upon self-trust whereas repentance to life is fused with trust in Christ. Finally, penance seeks out a human priest other than Christ.[22] While the practice of godliness may very well include acts of abstinence and self-control, such acts alone must never be confused with biblical repentance.[23] True repentance is a grace of God's Spirit whereby sinners are inwardly humbled and visibly reformed.

There are at least five elements to true repentance. First, sin must be recognized for what it is (1 Kgs 8:47; Luke 15:17; Eph 5:8). If the sin is not known, there can be no repentance.

Second, there must be sorrow for sin (Pss 38:18; 51:17; Joel 2:13; Zech 12:10; Luke 7:38). It includes a willingness to acknowledge or accept personal responsibility for all unbiblical motives, thoughts, feelings, and actions. It does not harbor shifting the blame. Sorrow for sin includes an understanding of the seriousness and awfulness of sin. It is an awareness that sin has caused the believer to fall, not just stagger. Sin causes a broken relationship with God. In addition, when a person exhibits genuine repentance there is a desire to get rid of the sin rather than merely getting rid of the pain caused by the sin.

Third, true repentance includes confession of sin. It is a willingness to call sin what God calls sin: not an excuse, a weakness, something inappropriate, a boo-boo, but rather, "I have sinned and it is a serious thing." A truly repentant person does not laugh or become amused by sin. When Job became convinced of his sin he said, "I abhor myself and repent" (Job 42:6).

Fourth, true repentance always turns from sin and to the Lord (1 Thess 1:9). Nothing will make a person repent. Only God can cause a person to repent and be saved (Eph 2:8). True repentance includes an intention to live a God-centered life with words

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[22]Ibid., 29.

[23]Roberts, *Repentance*, 94.

and deeds, a continual lifestyle change (David, Job, Ps 32). What is important is that God is magnified, glorified, and lifted up. True repentance involves admitting sin to God and others.

Finally, true repentance includes a concern about heart sins as well as behavioral sins. It is not just what people do that is sin; it is what is in their heart (Ps 51; Luke 6:46; Matt 12:35-37; 15:18; Jas 4:1-3).

Second Corinthians 7:8-10 describes a false repentance called worldly sorrow. This type of sorrow produces death because it is not a turning from sin but merely from sin's consequences. Worldly sorrow is grief for oneself, centered on self, and not grief for sin against God. It grieves over consequences. It aches with embarrassment. It focuses on its own hurt. It is self-pitying.[24] It is a counterfeit repentance that sometimes passes for the real thing.[25] Biblical examples of this include Esau (Heb 12:17; cf. 10:26-27), Ahithophel (2 Sam 17:23), Ahab (1 Kgs 21:27), Pharoah (Exod 9:27; 10:16-17), Saul (1 Sam 15:24-30), Judas (Acts 1:18-20), Herod (Mark 6:14-29), and the nation of Israel (Joel 2).

Confession and Forgiveness: Week 7

The seventh week of this project involved training on confession and forgiveness. Confession of sin, or wrongs, should be a regular habit. The following is a list of suggestions on how to confess and accept others' confessions.

First, confession of sin, or wrongs, and accepting others' confessions must be performed in a loving and honest manner (Gal 6:1).[26] The best way to approach

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[24]R. Kent Hughes, *2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 151.

[25]John H. Gerstner, *Repent or Perish* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1996), 207.

[26]Chris Brauns, *Unpacking Forgiveness* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 64, 134.

confession is to first deal with the hurt, anger, and bitterness of the heart. Truth not spoken in love ceases to be helpful because the message gets twisted and distorted.

Second, genuine confession is humble.[27] There is a willingness to consider how one has sinned against God and others, a willingness to lower one's defense system. It is a willingness to look in the mirror of God's Word.

Third, confession does not offer excuses.[28] Genuine confession resists the urge to build an argument for self-righteousness (Prov 28:13). Confession resists pointing out the reality that others are also sinners.

Fourth, those who make confession a regular habit are quick to admit wrongs and want to keep short accounts.[29] They do not pout or live in silence, anger, or vengeance. They are quick to seek forgiveness and reconciliation. Living this way allows for no record of wrongs and no closet of emotional baggage. This step resolves issues quickly.

Fifth, genuine confession is willing to listen and examine information, given or received, and to quiet individual emotions and the self-righteous tendencies of the heart.[30] It is a willingness to see things that may not have been previously considered. It is the process of seeing more and more clearly the strengths and weaknesses in relationships. It is being ready, willing, and waiting to learn.

Sixth, confession should be met with encouragement (Titus 2:15; Heb 3:13; 10:25; 2 Tim 4:2; 1 Thess 5:11). Few things crush a confession lifestyle more quickly than a response of harsh judgment against the one who has sinned. Although the natural

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[27]Jay E. Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 216-17.

[28]Borgman, *Feelings and Faith*, 99.

[29]Roberts, *Repentance*, 193-95.

[30]Scott, *Evaluating True Repentance vs. Penance,* CDN0017.

tendency is to retaliate when hurt by others, nothing encourages ongoing confession more than grace. The natural tendency is to hurt others as they have hurt us. However, nothing encourages confession more than grace. When confession is greeted with the same grace God extends to sinners, others are given courage and hope to confess all the more.

Seventh, genuine confession does not return to the past.[31] Sadly, many relationships camp on the failures and hurts of the past. Often, the same discouraging conversation occurs over and over. Eventually the point is reached where some simply do not want to talk to one another anymore; it is just too painful. The conversations do not move toward resolution; each is just a reminder of how bad things are and how long they have been that way.

Eighth, confession places hope in Christ.[32] Authentic confession surrenders any hope in oneself and places all hope in Jesus Christ, the Savior and Redeemer. Why does this give hope? Because Christians are no longer surprised by their sin.

When the shadow of the cross hangs over the relationships of sinners, they live and relate differently. They can realistically look at themselves, no longer surprised by their sin and unable to work for righteousness. They abandon records of wrongs, settle issues quickly, and stop excusing.

The second area discussed during week 7 was the biblical view of forgiveness.[33] Forgiveness is defined as "a lifting of the charge of guilt from another, a formal declaration of that fact and a promise (made and kept) never to remember the wrong against him in the future."[34] Biblical forgiveness is a promise to not dwell on the

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[31]Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 25. See also Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual*, 63-70.

[32]Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual*, 39-48.

[33]Randy Patten, "Forgiveness" (lecture given at a Biblical Counseling Conference, LaFayette, IN, February 2006).

[34]Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling*, 229.

incident mentally, not bring it up and use it against the other person, not talk about the incident or allow it to stand between oneself and the other person.[35] Forgiveness is an act of the will and not of the emotions. Forgiveness is to be granted when there is repentance (Luke 17:3) and when we know God requires it, not when we feel like it (Matt 18:21-22; Luke 17:3-4).

There are four reasons underlining the importance of forgiveness. First, people's greatest need is forgiveness. Without forgiveness they are doomed to eternal punishment (Rom 6:23; Rev 20:11-15) so forgiveness is necessary for salvation (Col 2:13-14). Second, Christians are commanded to forgive others in the same way God has forgiven them (Col 3:13; Eph 4:32). Third, seeking and receiving forgiveness is a prerequisite to mutual love, the strongest argument for the Christian faith (John 13:35). Finally, forgiveness needs to be discussed because unreconciled relationships between Christians hinder evangelism and rob churches of a positive community witness.

There are three misconceptions about forgiveness that Christians often have. First, forgiveness is not a feeling but rather a matter of obedience (Luke 17:3-10). Forgiveness is to be repeatedly granted when a sinner repents. Jesus says it is necessary to forgive others if we want our sins forgiven (Matt 6:14-15). Jesus also says we must forgive sin repeatedly and gives an example of seven times a day (Luke 17:3-4) or even seventy times seven (Matt 18:21-22).[36] Second, forgiveness is not necessarily forgetting; however, forgetting is frequently a by-product of granting forgiveness. Finally, forgiveness is not excusing or minimizing sin but rather taking sin seriously.

Parenting: Week 8

The eighth week of this project utilized and summarized two books on

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[35]Ibid., 221-32.

[36] Other verses that talk about forgiveness include Gen 45-50, Matt 6:12, 18:23-25, Mark 11:25, Luke 15:20-24, 1 Cor 13, Eph 4:31-32, 5:1-2.

parenting.[37] This is obviously an enormous area so I was able to touch only on a few topics. The handout that was made available to the students summarized some of the major topics which include "Parenting Styles," "Goals for Our Children," "The Biblical Warning against Cultural Influence" and "Biblical/Unbiblical Methods of Parenting."

"Parenting Styles" discussed a variety of ways parents might provoke children to anger. This does not refer to a parent who says or does something very occasionally, causing the child to become "wrathful." This refers to repeatedly provoking the child so that over time he or she becomes angry and loses heart.

The second area of discussion was "Goals for Our Children." Each parent has goals for their children. Whether spoken or unspoken there are objectives that direct parents' choices as children are raised. Parents want their children to do well and live happy, comfortable lives. This wish for success has different shapes and definitions, but all parents desire success and happiness for their children. A variety of ways were touched upon about how parents try to produce success in their children.

The third topic was "The Biblical Warning against Cultural Influence." In the Old Testament God consistently warned the Israelites to drive out the pagan nations so Israel would not be susceptible to their influence. Like Israel, individuals are subject to the powerful influences of culture. It is one thing to be aware of unbiblical objectives but it is quite another to embrace scriptural objectives. What goal (or biblical objective) is broad enough and flexible enough to be suitable to all stages of child development? What is a worthy biblical focus? If children are taught to use their abilities, aptitudes, talents, and intelligence to make their lives better but without reference to God, they are turning away from God. If objectives are anything other than "Man's chief end is to

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[37]Martha Peace and Stuart W. Scott, *The Faithful Parent* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2010), 127ff; Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd, 1995).

glorify God and enjoy Him forever," [38] children are being taught to function in the culture on its terms.

The final area discussed was "Biblical and Unbiblical Methods of Parenting." God is not only concerned with what parents do biblically, but also how it is done. Biblical goals require a biblical approach, and only godly methods will bring glory to God. A biblical approach to children involves two elements that are woven together. One is rich and full communication and the other is the rod (Prov 23:13-19, 22, 26). The emphasis on rich interaction provides a context for honest communication in which the child can be known and learn to be known. The use of the rod preserves biblically-rooted parental authority.

Unbiblical approaches to parenting come from many sources. Books and magazines regularly address childrearing. There is always some talk-show host, an expert, or a "new" method. Each of these approaches has one thing in common: It is rooted in human wisdom. Such wisdom may flow from experiences: "There is nothing wrong with how my father raised me." This wisdom could also come from the advice of another as the standard for parenting: "Dr. So & So" on talk-radio or television advocates a certain technique. It sounds good so the parent(s) implements it.

A particularly relevant portion of this session centered on behavior as it relates to the heart. Each secular approach leads to the same problem: it addresses behavior only and ignores behavior as it relates to the heart. Superficial parenting that never addresses the heart biblically produces superficial children who do not understand what makes them tick. Changing behavior without changing the heart trains the heart to respond to things such as reward, approval, or fear. When the experts tell parents to find what works with

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[38]Gerald Irvin Williamson, *The Westminster Shorter Catechism: For Study Classes* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2003). Question 1 asks, "Q. What is the chief end of man? A. Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever (1 Cor 10:31; 2 Cor 5:9)." Ibid., 1.

each child, they are saying that parents must find the idols of the heart that will move the child.

Parents who address only behavior in children create another problem: they never get to the cross of Christ. It is impossible to get from preoccupation with behavior to the gospel. The gospel is not a message about doing new things. It is a message about being a new creature. It speaks to people as broken, fallen sinners who are in need of a new heart.

Anger: Week 9

The ninth week of this project centered on the topic of anger in counseling (see Appendix 4). There are two primary reasons to discuss anger. First, as the layers of a problem involving marriage, finances, rebellious children, or abuses are peeled back, the core difficulty frequently includes the element of anger. Second, if anger is part of the problem, no thorough and lasting godly change can take place until the root of the anger is effectively addressed.

Scholarly definitions of anger emphasize different aspects of this complex emotion. Robert D. Jones defines anger as "a whole-personed active response of negative moral judgment against perceived evil."[39] Jones goes on to say, "Anger is complex. It comprises the whole person and encompasses our whole package of beliefs, feelings, actions, and desires."[40] Les Carter defines anger as "a primary desire for self-preservation . . . to preserve personal worth, perceived needs, and heartfelt convictions."[41] Brian S. Borgman describes various degrees of anger as "emotions [that] not only express our values and evaluations but also influence motives and conduct. So anger is something we

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[39]Robert D. Jones, *Uprooting Anger* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2005), 21.

[40]Ibid., 15.

[41]Les Carter, *The Anger Trap* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 6.

feel and *do*."[42] Many times anger can be perceived in others and physically experienced when it rises in one's own veins. The Bible is filled with examples of both God and man becoming angry.

The Bible depicts three categories of anger.[43] First, God's anger is described as "divine anger." This anger is "hot" or "burning" and is virtually always directed at sinners and their sin. Divine anger is God's perfect, pure, settled opposition to evil (Deut 32:41; Ps 2:4-5; John 3:36; Rom 1:18; cf. 2:5-9).

Second, the Bible describes righteous human anger. The Bible states that anger, in general, is not necessarily sin (Eph 4:26; Jas 1:19-20). This category includes the anger of Jesus as both God and man. Jesus got angry when he drove out the moneychangers (Matt 21:12-13; John 2:13-17) and with the Pharisees for their stubborn hearts (Mark 3:5). Righteous human anger imitates God's anger in that it is a person's response to perceived evil (Moses in Exod 32:19-20; cf. God in Exod 32:9-10, 33-35).

The final biblical category of anger is sinful human anger. Most occasions of human anger are sinful. James 1:13-15 and 3:13-4:12 describe in detail the subtleties and clever displays of one's evil, deceitful desires. Angry people respond with their whole being (thoughts, emotions, affections, words, actions, etc.) to those people or things they perceive to be wrong or harmful to their own interests.

So when is anger sinful? Anger is sinful when the arousal and display of emotion is for the wrong reason. The Bible gives numerous examples of sinful types of anger. Anger is sinful if it is selfish.[44] Anger is also sinful when it accuses God of evil

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[42]Borgman, *Feelings and Faith*, 103.

[43]For an excellent discussion of the three categories of anger see Jones, *Uprooting Anger*, 18-21.

[44]Examples of sinful anger derived from selfishness in the Bible include Cain and Abel (Gen 4); Ahab and Naboth's vineyard (1 Kgs 21); Herodias against John the Baptist (Matt 14:3-4; Mark 6:17); Saul against David (1 Sam 18:7); and the older brother and the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32).

or wrongdoing.[45] Anger is sinful when it occurs over hurt feelings, jealousy, lack of recognition, or one's "rights" being denied (Jas 4:1-2). Anger is sinful when it is allowed to control a person (Prov 16:32, 25:28). In addition, anger is sinful when it becomes the dominant feature in a person's life (i.e., someone is known as being touchy, easily annoyed, sensitive, or irritable), when a person pretends not to be angry, when a running record is kept of how someone has been sinned against, and when the offending person or thing is attacked or hurt.[46]

There are three distinguishing marks of right or righteous anger.[47] Righteous anger always retains godly qualities and expressions. First, anger is righteous when it is in response to God or his Kingdom being dishonored, disrespected, defiled, or besmirched. Second, anger is righteous in response to a violation of God's Word (Rom 3:23; 1 John 3:4). Finally, righteous anger is accompanied by other godly qualities. For example, when Jesus became angry he did not resort to cursing, screaming, rage, self-pity, or despair. The anger of Jesus sought to defend the poor, honor God the Father, administer justice, confront evil, and call everyone to repentance and restoration. An example of godly human anger in the Bible occurred when the Holy Spirit came upon Saul in a powerful way so he could free the city of Jabesh Gilead (1 Sam 11:1-6).

Jesus affirms that unrighteous anger comes from the heart (Mark 7:21-23; Luke 6:45). James 4:1-3 states that anger arises from entrenched desires and pleasures

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[45]Examples of sinful anger derived from accusing God of evil or wrongdoing include King David becoming angry with God when Uzzah reached out his hand to steady the ark and died (2 Sam 6:6-8); Nineveh repenting and Jonah becoming angry (Jonah 3:10-4:10); Job's wife (Job 2:9-10); King Asa (2 Chr 16); and the Jewish crowd against Jesus (John 7:23).

[46]Some examples include Saul being angry with Jonathan instead of David (1 Sam 20:30-34), Moses smashing the tablets (Exod 32:19), and Moses striking the rock (Num 20:11).

[47]See Jones, *Uprooting Anger*, 29-30, and David A. Powlison, "Anger Part 1: Understanding Anger," *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 14, no. 1 (1995): 48-53.

that battle within a person, from unmet desires that rule the heart, and from selfish motives rather than a delight in God. External circumstances may give occasion for anger to surface, but what comes boiling over the top comes from inside a person, not from the outside.

Anger is a whole-person, active response against something that is perceived to be negative or harmful in one's judgment. Anger has a range of levels from rage and bitterness to irritability and moodiness. At its core, anger is the expression of the ruling desires within one's heart that say, "I desire," or "I demand" (Jas 4:1-3). The root of anger is selfishness, an entrenched desire that battles within one's heart for control. No lasting godly change can occur until the root of anger is dealt with through confession, repentance, and embracing the grace of God. The greatest reason to turn from anger is that it displeases, dishonors, and offends the Lord and Savior.

Fear, Worry, and Anxiety: Week 10

The tenth week of this project was a discussion on fear, worry, and anxiety.[48] Some sins are so common among Christians that they appear to be acceptable behavior. The motto of many twenty-first century Christians seems to be, "Why trust when you can worry?" Some realize it is wrong and try to hide their worry by giving it other descriptions such as "being concerned," "troubled," "disturbed," "interested," or "bothered." Regardless of the term used, worry saps energy, drains joy, destroys vision, curtails evangelism, and aggravates physical ailments. Unfortunately, it is also contagious, easily caught, and experienced as fear.

The Greek word for worry is *merimnao*, a combination of two words; *merizo* (to divide) and *nous* (mind). Worry is an over-anxious concern regarding the future and

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[48]Randy Patten does an excellent treatment of this subject in "Handling Worry and Fear Biblically," in *Handling Emotions Biblically*, *The Faith Resources Counseling Library* [DVD] (Lafayette, IN: Faith Resources, 2011).

things that keep a person from fulfilling current biblical responsibilities. Worry is not to be confused with diligent care and concern toward responsibilities (2 Cor 11:28; Gal 4:19; Phil 2:20) or with planning that acknowledges God's sovereignty (Jas 4:13-14).

In Matthew 6:19-34 Jesus addresses and forbids worry three times (vv. 25, 31, 34). The apostle Paul commands believers to "be anxious for nothing." This should be viewed as a command to refrain from sinful behavior (Phil 4:6). Unbridled fear, worry, and anxiety may lead to idolatry. Idolatry is worshipping someone or something other than the true and living God. It is giving oneself to some person, goal, ideal, concern, or object rather than Christ. It is putting one's desires above God's desires and commands. It is allowing concerns over the future and things to be more important than thinking and acting God's way. Jesus declares that one cannot serve God and something or someone else simultaneously (Matt 6:24; Mark 12:30-31). The things a person worries about reveal the idols in life (finding a mate, getting a promotion, health, money, success, children, people's opinions, etc.). Jesus describes worriers as people of "little faith" (Matt 6:30). Worry is the fruit of unbelief and doubt. The presence of worry indicates that there is someone or something being lived for other than the Lord. The fruit of repentance for a worrier will be manifesting faith in God by disciplining his or her mind to focus on God's care for all human beings (Matt 6:25-30), God's omniscience (Matt 6:31-32), and God's promises (Matt 6:33) and by caring for today's responsibilities (Matt 6:34).

The idolatry and unbelief of worry is to be replaced by a worship of and faith in God. This will manifest itself in a lifestyle marked by right praying (Phil 4:6-7), right thinking (Phil 4:8), and right acting (Phil 4:9).

Fear, in and of itself, is not wrong. Fear is a feeling of anxiety and agitation caused by the presence or nearness of danger, evil, or pain. It is right, good, and proper when it moves a person toward God and motivates biblical behavior.[49] However, fear is

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[49]Fears that are appropriate are fear of God (Ecc 12:13-14; Prov 1:7; 2 Cor 5:10), fear of danger (Gen 4:14-15; Job 41:33; 1 Cor 6:19-20), and fear due to guilt (Lev

wrong and sinful when it is allowed to motivate thinking and behavior that is unbiblical.[50]

Biblical ways to overcome sinful fear are to develop a strong focus on God (Ps 46:1-10; Isa 26:3; 2 Cor 5:9-10; Gal 1:10; 1 Peter 1:7), deal with guilt biblically (Prov 28:1; Matt 5:23-24; 1 John 1:9), develop love as the antidote to fear (1 Cor 13; 2 Tim 1:7; 1 John 4:15-21, esp. 17-19), view fearful situations as opportunities to grow in faith (Matt 5:16; Rom 8:28-29; 1 Cor 6:19-20), and meditate on and memorize key Scriptures (Ps 118:6; Isa 26:32; Tim 1:7; 1 Pet 5:7).

Depression: Week 11

The eleventh week of this project was a general overview of depression with the primary goal of looking at what the Bible has to say about this condition.[51]

Depression is a term that is used to label an array of dissimilar symptoms. Depression is a debilitating mood, feeling, attitude of hopelessness, guilt, shame, or sorrow causing a person to have difficulty handling important issues of life.[52] Marks of depression include feelings of despair, hopelessness, emotional pain or numbness, indifference, lethargy, dread, fear, worry, and anger, at times for no apparent reason.[53] Depression should be taken seriously even though it does not look the same in every person and it is not manifested to the same degree in every person.

26:17-18, 36; Prov 28:1; Matt 14:1-2).

[50]Fears that are wrong (sinful) are fear of man, not God (Luke 12:4-5; John 12:42-43), fear of things temporal, rather than eternal (Luke 12:4-5; 1 Cor 4:5), and fear of things we cannot change (Gen 4:14; Prov 3:25).

[51]An excellent treatment of depression is given by Dan Wickert, "Handling Depression Biblically," in *Handling Emotions Biblically*, *The Faith Resources Counseling Library* [DVD] (Lafayette, IN: Faith Resources, 2011), parts 1 and 2.

[52]Ibid.

[53]Borgman, *Faith and Feelings*, 135-36; Edward T. Welch, *Depression: A Stubborn Darkness* (Greensboro, NC: Zondervan, 2004), 37-38.

The Bible distinguishes between the physical and the spiritual but affirms the interpenetration and interdependence between the body and soul (Matt 10:28; Ps 38:3),[54] and this applies to depression as well. At times, physical problems can be at the root of depression: a recent illness, hormonal changes, and the consequences of hygienic negligence. At times emotional difficulties lead to depression: self-pity arising from jealousy or a disadvantageous turn of events, bad feelings resulting from resentment, worry, etc.[55] There are also spiritual sources of depression like discouragement and particularly guilt caused by sin[56] (Pss 32:3-5; 38:1-10; 51).

Scripture does not specifically define depression but points to at least five possible causes. One cause of depression is the action of other people.[57] Many of the Psalms contain cries to the Lord because of the oppression by others. A second cause of depression is ourselves (Gal 5:19-21; 1 Cor 6:9-10; cf. Gal 6:7-10). Evil desires can be the cause of some people's depression. A third cause of depression is our bodies: disease, deterioration, and physical suffering may lead to depression. A fourth cause of depression is Satan as seen in the book of Job. Finally, the suffering God allows may be the cause of depression (1 Sam 2:6-7; Is 45:7). Suffering and trials may lead to depression and can come from a variety of different causes, yet all suffering is intended to help fix one's eyes on God. Those who suffer are called to rejoice in the midst of their suffering because of the truths of the gospel (Jas 1:2-4; 1 Pet 1:3-7; Rom 5:2-4).

Some Scripture passages describe well-known symptoms of depression.

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[54]Borgman, *Faith and Feelings*, 136.

[55]Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual*, 375. See also Borgman, *Faith and Feelings*, 136-38.

[56]Borgman, *Faith and Feelings*, 138; Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual*, 375-83.

[57]See Welch, *Depression: A Stubborn Darkness*, 39-41 for a fuller discussion of the five possible causes of depression.

Deuteronomy 28:65-67, which lists a number of covenant curses for unfaithfulness,

describes many of the symptoms that comprise depression. God tells the nation of Israel,

> Among these nations you shall find no respite, and there shall be no resting place for the sole of your foot, but the LORD will give you there a trembling heart and failing eyes and a languishing soul. Your life shall hang in doubt before you. Night and day you shall be in dread and have no assurance of your life. In the morning you shall say, "If only it were evening!" and at evening you shall say, "If only it were morning!" because of the dread that your heart shall feel, and the sights that your eyes shall see.

This passage points to no rest, a trembling heart, despair of soul, life hanging in doubt,

fearing day and night, no assurance, no security, a dread of the morning, hating the

thought of facing the day, a dread of night, and shrinking from the thought of trying to

sleep. Anyone who has felt depression can identify with some, if not most, of that

description.[58] Likewise the Psalms deal with descriptions that can legitimately be applied

to depression.[59]

Adams contends that depression does not result directly from any one

symptom but rather from a cyclical process in which the initial problem is mishandled in

such a way that it is enlarged in a downward spiral that eventually plunges a person into

despair.[60] Sin leads to guilt and depression, and sinful handling of sin further

complicates matters leading to greater guilt and deeper depression.[61] Adams believes

healing begins when this pattern is reversed by beginning an upward cycle of

righteousness resulting in further righteousness.[62]

The Bible provides at least three principles that are critical if a person is to be

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[58]Borgman, *Faith and Feelings*, 134.

[59]Pss 42:5, 11 and 43:5 use the words "despair," "turmoil" and "downcast." Additional Scripture that speaks to symptoms of depression are Pss 32; 51; 77:7-9; Prov 13:12; 17:22; 18:14; 28:1; 1 Kgs 19:4; Jonah 4:3, 8; 2 Cor 1:8-10.

[60]Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual*, 375.

[61]Ibid., 377.

[62]Ibid., 375.

rescued from depression. The first is to deal with known sin in the life of the depressed person. There may be certain sins that have not been dealt with that the Lord is disciplining a person for until there is confession and repentance[63] (Ps 32, 139:23-24; 51; Prov 28:13; 1 John 1:9). Ed Welch insightfully comments,

> Compassion cannot ignore unbelief or sin. Too often, family and friends think the depressed person is very fragile and cannot handle any frank discussion about sin or hard-heartedness. But to ignore these issues when they are obvious in someone's life is to treat that person without love and compassion. . . . The Bible always portrays our sin problem as being deeper than any pain we experience. To ignore sin, especially when it is obvious, is to offer only a very superficial kind of love and compassion, and to withhold help that is needed at the deepest level.[64]

To identify sin as a cause of depression should be a cause for hope because Jesus Christ has provided a solution for sin in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The second principle is to take every thought captive with truth. It is the Word of God that can revive the soul of the depressed and give hope (Pss 42:5-6; 2 Cor 10:3-5). Those who have guilt need to hear the message of grace provided in the Gospel and how Jesus Christ provides forgiveness through his sacrifice on the cross (Rom 8:1, 28-29; Eph 2:4-10). Troubled hearts need to hear the call of Christ to trust him and their Father (John 14:1). Those in disarray, confusion, trouble, and suffering need to hear about the peace Jesus promises (John 16:33). Welch states, "Wise counsel tells us that we must talk to depression—fight it—rather than merely listen to it."[65] Martyn Lloyd-Jones's words expand on preaching to oneself:

> Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself? ... You must take yourself in hand, you have to address yourself, you have to preach to yourself, question yourself. . . . Then you must go on to remind yourself of God, Who God is, and what God is and what God has done and what God has pledged Himself to do.[66]

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[63]See Borgman, *Faith and Feelings*, 140-43, for a fuller discussion.

[64]Ed Welch, *Blame It on the Brain?* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1998), 123.

[65]Welch, *Depression*, 97.

[66]Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Spiritual Depression* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 20-21.

This counsel can be difficult to perform, but it is biblical.

The final principle from Scripture that can be used to rescue a person from depression is to encourage the depressed to do the right thing, which will lead to a change in feelings. Counselees must get busy no matter how they feel; they must change their actions and work on doing right regardless of how they feel (Phil 4:9; Luke 9:23).[67] When Cain's countenance fell with anger and jealousy, God's counsel to him was, "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it" (Gen 4:7). Cain was required to do something; he was to do the right thing.[68] Counselors must lovingly but firmly require the counselees to stop the self-pity and do the right thing because power often comes in the doing.[69] Serving others will replace darkness with light and weakness with renewed strength (Is 58:10-11).

Sexual Sin: Week 12

The twelfth week of this project discussed sexual sins. Every person has a need for worship; the objects of that worship are the things or persons that have taken the preeminent position of importance in the person's life. Matthew 6:21 states, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." People addicted to sexual sins have one thing in common: they have allowed unbiblical thinking to dominate their lives.

Mark Dutton provides an excellent example of the progression between temptation and desire:

DESIRE + ENTICEMENT = TEMPTATION + WILL = SIN
(I want it)   (I can get it)   (I need it)   (I deserve it) (I choose it)[70]

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[67]Ibid., 214.

[68]Borgman, *Faith and Feelings*, 142.

[69] Ibid.

[70]Mark Dutton, "Developing a Biblical Counseling Ministry in the Local Church" (D.Min. project, Bible Baptist Seminary, 2003), 188.

Desires are not inherently sinful. God has given the desire for food and rest. In addition, if any man aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a fine work (1 Tim 3:1). Our desires can be controlled and changed (Rom 6:11). Desire can work either positively in good habits or negatively in bad habits. It is not possible to avoid all temptation; however, temptation can be overcome as God's Word is allowed to control thoughts and actions (1 Pet 5:8-9; Jas 1:13-15; 4:7; Matt 26:41; Eph 67:10-12; 1 Cor 10:12-13).

Many times sin is thought of as simply an act, but this is insufficient and unbiblical (Prov 24:9; Matt 5:28). Behind every sinful act is a process of wicked thinking. One of the problems with wicked desires and temptation is that the resulting sin is never logical. The sin seems like it makes sense at the moment, but people forget the law of the harvest as seen in Galatians 6:7.

Sexual sins can be prevented and/or overcome by the power of the Holy Spirit and guarding one's heart (John 15:5; Gal 5:22-25; 1 Tim 4:7). Guarding one's heart means remembering the pain and suffering Jesus went through on the cross to pay the penalty of sin. When God sees sexual sin he does not consider it to be a mistake, a relapse, or an innocent error in judgment. God sees all sin as wickedness, lawlessness, rebellion, wrongdoing, and an activity directed against Himself. Since all sin is against God, he cannot be complacent towards sexual sin or indifferent with respect to it.[71] Sin always incurs the wrath of God, his righteous and holy detestation of sin. A fuller understanding of the suffering Jesus Christ bore for sin should cause one to guard one's heart will all diligence (Prov 4:23; Phil 4:7).

This can be accomplished in three ways. First, one must work at confessing all sin when it begins in the heart (Ps 139:23; 1 John 1:9). Those involved in sexual sins must quit blaming the occasion and start confessing the cause. Second, living a life free

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[71]I. Howard Marshall et al., eds., *New Bible Dictionary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 1108.

of sexual sins reflects a biblical view of God. God has shown his love by providing everything needed for life and godliness (2 Pet 1:3). This is seen in the Holy Spirit who indwells, guides, and produces His fruit in believers. Further, God the Father has given Jesus as an example of how to live (Heb 4:15). In addition, the local church is available to provide encouragement, accountability, and growth. A biblical view of God sees him as omnipresent (Prov 5:21; 15:3). One of the major results of the curse of sin is a person's tendency to think God can be blocked out of lives; an individual can sin and somehow God will not know about it (Gen 3). God knows the thoughts and the motives of the heart (Ezek 11:5) and will eventually judge each life (Rom 2:16; 2 Cor 5:10). Third, preventing or overcoming sin through discipline is accomplished by guarding the heart and the mind (Prov 4:23). A person who is spiritually in awe of God and stunned by his greatness is not easily seduced by sin.

Trials and Suffering: Week 13

The thirteenth week of this project discussed trials and suffering in the Christian life.[72] All Christians have either just come out of a trial, are presently in a trial, or are being prepared to go through a trial. God often uses these trials and sufferings so individuals can see what is in their hearts.

People can easily develop wrong perspectives about the nature of these trials. The first wrong perspective concerns the origin of trials and suffering. Some think their trials and suffering are their own fault, the fault of other people (victim), no one's fault (Fatalism), or that God is not in it at all (Deistic view of God). None of these views is accurate. God is the author and originator of all trials and suffering but never the author of sin (Jas 1:12-18). Trials and suffering are ultimately the result of Adam's fall (Gen 3); however, God is sovereign, so everything is planned by Him and goes according to how

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[72]An excellent treatment of this subject is by Jerry Bridges, *Trusting God Even When Life Hurts* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1988).

He decrees (Isa 46:9-11; Eph 1:11). This includes both calamity and blessing (Jer 32:42; Lam 3:37-38). To say that God "allows or permits" evil does not mean that He sanctions it in the sense that He grants approval to it. However, God is never totally passive. When He seems to be passive, He is actively choosing not to intercede directly.

The Bible states that the purposes of trials and suffering are always for God's glory (Job 1-2; John 9:1-3; 1 Cor 1:26-31) and people's eternal good (Rom 8:28-29) even though God may choose to set aside people's temporary happiness to work a grander work (Paul in 2 Cor 12:7-10; Joseph in Gen 50:20).[73]

The biblical response of believers to trials and suffering is to be responsible no matter how a person feels. This means striving to always please Christ since each of us will one day give an account for our thoughts and actions (2 Cor 5:9-10).

But how does one minister the Word to those who are suffering? Since the Holy Spirit employs his Word as the principal means by which Christians may grow in sanctification, counseling cannot be effective apart from the use of the Scriptures. Ministering the Word is more than merely prescribing or doling out verses, much as a

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[73]Randy Patten does an excellent treatment of this subject in "Handling Emotions Biblically," *The Faith Resources Counseling Library* [DVD] (Lafayette, IN: Faith Resources, 2011). He states that the Bible contains a lengthy list of possible reasons why God allows trials and suffering: (1) to deal with unconfessed sins (2 Kgs 5:15-27; 1 Cor 11:30); however, people need to use caution here as Job's counselors thought this was the only reason; (2) to chastise His children (Ps 119:67; Heb 12:5-11); (3) to increase usefulness (pruning process–John 15:2; 2 Cor 1:3-9; 2 Pet 1:5-8); (4) to emphasize this is not heaven and the world is fallen (Gen 3:8-19; Rom 8:22-24); (5) to show how sin has an effect on others (Josh 7:8, 10-12; Jonah 1; Eph 6:4); (6) to fulfill the principle of reaping what is sown, a natural consequence of choices (Gal 6:7-8; Prov 5:22); (7) to reveal personal weakness and teach dependence on God (2 Cor 1:8-9; 12:7-10); (8) to illustrate how hope has been placed somewhere else or spread out between God and self/circumstances, other people, or possessions. Hope is to be squarely fixed upon God alone and His promises (Heb 6:19; 1 Pet 1:13). Trials and suffering can reveal misplaced "little hopes"; (9) to enlarge an appreciation of His sufficiency (2 Cor 4:7; 12:7-10); (10) to strengthen and test our faith (1 Pet 1:6-7; 4:12); (11) to create opportunities to witness for Christ (Phil 1:12ff.); (12) to develop Christ-like character (Jas 1:2-5); (13) to cause believers to recognize their need for one another in the Body of Christ and to draw closer to one another (Rom 12:15; 1 Cor 12:25; Gal 6:2); and (14) to always bring glory to Himself (Job 1-2; John 9:1-7; 1 Cor 1:26-31).

doctor hands out prescriptions. Those who use the Bible are commanded to "exhort, urge, persuade, teach, apply, rebuke, and convict" by the Word (cf. 2 Tim 4:2). In addition, the Spirit expects those who use His Word to minister it accurately (2 Tim 2:15). Ministering the Word means interacting with the gospel whether in a public or private forum. It means using Scripture to engage people's questions, reactions, thoughts, experiences, troubles, motives, blind spots, circumstances, and hopes.[74]

There are many ways to minister the Word to those going through trials and suffering. Those methods include listening, being kind, providing time, extending sympathy, being physically present, mobilizing the church family, and sharing portions of the Word that are meaningful. Sufferers often ask, "Is God really in control?" "Why did He allow this to happen?" or "Can I trust God?" Sometimes it is best simply to "weep with those who weep" (Rom 12:15). In the hour of trouble or sorrow, the prayer that comforts is the one that leads everyone into the presence of the loving Father where his peace can come to troubled hearts.[75]

Questionnaire and Evaluation: Weeks 14 and 15

The fourteenth week of the project was the administration of the post-training questionnaire, which was a mirror of the pre-training questionnaire with the exception that it asked the student how many classes were attended (see Appendix 5). The final week of the project was a student evaluation of the training. The results of the questionnaire and the evaluation will be discussed in the next chapter.

Conclusion

This project began on February 27, 2011, and concluded on May 29, 2011.

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[74]David A. Powlison, *Speaking Truth in Love: Counsel in Community* (Winston-Salem, NC: Punch, 2005), 106.

[75]Warren W. Wiersbe and David W. Wiersbe, *Comforting the Bereaved* (Chicago: Moody, 1985), 9.

The entire length of the project was fifteen weeks including eleven weeks of training in the basics of biblical counseling. All of the questionnaires were completed and turned in during the final week.

The students were interested and engaged during the training. The teaching material was appropriate, but future training will narrow the focus to specific topics within biblical counseling.

The next chapter contains a thorough evaluation of this project.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS, EVALUATION, AND REFLECTION
ON THE PROJECT

This chapter provides analysis, evaluation, and personal reflections by giving an assessment of this project in seven areas. First, a description is offered of why biblical counseling is needed at Christ Fellowship and the purpose of this project. Second, the project goals are restated and evaluated. Third, the research data is presented and evaluated. The fourth and fifth sections identify the strengths of the project and describe how this project could be improved for future use. The sixth section is a theological reflection on what God has revealed during this process. Finally, there are concluding observations on how this project affected me as a pastor and biblical counselor.

Evaluation of Purpose

Before small groups, called Christ Groups, were formed, the attendees of Christ Fellowship were in the habit of contacting the church staff for most needs associated with family, friends, or acquaintances. The church eventually got to the point where the staff was unable to effectively attend to these needs. In response, the leadership of Christ Fellowship made a decision to discontinue the evening worship service and replace it with Christ Groups. Christ Group leaders are the shepherds of a flock, which they guard, protect, and care for. To a large extent, Christ Groups replaced the staff when ministering to the needs of the people in their groups.

It is abundantly clear that members of Christ Groups receive a high quality of care significantly beyond what professional staff could ever provide. The concept of Christ Groups will remain an integral part of the ministry at Christ Fellowship. Therefore, it is essential that Christ Group leaders receive training to address problems

within the group biblically and in a God-honoring manner.

The purpose of this project was to train Christ Group leaders in the basics of biblical counseling so that they would have increased confidence and skill when ministering God's Word to those with needs in their group. It is not the intent of this project to train Christ Group leaders to be highly proficient in biblical counseling or certified as biblical counselors. The project does not allow the time needed to become highly competent or proficient in biblical counseling. The intent is to assist leaders in becoming aware of how to apply the truths of the Bible to their own lives and then to the lives of others who are struggling.

Project Goals Restated

There were four goals for this project. The first goal was to equip leaders to embrace the sufficiency of Scripture. God has provided all that is needed through his Word in order for Christians to handle the non-organic problems in life and live in a way that is pleasing to him (1 Cor 5:9; 2 Cor 10:31; 2 Pet 1:3; 2 Tim 3:16-17).

The second goal was to engender in leaders a desire to be more like Jesus Christ. This is spiritual growth that continues throughout the life of a Christian.

The third goal was to increase the confidence of small group leaders not to simply know the Word but be able to minister the Word to others. This goal included four separate parts. First, the leader must carefully select Scripture for a specific situation (2 Pet 1:3-4). Second, the leaders must know Scripture well enough to carefully apply selected passages to the issues of sin with love, care, grace, and relevance (2 Pet 1:3-4). Third, God's Word must be rigorously and sensitively applied to people's lives simply, plainly, and accurately (Eph 5:1; Phil 1:27). Finally, in addition to accurately interpreting Scripture, one must effectively implement the Word personally. This step goes beyond merely "knowing" to actually "doing" what God says.

The fourth goal was to become more effective as a biblical counseling teacher. Many of the problems in the church are doctrinal and based on an inadequate view of

God, a wrong view of sin, or an unbiblical view of self. Clear and effective biblical teaching can do much to diminish these problems.

Project Goals Evaluated

The first and second goals were achieved and enhanced primarily because this training was built on a previously developed foundation of faith in God's Word and a desire to be more like Jesus Christ. Each individual selected to be part of this project was considered a leader in the church or personally involved in the life of the church. In general I would characterize them as strong believers who embraced the sufficiency of Scripture and genuinely desired to be more like Jesus Christ.

The third goal turned out to be the most significant and elusive to achieve. A consistent trend within Christ Fellowship is that the majority of people receiving training or instructions are rarely, if ever, asked to apply what they have learned to a specific situation. Too many are constantly learning but not using what they know to help others. The students in this project generally knew the Bible but believed they were unprepared and ill-equipped to minister the Word. Most knew God's Word but were disinclined to minister the Word to others.

The final goal was for me to become more effective as a biblical counseling teacher. This project afforded me the opportunity to research, study, and teach a variety of subjects related to biblical counseling. This journey significantly broadened my exposure to various topics and my ability to teach others. Although there remains much more to learn, preparing for and teaching ten different counseling topics over eleven weeks greatly contributed to my becoming an effective biblical counseling teacher. As people ask questions about various aspects of counseling, it is evident that my knowledge base has enlarged primarily because of the work in this project.

Research Data Evaluated

The questionnaire responses of the Christ Group leaders are recorded in

Appendix 5 and Appendix 6. Each of the leaders completed the pre-training questionnaire during week 1 of training. The post-training questionnaire was given in week 15 of the project. The questionnaire used a 1 to 7 graduated measurement matrix where 1 represented strong agreement and 7 characterized strong disagreement. The participants were asked to give their opinion on 9 questions using the 1 to 7 scale. In addition, some statistical information was gathered such as age, gender, the number of years they had been saved, and if they had received any previous biblical counseling training. On the post-training questionnaire one additional question asked the student how many of the eleven sessions were attended.

The change in score (score on second survey minus the score on the first survey) from the post-training versus the pre-training questionnaire was determined for each of the nine questions. From this a mean, or average, change in score was computed for each student. A more negative score for this difference was considered a success. A portion of the research data is offered by means of a box plot, or graph, which gives a visual picture summarizing a variety of student variables such as gender, the number of classes attended, age, the number of years being saved, and previous training in biblical counseling.

Figure 2 is a box plot showing the mean change in score comparing the post-training questionnaire responses with the pre-training questionnaire responses for all of the questions and for all of the students combined. The median change in score was -0.44, which is statistically close to zero. The first quartile is the value below which 25 percent of the values occur. The third quartile is the value above which 25 percent of the values occur. Also shown are the highest and lowest changes in mean score (denoted by a black dot in Figures 2, 3, and 4) representing an isolated and more distant response from the median value. This is called a statistical outlier, meaning, responses located away or detached from the main group. Few of the student responses fall outside of the first through third quartile of responses. Several of the following graphs will display the

highest and lowest changes in means score. In summary, this box plot shows there was little change in student response between the pre- and post-questionnaire. Further research data is provided by using the actual number values associated with each question in Appendix 5 and Appendix 6.
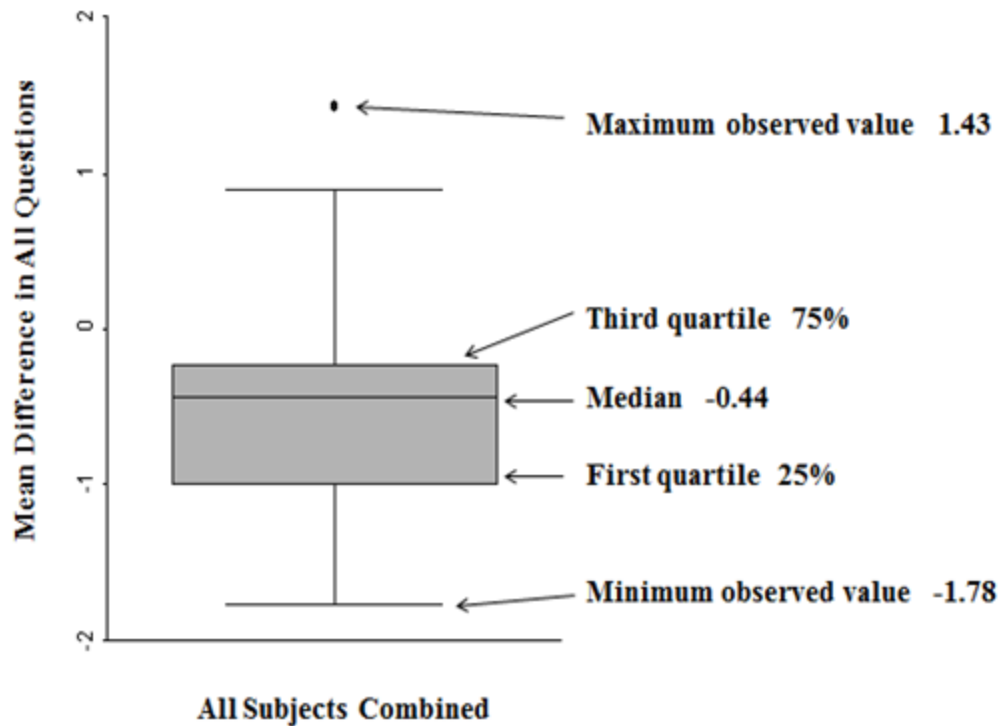

Figure 2. Change in score for all questions and all subjects

Figure 3 shows the mean change in score by gender. From this one can see that women showed a little more variability in their mean score changes than the men. However, the central tendency for both groups (as measured by the median) was very close. The mean change in score for women was -0.465 and for men -0.440. These differences were not significant employing a two-sample t-test[1] that yielded a

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[1]A t-test is a method used to assess whether the mean of two groups are statistically different from each other.

p-value[2] of 0.94. For the change in score to become significant[3] a difference of 0.67 would be necessary resulting in a p-value of less than 0.05. This graph shows that gender was essentially not a significant variable when comparing the responses of the pre- and post-questionnaire.
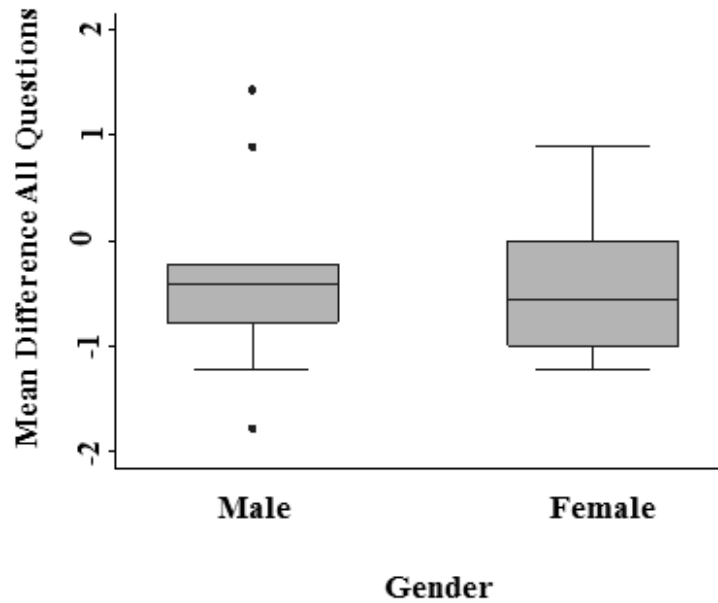

Figure 3. Change in score by gender

Figure 4 shows the change in score for each of the nine questions. Some clearly show greater variability than the others. A t-test for paired data (pre-test vs. post-test) was performed on each of the nine questions. Five of the questions (2, 3, 4, 6, and 8) showed significant change in scores indicating success in the training. Three of the

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[2]The p-value is a probability, with a value ranging from zero to one. If the p-value is 0.03, that means that there is a 3 percent chance of observing a difference as large as observed even if the two population means are identical.

[3]The term *significant* is seductive, and it is easy to misinterpret it. A result is said to be *statistically significant* when the result would be surprising if the populations were really identical.

questions (1, 5, and 7) showed no significant change while one (9) showed a significant lack of change in score.
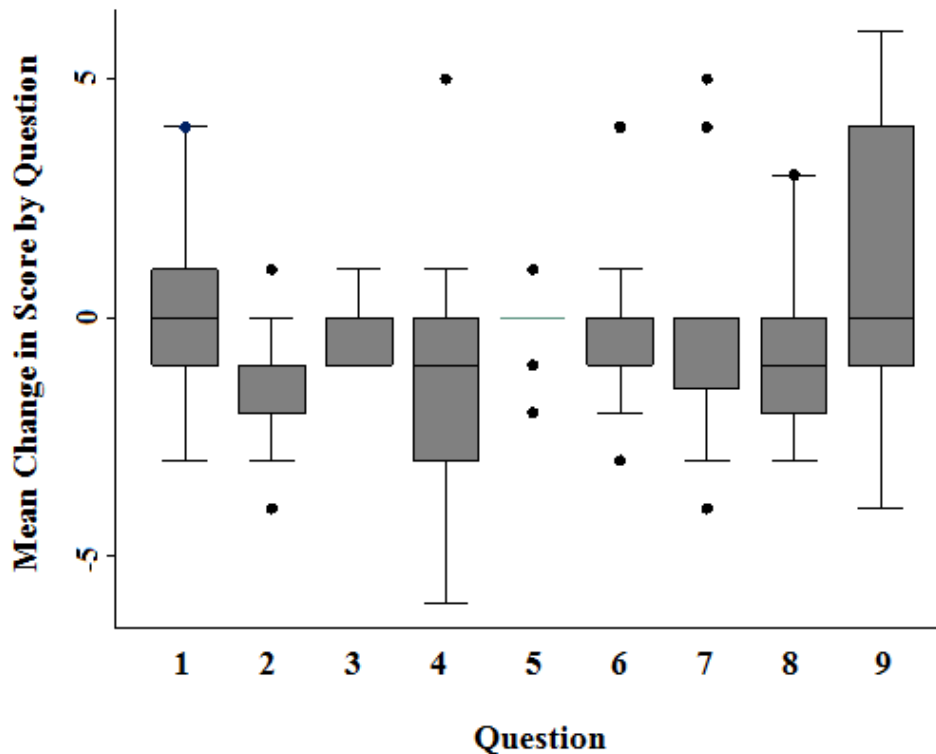

Figure 4. Change in score for questions

Figure 5 plots the change in mean score against the number of classes attended. The purpose of this graph was to evaluate the association between change in score and the number of classes attended. The line in Figures 5, 6, and 7 represents a "best fit" line to the data. The dots in Figures 5, 6, 7, and 8 represent students. In Figure 5 the line starts out flat and then slowly increases as the data increases. The term "lowess change attend" simply means that the line has been fitted to the data, which plots the change in score against the number of classes attended. Lowess refers to the statistical technique used to fit the line to the data.[4] It shows the trend in the data. The value plotted on the vertical

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[4]Lowess means "locally weighted scatterplot smoothing." It is a statistical

axis, "change in score," is the mean change in score. The change in score is calculated for each of the 9 questions by subtracting the pre-training score from the post-training score. With these 9 different scores the mean is calculated. This score, or value, is plotted along the vertical axis. Those students who showed large positive scores were ones where the scores on the post-training questions were higher than on the pre-training questions. Those students with large negative change scores tended to have lower scores on the post-training questionnaire compared to the pre-training questions.
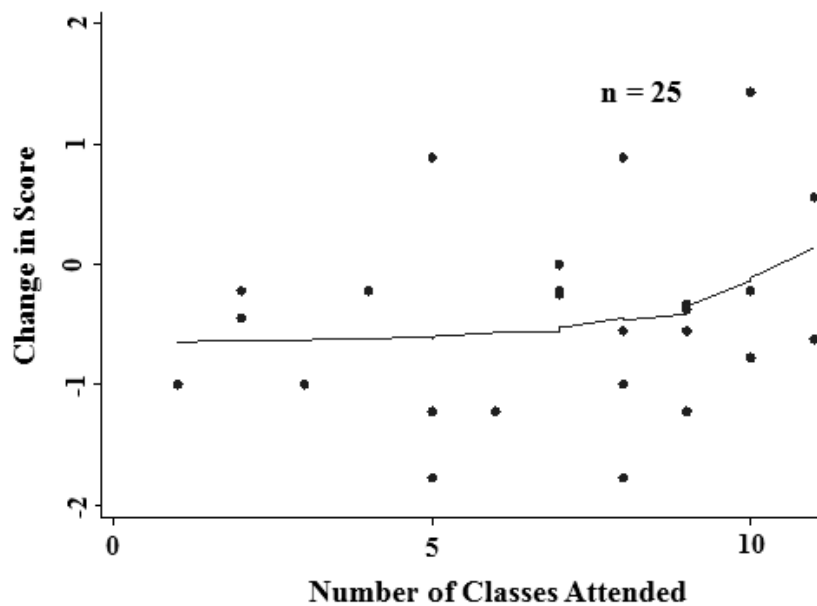

Figure 5. Change in score by classes attended

In Figure 5 the dots are the mean change in score plotted against the number of classes attended. While there is a slight trend upward, there is no demonstrated strong association or relationship between the number of classes attended and how a student responded in the pre- and post-questionnaire. The change in score does not appear to be strongly influenced by the number of classes attended. There are several possible

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technique utilized to get smoothed means from a set of linear data or data that does not fit a straight line.

reasons: one respondent failed to answer 5 of the 9 questions, numerous students who were unable to attend the training obtained the handouts, some students spoke with me about what had been taught in earlier sessions and generally the leaders of Christ Groups are fairly knowledgeable in selected topics.

Figure 6 shows change in the mean score against the age of the student. The "line" in the graph represents a "best fit" to the data. The dots are the mean change in score plotted against the age of the student. There does not appear to be any strong association between the change in score and the age of the student. The age of a person taking the biblical counseling training did not significantly affect their responses on the pre- and post-questionnaire.
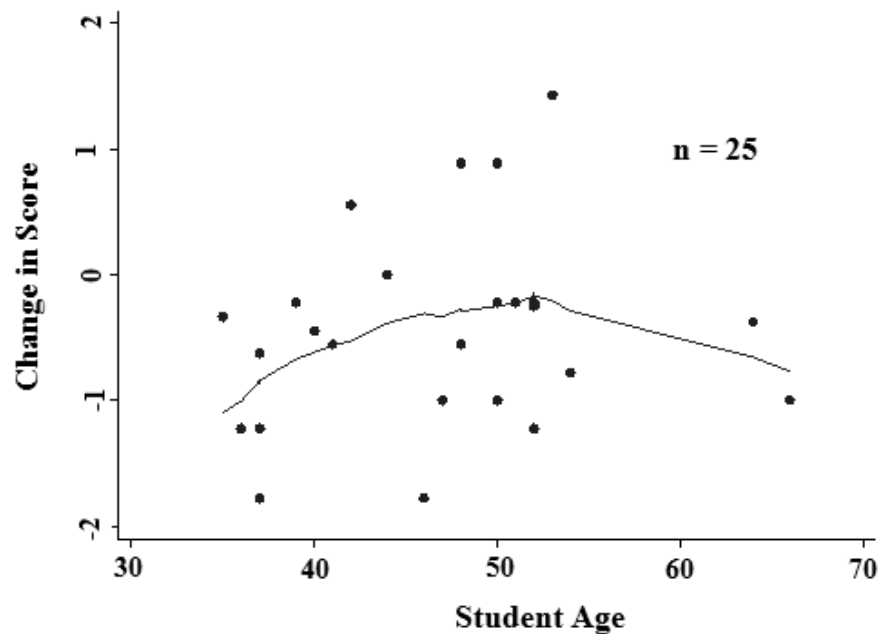

Figure 6. Change in score by age

Figure 7 plots the change in mean score against years of being saved. This plot is not a lowess plot like Figures 6 and 7. It is a least squares regression[5] plot and that is

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[5]A least-squares regression is a method for finding a line that summarizes the relationship between two variables.

why a straight line is shown. Of interest is the slope of this line to evaluate whether the mean change in score was related strongly to the years a student had been a Christian. The slope of the line in Figure 7 represents a slight but insignificant downward trend. Since the age when each individual came to Christ is not equal for all, it is not known how the trend might be influenced by these two factors (age combined with years being saved).
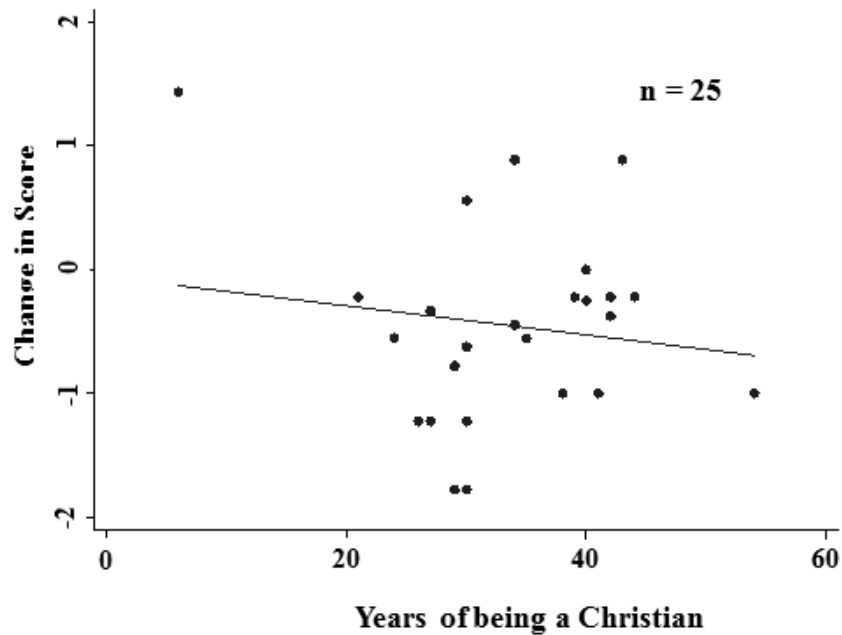
Figure 7. Change in score by years saved

Figure 8 plots the change in mean score against whether the students had counseling training or not. The training was given to 25 students. Twenty-one individuals had no counseling training and their mean change scores is plotted on the left side of the plot. Four individuals had training and their mean change scores are on the right side of the plot. Those students with high positive mean change scores (the highest was 1.42) were those with higher scores on their post-test. The lowest score on the left was -1.77. This individual had lower post-test scores compared to pre-test scores. The research data indicates this variable did not yield a trend that was easy to identify. In

other words, training at different ages, or lack of training, did not cause students to answer the questionnaires in an identifiable trend.
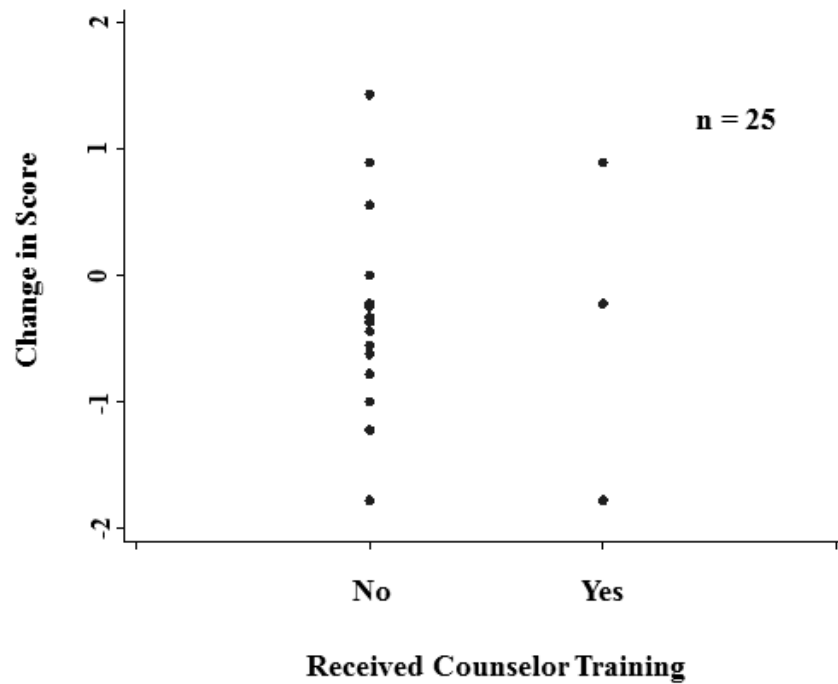

Figure 8. Change in score by counseling training

Overall, none of the predictor variables, such as gender, number of classes attended, age, years being saved, or previous counseling training seemed to, when evaluated separately, influence the mean change in score. Part of the reason for this may have been the small sample sizes employed for each of these sub-comparisons. Small sample size means low statistical power for being able to detect significant differences that might exist. However, for the pooled data overall, there was a significant decrease in pre-test and post-test scores ($p=0.004$), indicating a general overall success in the training provided. Question 9 had a negative (not successful) score but the amount of change is not considered statistically significant. Five of the questions (2, 3, 4, 6 and 8) had significant positive change (success). Three questions (1, 5, and 7) showed no significant change.

Table 3 summarizes the paired t-test analysis. The mean change is the mean of

all 25 change scores. The 95 percent confidence interval is the interval within which the

true mean difference for the change scores exists with 95 percent probability. Where the

interval includes zero the mean change score is not significantly different from zero. The

first question has a lower limit of the confidence interval of -0.53 and the 1.0 is the upper

limit. Since this range contains zero, the mean change score is not significant.

Table 3. Questionnaire summary

Question	Mean Change	95% Confidence Interval[6]	p-value
1	0.240	-0.53 to 1.0	0.520
2	1.240	0.77 to 1.7	0.000
3	0.250	0.03 to 0.47	0.015
4	1.430	0.39 to 2.5	0.005
5	0.043	-0.20 to 0.29	0.710
6	0.680	0.11 to 1.25	0.011
7	0.330	-0.64 to 1.3	0.480
8	0.880	0.32 to 1.4	0.022
9	-1.000	-2.3 to 0.35	0.140

Strengths of the Project

The first strength of this project was that the topics were considered to be of

great importance to everyone who received the training. Throughout the training, I

regularly received positive comments about the content and usefulness of the material.

Participants in the training readily understood that at one time or another, each of them

would have the opportunity to utilize biblical counseling principles and techniques.

Therefore, the training process needed very little in the way of outside motivation for the

participants to approach the training seriously. In fact, some students were able to

immediately put into practice what they were learning and benefit from the positive

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[6]A confidence interval is a range around a measurement that conveys how
precise the measurement is.

changes experienced in areas such as raising children, interacting with a spouse, or helping a friend.

A second strength was the selection process used to identify who would be trained. Christ Groups were formed about nine years ago and over the years great care was given as to who would be selected as leaders. Over time, a specific group of committed individuals surfaced and were implicitly viewed as the leaders of Christ Groups at Christ Fellowship. It was this group of individuals that were asked to take the training in the basics of biblical counseling. The Ministry Council understood the purpose of the project and concurred that Christ Group leaders would be on the front line to help and counsel others. Identifying committed individuals was a critical element to the success of this project.

The third strength was that Christ Fellowship currently has a Biblical Counseling ministry with five certified counselors and several more working towards certification. The participants in the training were aware that Christ Fellowship takes biblical counseling seriously. Having a counseling ministry in the church allows many within the church to experience on-going exposure to what biblical counseling teaches. A healthy counseling ministry creates enthusiasm because individuals interact with certified counselors, which often creates a desire in them to become increasingly skilled in counseling. As biblical counseling became part of the teaching ministry of Christ Fellowship it was easier for those in the church to recognize that many in the community needed to be taught the truths in Scripture and apply these truths to their lives.

Another strength of the project was the handouts that were provided for each session with a summary of the instruction. Participants were given more information than they could assimilate; however, several students expressed gratitude for the ability to refer to the class material at a later date.

A final strength was the support that the senior pastor and Ministry Council gave to the project. It is well known at Christ Fellowship that both Christ Groups and

Biblical Counseling are very important. When the leadership of the church visibly supports a ministry it gives those involved in that ministry encouragement and credibility.

Weaknesses of the Project

The single greatest weakness of this project was the questionnaire. Once the project was well underway I realized the pre- and post-training questionnaire would not render the quantity or quality of data needed to measure its effectiveness precisely. There should have been more questions to explore a student's knowledge of Scripture, application of Scripture, and ability to counsel. The questions were too few and too general to address counseling issues appropriately or to assess the true depth to which the students were changed by the training. Failure to obtain precise data is a detriment to evaluating the project's effectiveness.

A second weakness was the improper wording of three questions. Six of the nine questions were presented in such a way that a negative response would be considered positive or a success. Three of the questions (2, 4, and 5) were worded in such a way that success would require a positive response to the question. These three questions were later re-coded so that success would result in a negative change. If the training were successful (increase in confidence), all scores should be negative when comparing pre- with post-questionnaire results.

A third weakness of the project was the amount of information given to the participants. The eleven weeks of training focused on the necessity of biblical counseling, the sufficiency of Scripture, and ministering the Word. Specific instruction was given on a host of topics including anger, depression, guilt and repentance, forgiveness, trials and suffering, fear and worry, and sexual sin. Several participants requested that future instruction be focused and developed on one or two biblical counseling topics over 11 weeks.

The project was affected and weakened by the transition that took place among the three pastors on staff. About three months before the training began, the senior pastor

left Christ Fellowship for a position in California. When the training classes were offered Christ Groups were active. Within a month after the training was completed Christ Groups were temporarily suspended due to changes in job descriptions and the loss of a second pastor. Christ Groups would not restart for another year. This was a necessary adjustment, but it did much to diminish the impact of the training on the leaders of Christ Groups.

Theological Reflection

One of the reasons Christians are more likely to seek out a Christian psychologist than a pastor for counsel is because many pastors are not competent to counsel. As a pastor, I understand the pressures and time constraints that make it difficult to find time to read, study, and prepare for counseling in addition to sermon preparation and Bible studies. It is also true that some counselees want instant relief from their suffering and have little desire to change sinful thinking or behavior. These factors can make it easy for a pastor to become discouraged and view counseling as a waste of time. Nevertheless, I believe that counseling is still part of a pastor's calling, and in order to counsel effectively there must be preparation. If pastors do not take the time and effort to become competent counselors, to whom will the people turn? The evidence tells us they will turn to psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers.

The Word of God is not only powerful from the pulpit on Sunday but also in the counseling office throughout the week. The same Scriptures that move congregations to repentance are able to convict counselees of sin as well. Pastors today need to embrace the sufficiency of Christ and his Word. Paul told the Ephesians his prayer for them was that they might "have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph 3:18-19). The grace of Christ is sufficient, and he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. Christ lives in us; therefore, we have everything we need.

Personal Reflection

I have found it very enjoyable and satisfying to see how the Lord has worked in my life since I have gone into the ministry. Ten years ago I began having members of my congregation come into my office with "issues," and I had no idea what to tell them! Fast forward to the present and I find myself teaching some of the same people the basics in biblical counseling (2 Tim 2:2).

When I came on staff at Christ Fellowship each pastor did as he thought best in counseling. Years later our church has an active biblical counseling ministry with five certified counselors and several more people working on certification.

I have found the more proficient I become in biblical counseling, the more I recognize the flaws in my own marriage and relationships. I increasingly notice subtle ways I sin in speech, actions, and intentions. I was not totally ignorant of these tendencies prior to my exposure to biblical counseling, but they come sharply into focus as I more fully understand the deceitfulness of my own heart. It has become evident to me that I need to consistently examine my heart in order to honor and glorify God in all things. This will be a lifelong personal project.

Conclusion

The biblical counseling training was given in the spring of 2011 after a year and a half of study, research, and planning. The purpose and goals of this project have been outlined, approved, and principally achieved. The goal of the pre- and post-questionnaire was to measure the immediate impact of the training upon the students. The goal of the previous two sections was to personalize and summarize the impact of this project on my life. In many ways the influence of this project on each of us can be quantified. What is not known is what God plans to do with those who were exposed to this training. I hope that God will use this project as a seed that will bear much spiritual fruit for his glory.

In my counseling ministry I have had more opportunities to share Christ and

expound on God's Word than I have had at any other time. Perfect strangers, who do not know Christ as their Lord and Savior, voluntarily come into my office, with problems so compelling they are eager to hear what God has to say to them in his Word. As a result, numerous individuals have accepted Christ into their lives.

It is exciting for me to know that when I one day leave Christ Fellowship, those whom I have trained will continue on, sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ, applying God's Word to problems and having a front row seat watching God work in people's lives. I cannot think of a more fulfilling work and ministry.

APPENDIX 1

LETTER TO POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

February 27, 2011

John and Jane Smith
1234 ABC Avenue
City, State, Zip

Dear John and Jane;

Can you believe that March is almost here! It is amazing how quickly time passes!

You may know that for the last two years I have been enrolled at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky in a program called, "Doctor of Ministry in Biblical Counseling." I am currently in the dissertation phase of the process.

According to Southern Seminary rules, a Doctor of Ministry degree must be practical within a church setting. In other words, this dissertation must 'do' something for a local congregation as opposed to simply 'study' something.

Starting on March 13 I will be teaching a Biblical Education class on the basics of biblical counseling. The intent of this class is not to make you a counselor but rather provide exposure to what the Bible has to say in various areas. I am asking the leadership of Christ Fellowship, Christ Group leaders, their apprentices and wives to help me in two ways. First, I am asking you to commit to attend eleven classes covering an array of topics listed below. Second, I am asking each of you to voluntarily answer a very short questionnaire before the training begins and to fill out the same questionnaire, with one additional questions, after all of the training is complete. The additional question will ask how many classes you attended. The purpose of the questionnaire is to measure the knowledge you gained from the instruction; a very important component in a dissertation I can assure you!

For your information, this is the teaching schedule for this class:

1.   March 6—Administer the pre-training questionnaire, share some introductory information and answer any preliminary questions.

2.   March 13—Begin teaching on "The Essential of Biblical Counseling."

3.   March 20 and 27—Communication (2 lessons)

4.   April 3 Repentance

5.   April 10—Confession and Forgiveness

6.   April 17—Parenting

7.   April 24—Anger

8.   May 1—Fear, Worry and Anxiety

9.   May 8—Depression: Its Causes and Cure

10. May 15—Sexual Sins

11. May 22—Trials and Suffering

12. May 29—Administer the questionnaire and seek class feedback.

Just so you know, this class will be open to anyone in the church; however, only the church leaders, Christ Group leaders, apprentices and their wives will be offered the questionnaire.

Please let me know if you will be able to attend so I can have the appropriate amount of paperwork available when the class begins.

I hope to hear from you soon!

Thanks for your help,

Pastor Ken

APPENDIX 2

PRE-SEMINAR AND POST-SEMINAR
QUESTIONNAIRE

Agreement to Participate:
The research in which you are about to participate is designed to measure your confidence level and your knowledge level relating to helping or counseling another person. This research is being conducted by Ken Van Kooten for purposes of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will simply answer the questions before we begin training and answer the same questions at the end of training. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

Section 1: The first section of this questionnaire will obtain some demographic information about the people taking this class:

1. Please write your name: _____

2. Circle the number of years since you came to faith in Christ:
    1-5 years   6-10 years   11-15 years   20+ years

3. Age
    _____   Less than 20
    _____   20-30
    _____   31-40
    _____   41-50
    _____   51-60
    _____   61+

Section 2: The second section of this questionnaire deals with your confidence in counseling someone.

Please circle the number that best describes your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

1. If a friend began sharing details of their personal problems, I would feel comfortable helping them with insights from the Bible.
                    Agree __ __ __ __ __ __ __ Disagree
                            1   2   3   4   5   6   7

2. I believe it is best to refer someone with personal problems to a professional (Doctor, Christian psychologist, psychiatrists, etc.).
                    Agree __ __ __ __ __ __ __ Disagree
                            1   2   3   4   5   6   7

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3. I believe the Bible is sufficient and the sole source needed for counseling a troubled believer or non-believer concerning all matters pertaining to life and godliness.

    Agree __ __ __ __ __ __ __ Disagree
            1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. I believe the best way to counsel or help a believer or non-believer is by using the best mental health techniques available combined with insights found in the Bible.

    Agree __ __ __ __ __ __ __ Disagree
            1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. I am familiar with the Bible and feel it does not have much to say about how to counsel a believer or non-believer with their personal problems.

    Agree __ __ __ __ __ __ __ Disagree
            1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. I believe I am adequately equipped to help other troubled believers or non-believers with their problem(s).

    Agree __ __ __ __ __ __ __ Disagree
            1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. I believe a layperson can provide genuine, spiritual help to a believer or non-believer.

    Agree __ __ __ __ __ __ __ Disagree
            1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. I would be confident giving biblically-based counsel to a troubled believer or non-believer.

    Agree __ __ __ __ __ __ __ Disagree
            1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. I believe the key to helping a believer or non-believer lies in equipping the person with biblical or non-biblical skills to effectively deal with problem(s).

    Agree __ __ __ __ __ __ __ Disagree
            1 2 3 4 5 6 7

10. Have you ever had any training in counseling? Yes ____   No _____

Additional question in the Post-Seminar Questionnaire:

Training in the basics of biblical counseling has been conducted for eleven weeks.
How many of the sessions have you attended? _____

APPENDIX 3

THE FOUR RULES OF COMMUNICATION
BASED ON EPHESIANS 4:15, 25-32

Introduction

Many of the problems in relationships, friendships, and marriages is related to communication problems.

Many people think that good relationships develop automatically and are the result of the absence of problems or conflicts.

1. One of your kids finds a "best friend" only to have the relationship wither.
2. A woman thinks she has found her knight in white shining armor only to discover that underneath the shining armor he has bad breath and stinky feet!
3. Before the wedding some find out and come to terms with the fact that they are getting married to another sinner.

The truth is that good relationships and good marriages are not built on the absence of problems because everyone experiences problems. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23).

In every relationship (relatives, extended family), in every friendship, and in every marriage, there are two people with different backgrounds, vocabularies, and ways of doing life who are coming together. There can be instant incompatibility, conflict, or chaos. Without some way of solving problems or conflict, there are going to be bigger problems. Look at the current leadership of the church; pastors, council, search committee, and various other committees or gatherings. Without godly communication each of these groups would be a mess.

Good relationships are not built on the absence of problems but can and are being built by those who honor Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (2 Cor 5:9; Rom 8:28-29).

This lesson deals with Ephesians 4:15, 25-32. The first three chapters of this epistle speak about the treasure we have in Jesus Christ. The next three chapters are practical applications of what it means to live like a child of Jesus Christ. In a nutshell, our relationship with Jesus Christ and our walk with Him should be evident.

Verses 17-24 contrast our walk as believers with our former walk. We used to live by feelings but this is not the way we are to live now. Verse 25 starts off by discussing the area of communication. Paul tells us that once we are saved we are not to bring our old ways of communicating into the new relationship because it will not work. The old way of solving communication problems was to merely to talk about them. The Biblical way of solving problems is to talk about them with a view of reaching a solution.

<h1 style="text-align:center">Guidelines</h1>

Paul gives four guidelines or rules of communication. They are meant to prevent and solve problems in the home, church, work, with friends, spouses, etc. The purpose for these rules is to address conflict and problems biblically and to promote unity in all relationships.

Be Lovingly Honest (Eph 4:15, 25)

We are to not only put off lying, but replace lying with truth-telling.

Be open and truthful.

This is a command and not something over, above, and beyond what is required of us.

We are not to avoid, evade, manipulate, or clam up

First Corinthians 2:11 tells us that no one really knows the thoughts of another man except that person.

We are not to give opinions, ideas, or conclusions that do not continuously speak the truth.

Examples of dishonesty are lying, deceit, exaggerating, embellishing.

Some people really like this rule because they pride themselves in being very honest (blunt) about the truth. Often this is the rule with everyone but themselves. They are quick to be honest about the sin in others but not in themselves.

The goal of honesty is not to ventilate or get something off your chest.

The goal is to bring conflict/problems in the open and solve them biblically.

One characteristic of a believer is to focus on others (Phil 2:3-4).

Keep Current (Eph 4:26-27)

1. "Keeping current" means that problems are addressed in a timely manner. Verse 26 states in part, "Do not let the sun go down on your anger." This seems to imply that conflict(s) should be resolved the same day.

2. There are times when one tries to keep current but it can come out as unloading ("I feel better and then we are done talking. The conversation is over!") The goal of godly communication is to solve problems or conflict biblically. Unloading one's concerns onto someone else and walking away does not keep current; it merely shifts the conflict/problem to another person. Nothing is solved.

3. Other ways to fail to keep current are:

   To explode

   Change the subject

   Get self-righteous

   Ignore the relationship by giving the cold shoulder

Saying, "That's all I have to say about that" and walk away

ALSO: some live by the "gunny sack principle" (v. 26). This represents the converse of keeping current. The gunnysack principle occurs when someone gathers and holds onto conflicts and problems instead of solving them as they occur. Eventually the problems become unmanageable and the contents of the "sack" are emptied all at once.

4. Sometimes it is difficult, if not impossible, to bring up difficult, sticky or emotionally-charged subjects. There is just a ton of emotional freight attached to the subject. Here are six questions to ask before bringing up this type of subject:
    a. Do I have the <u>facts</u> right? (Prov 18:13). Get the facts and get them straight.
    b. Should <u>love</u> hide it? (1Peter 4:8). Here is the question: "Is it sinful?"
        1.   Is this a **preference**, **conviction,** or a **sin** problem?
        2.   Just because I don't like it or prefer it does not make it sin
        3.   Has God's Word been violated?
        4.   You and I are not the standard. God's Word is the standard.
        5.   Do I have responsibility for that person?
        6.   Sometimes a person needs to let the reproofs of life deal with them.
    c. Is my <u>timing</u> right? (Prov 15:23b). Late at night, tired, lots going on, etc.
    d. Is my <u>attitude</u> right?
        1.   What is my goal?
        2.   Am I bringing this issue up for God's glory or my benefit?
    e. Are my words loving, constructive and solution-oriented?
    f. Have I prayed for God's help? "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your path straight" (Prov 3:5).

Attack the Problem, Not the Person
(Eph 4:29-30)

1. What does it mean to "attack the person?" It means using unwholesome words that attack a person's character, words that slice and dice a person. These are words that attack, tear down, and rip apart. Here are some examples:
    a. Stupid, idiot, lazy, good for nothing, jerk
    b. I expected that, you are just like your dad/mom, you are no good
    c. You are a slob, worthless, dumb, you can't do anything right

2. What does it mean to "attack the problem?" The "problem" is what the person says or does, not the character of the person. Attacking the problem is a godly goal:
    a. Pleases God
    b. Allows us to become more like Jesus Christ
    c. Solves conflict
    d. Promotes unity with believers

    Examples of goals that are not godly are:
    a. Getting the "heat" off
    b. Venting to get the pressure off
    c. Speaking to make my life better
    d. Speaking to make the other person change
    e. "I have peace about this"

James 3:8 talks about the tongue being a small but poisonous part of the body. Other passages call the tongue an open tomb and a piecing of the sword. Attacking a person by-passes the conflict and does not solve the problem. This grieves the Holy Spirit.

Act, Don't React (Eph 4:31-32)

1. Put off communication that is a reaction (Eph 4:31)
   a. Types of reaction communication:
      1. Bitterness—a smoldering resentment
      2. Wrath—flaring outbursts of wild rage
      3. Anger—internal smoldering, settled indignation or hostility that frequently seeks revenge
      4. Clamor—harsh contention and strife, public quarreling, brawling
      5. Slander—speech that causes injury, on-going defamation of another person that rises from a bitter heart
      6. Malice—the desire to harm others or see them suffer
   b. The natural tendency—Genesis 3:8-13: Blame others, be defensive, shift the blame, use others to excuse ourselves

2. Put on communication that acts correctly and biblically (Eph 4:32). 'Put off' by 'putting on.' Replace evil reactions with godly responses.
   a. Definitions of godly responses:
      1. Kindness—benevolent, helpful
      2. Tenderheartedness—compassionate, sympathetic
      3. Forgivingness—giving up your right to revenge or hold a grudge

3. Conflicts occur only when each person reacts.

If we do not put off these types of sinful reactions, we soon become a Genesis 3:18-31 type of person. We blame others and become defensive with our own sins.

We do this with practice and hard work. We cannot change the other person but we can control our response.

Read Colossians 4:6 and Luke 6:45.

It is not natural to respond biblically. We need a plan that thinks through steps and actions so we do not sin.

Summary:
Be lovingly honest   Keep current   Attack the problem, not the person   Act, don't react

APPENDIX 4

COUNSELING ANGER

Introduction

1. Often the protest is offered that when someone appears angry, he or she is merely frustrated, irritable, moody, bothered, annoyed, or upset.

2. We all recognize anger when we see it yet try to minimize its existence in our own lives.

3. Some deny or minimize their anger.

Why discuss anger?

1. Frequently the core of a difficulty includes the element of anger.

2. No thorough and lasting godly change can take place until the root of anger is addressed effectively.

What is Anger?

1. Anger is relatively easy to describe, yet tricky to define.

2. It can be perceived in others and physically felt when it rises in our own veins.

3. Anger has several key ideas
    a. It is a "whole-person" active response
    b. It is an "active response." It is something we do.
    c. It is a response against *something*.
    d. It is a negative moral judgment. It opposes whatever we determine to be evil and all offenders must change, be punished or be removed.
    e. Anger expresses a value system, beliefs, and motives.

4. The Bible is filled with examples of both God and man becoming angry.

Three Biblical Categories of Anger

1. Divine anger
    a. There are several hundred references to God's anger in the Bible.

    b. The various words for anger can be translated, "to be wroth, to provoke, vex, make angry, wrath, rage and to be angry."

    c. Divine anger is described as "hot" or "burns" and virtually always is directed at sinners and their sin.

    d. Divine anger is God's perfect, pure, settled opposition to evil (Deut 32:41; Pss 2:4-5; John 3:36; Rom 1:18; cf. 2:5-9).

2. Divine anger reflects his accurate perception of evil and his holy hatred of it.

3. Righteous human anger
    a. This category includes the anger of Jesus as both God and man.
    b. Righteous human anger imitates God's anger in that it is our response to perceived evil (Exod 32:19-20; cf. 32:9-10, 33-35).

4. Sinful human anger
    a. The majority of human anger is sinful
    b. James 1:13-15 and 3:13-4:12 describe in detail the subtleties and clever displays of our evil, deceitful desires.
    c. Angry people respond with their whole being (thoughts, emotions, affections, words, actions, etc.) to those people they perceive to be wrong or harmful to their own interests.

When is Anger Sinful?

1. Anger is natural to human beings for two reasons
    a. God created us in his image with the capacity for godly anger
    b. Ever since "the Fall" our response to circumstances has been so corrupted that even righteous anger can easily degenerate into something sinful.

2. When is anger sinful?
    a. When it is for the wrong reason
        1. Selfishness
            a. Cain and Abel (Gen 4)
            b. Ahab and Naboth's vineyard (1 Kgs 21)
            c. Herodias against John the Baptist (Matt 14:3-4; Mark 6:17)
            d. Saul against David (1 Sam 18:7)
            e. Older brother and the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32)
        2. Anger against God (this accuses God of evil and wrongdoing)
            a. David when Uzzah reached out his hand to steady the ark
            b. Jonah when Nineveh repented (Jonah 3:10-4:10)
            c. Job's wife (Job 2)
            d. King Asa (2 Chr 16)
            e. Jewish crowd against Jesus (John 7:23)
        3. When it occurs over hurt feelings, jealousy, lack of recognition or our "rights" are being denied (see Jas 4:1)
        4. When we allow anger to control us (Prov 16:32; 25:28)
        5. When anger becomes the dominant feature in a person's life

      a. If we are known as being touchy, easily annoyed, sensitive, irritable

      b. If words like "hostile, angry, and easily provoked" characterize this person.

      c. Are acts of kindness wasted on such a person? Meaning, they don't change.

      d. When it involves brooding or fretting, which means to constantly dwell on some personal slight until an original small annoyance is built up into an enormous offense (Prov 30:33; Eph 4:26-27).

6. When we keep a running record of how we have been mistreated

7. When we pretend we are not angry

8. When an attack is made on the person with whom we are angry

      a. Active anger or physical revenge

         1. Saul against his son Jonathan (1 Sam 20:30)

         2. Cain killing his brother Abel

      b. Passive anger or silent revenge

         1. The treatment David gave to Shimei

         2. The interaction of Solomon with Shimei

9. Anger is sinful when we attack or hurt a substitute

      a. Saul was angry with Jonathan instead of David

      b. Moses smashing the tablets

      c. Moses striking the rock

When is Anger Right or Righteous?

1. Anger, in and of itself, is not sinful (Eph 4:26)

      a. Jesus drove out money-changers (Matt 21:12-13; John 2:13-17)

      b. Jesus was angry with the Pharisee's for their stubborn hearts (Mark 3:5)

2. When Jesus was angry he consistently displayed righteous anger

3. For sinners, what may have started out as righteous and justifiable anger can soon degenerate into something perverted, self-serving and sinful.

4. Righteous anger can become unrighteous anger in two ways

      a. By ventilation of anger—blowing up!

      b. Internalization of anger—clamming up!

5. Four distinguishing marks of righteous anger

      a. When God does not get what he deserves and we get angry about it. It is recognizing that God is somehow dishonored, disrespected, defiled, or besmirched.

      b. Anger from an accurate perception that sin is any violation of God's Word (Rom 3:23; 1 John 3:4).

         1. Righteous anger focuses on God, his Kingdom, his rights and his concerns, not on me and my kingdom, my rights and my concerns.

         2. Righteous anger focuses on how people offend God and his Name, not me and my name.

     c. Righteous anger accompanies other godly qualities
       1. When cleansing the temple Jesus displayed extreme passion without resorting to cursing, screaming, rage, self-pity, or despair.
       2. The anger of Jesus sought to defend the poor, honor God the Father, administer justice, confront evil, and call everyone to repentance and restoration.
       3. There are few examples of when Jesus got angry but each focused on the honor of God and retained godly qualities and expressions.
     d. The first example of godly human anger was Saul in 1 Samuel 11:1-6. In this passage Saul experienced the Holy Spirit coming upon him in a powerful way so that he pressed the military campaign and freed Jabesh Gilead.

6. The absence of righteous anger when it is appropriate is as sinful as the presence of sinful anger (Heb 1:9).

What is at the Heart of Anger?

1. It is common for sinners to want to blame others
     a. A difficult co-worker
     b. Traffic
     c. An uncooperative spouse
     d. A self-willed child
     e. A misbehaving puppy
     f. A piece of equipment that refuses to work properly
     g. Childhood trauma
     h. Unmet emotional needs

2. Jesus tells us exactly where anger comes from—the heart (Mark 7:21-23)
     a. External circumstances may give occasion for anger to surface but what comes boiling over the top comes from inside of us, not outside of us.
     b. The only way to understand your anger is to examine your heart.

3. James 4:1-3 gives reasons why the heart is the cause of anger
     a. Anger arises from entrenched desires and pleasures that "battle" within us
     b. Anger is from unmet "desires" and "wants" that want to rule our heart.
     c. Anger comes from selfish motives rather than to delight in God and glorify Him.

How Can Someone Know if a Good Desire
Is Now a Ruling Desire?

1. A good desire becomes inordinate when a person is willing to sin to get it.
     a. Esau became furious when he failed to get the blessing (Gen 27)
     b. Balaam beat and cursed his donkey (Num 22)
     c. King Balak became angry when Israel was not cursed (Num 24)
     d. The Pharisees were angry with Jesus (John 7; 8:59; 10:31)
     e. Herod murdered infants to protect his throne (Matt 2)
     f. The Jews became furious with Jesus (Luke 4:20-30)

2. Our response to these questions will reveal if our desires are ruling or not:
    a. Are we content with God's direction?
    b. Do we display godly contentment?
    c. Are we sullen, depressed or angry?

The Development of Rebellion

1. This process can be traced through five distinct steps
    a. First there is a sense of hurt caused by an offense, whether real or imagined (Prov 18:14)
    b. If not dealt with, this "seed" can grow into a root of bitterness (Heb 12:15)
    c. The third step is anger. This is not a momentary explosion of anger but rather depicts a person who is described or characterized as an angry or hot-tempered individual (Prov 22:24-25).
    d. The next indicator is stubbornness or insubordination
        1. First Samuel 15:23 provides the picture of a backsliding heifer pushing her front hooves into the ground to counteract her master who is trying to push or pull her forward
        2. This person is guilty of idolatry because of their belief that they are the ruler and controller of their own destiny.
    e. The final result is full-blown rebellion
        1. This anger has progressed beyond the picture of an angry man and moved on to that of a biblical fool.
        2. The book of Proverbs has much to say about this type of person
            a. Despises wisdom and instruction (1:7)
            b. Hates knowledge (1:22)
            c. Enjoys devising mischief (10:23)
            d. Is right in their own eyes (12:15)
            e. Is quick to anger (12:16)
            f. Hates to depart from evil (13:19)
            g. Rejects his father's instruction (15:5)
            h. Despises his mother and/or father (15:20)
            i. Will not discuss any viewpoint but his own (18:2)
            j. Provokes others to strife and anger by his words (18:6)
            k. Is quarrelsome or contentious (20:3)
            l. Repeats his folly or foolishness (26:11)
            m. Trusts in his own heart (28:26)
            n. Cannot resolve conflicts (29:9)
            o. Gives full vent to his anger (29:11)

Conclusion

This discussion contends that anger is a whole-person, active response against something that is perceived to be negative in judgment. Anger has a range of levels from rage and bitterness to irritability and moodiness. At its core, anger is the expression of the

ruling desires within the heart that say, "I desire" or "I demand" (Jas 4:1-3). The root of anger is selfish, entrenched desires that battle within the heart for control. No lasting godly change can occur until the root of anger is dealt with through confession, repentance, and embracing the grace of God. The greatest reason to turn from anger is that it displeases, dishonors, and offends the Lord and Savior.

APPENDIX 5

PRE-PROJECT QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Table A1. Pre-project questionnaire responses

Statement	Number of participants that answered each survey statement agree (1) through disagree (7)							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Avg
1. If a friend began sharing details of their personal problems, I would feel comfortable helping them with insights from the Bible.	0	9	8	2	2	2	1	3.83
2. I believe it is best to refer someone with personal problems to a professional	2	2	3	2	8	2	4	4.48
3. I believe the Bible is sufficient and the sole source needed for counseling a troubled believer or non-believer concerning all matters pertaining to life and godliness.	15	5	2	0	0	0	0	1.59
4. I believe the best way to counsel or help a believer or non-believer is by using the best mental health techniques available combined with insights found in the Bible.	4	3	1	4	1	5	4	4.18
5. I am familiar with the Bible and feel it does not have much to say about how to counsel a believer or non-believer with their personal problems.	0	0	0	1	0	2	20	6.78
6. I believe I am adequately equipped to help other troubled believers or non-believers with their problem(s).	0	0	6	7	5	3	2	4.48
7. I believe a layperson can provide genuine, spiritual help to a believer or non-believer.	9	5	5	1	0	3	0	2.43

Table A1—Continued. Pre-project questionnaire responses

8. I would be confident giving biblically-based counsel to a troubled believer or non-believer.	1	4	3	4	4	4	3	4.71
9. I believe the key to helping a believer or non-believer lies in equipping the person with biblical or non-biblical skills to effectively deal with problem(s).	7	5	4	3	0	2	1	2.72

APPENDIX 6

POST-PROJECT QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Table A2. Post-project questionnaire responses

Statement	Number of participants that answered each survey statement agree (1) through disagree (7)							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Avg
1. If a friend began sharing details of their personal problems, I would feel comfortable helping them with insights from the Bible.	0	9	8	2	2	2	1	3.29
2. I believe it is best to refer someone with personal problems to a professional	0	0	2	3	4	7	8	5.66
3. I believe the Bible is sufficient and the sole source needed for counseling a troubled believer or non-believer concerning all matters pertaining to life and godliness.	17	6	0	0	0	1	0	1.45
4. I believe the best way to counsel or help a believer or non-believer is by using the best mental health techniques available combined with insights found in the Bible.	2	0	0	2	2	8	10	5.50
5. I am familiar with the Bible and feel it does not have much to say about how to counsel a believer or non-believer with their personal problems.	0	0	0	0	1	2	21	1.58
6. I believe I am adequately equipped to help other troubled believers or non-believers with their problem(s).	1	2	9	3	6	2	1	3.87
7. I believe a layperson can provide genuine, spiritual help to a believer or non-believer.	11	8	1	0	1	1	2	2.29

8. I would be confident giving biblically-based counsel to a troubled believer or non-believer.	2	6	7	5	3	2	1	3.42
9. I believe the key to helping a believer or non-believer lies in equipping the person with biblical or non-biblical skills to effectively deal with problem(s).	6	6	1	0	2	5	4	3.29

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ABSTRACT

EQUIPPING LAY LEADERS IN THE BASICS OF BIBLICAL
COUNSELING AT CHRIST FELLOWSHIP,
EVERSON, WASHINGTON

Kenneth Dale Van Kooten, D.Min.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Heath B. Lambert

The purpose of this project was to train group leaders in the basics of biblical counseling so that they may effectively address the spiritual needs of small groups at Christ Fellowship in Everson, Washington.

Chapter 1 describes the history of Christ Fellowship, its present ministries, and a demographic analysis of the surrounding cities.

Chapter 2 examines the biblical and theological basis for this project.

Chapter 3 examines the history of counseling. How did counseling shift from the domain of the church to the mental health establishment? What has caused the emergence of the biblical counseling movement?

Chapter 4 presents an outline of this project. The purpose of this chapter is to supply detailed information anticipating that other churches may want to use this material in their own ministry setting.

Chapter 5 evaluates the effectiveness of this project. The information gathered by the research instruments determined the project's level of success.

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