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EQUIPPING SMALL GROUP LEADERS AT TROY FIRST
BAPTIST CHURCH TO DISCIPLE MEMBERS USING
CONCEPTS OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING

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To Kennedy Hayashi, a faithful follower of Christ, my sister in Christ and friend, bride
and the mother of our two beautiful daughters.

She inspires me to be a better follower of Christ, husband who gives sacrificially, and
father to our beautiful children. She faithfully models Christ-like humility and
encouraged me to believe that I was capable of accomplishing this project

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PREFACE

This project was completed in large part due to the urgency I have sensed in the task of disciple-making. I am humbled and thankful to my Lord Jesus Christ who saved me from the depth of my sin and purchased me with His blood. I am thankful that God has allowed me to utilize this project for the furtherance of His gospel.

I thank the Lord for placing me in a family with a godly mother, Yukiko Hayashi, who faithfully modeled Christlikeness in the home. I came to know the saving grace of Jesus Christ at sixteen because of her love for the gospel and her fervent prayer. My growth in love for the church and God's Word was evident in the early years of my spiritual journey. I praise God for the major milestone in my family when my father, Takakazu Hayashi, came to know the saving grace of Jesus Christ in 2012.

I am forever grateful for my loving and affirming siblings, who have spoken truth in love into my life. I thank God for Takayuki Hayashi, who serves as a pastor missionary; Kazuyuki Hayashi, for his diligence in the careful, articulate study as a Christian professor and PhD student; and Chrissy Hayashi for the impact she has had upon my family and her faithful work in mission in Japan. I would not be where I am today in full-time ministry in the local church if it were not for the encouragement and prayer I received from my siblings.

Finally, to say that I am grateful for my wife, Kennedy, is a gross understatement. She continues to show me grace, patience, kindness, and love. Words are not enough to begin to describe how grateful I am for my wonderful wife, mother of our children, my dearest friend, and my closest companion. Kennedy has shown and supported me with her steadfast love and causes me daily to want to walk and grow in Christlikeness.

I am thankful for our two beautiful daughters, Kaede Selah and Anna Karis, as well, as we continue to grow as a family.

My hope and prayer are that this project would serve and equip the saints in the local church to begin a world revolution through the local movement of the gospel for the sake of the gospel.

Jonathan Hayashi

Troy, Missouri

December 2020

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The mission statement of Troy First Baptist Church is “Helping people to know, love, and follow Jesus Christ.” The church demonstrates the vision by focusing on five specific purposes: (1) to belong, (2) to grow, (3) to serve, (4) to tell, and (5) to worship God. The purposes promote the vision statement of Troy First Baptist Church, “Where Love Shines” by glorifying God.¹ Biblical counseling develops disciples. Paul mentions in Galatians, “They will continue until Christ is fully developed in your lives” (Gal 4:19-20). Biblical counseling supports the mission and vision of Troy First Baptist Church by equipping the church to display the glory throughout the nations (2 Cor 3:18).

Context

Troy First Baptist Church has a long history, spanning over 180 years. Troy First Baptist Church is located in the suburbs of the greater St. Louis area in Troy, Missouri. The city of Troy is a growing rural area surrounded by little towns. Troy First Baptist Church is located between rural and suburban areas. For the past ten years, the gentrification of the metropolitan city of St. Louis has led to suburbanization with a high number of people moving to the area. With this move came a great number of people groups with mental illness, substance abuse addictions, and low-income housing needs. The need for counseling (secular psychology) became essential within the community. Troy First Baptist Church sensed the need with the change of demographics in the community, yet the church was uncertain of how to deal with counseling issues. Many

¹ Troy First Baptist Church, “Our Central Purpose at Troy First,” accessed January 11, 2018, <http://www.troyfirst.com/content.cfm?id=2044>.

lost souls are saved and baptized at Troy First Baptist Church; however, as fast as people come through the doors, other people slip out the backdoor and too often end up in the same old lifestyle in which they began.

Troy First Baptist Church teaches primarily through expositional preaching. Sunday school classes are a primary means of Bible teaching with added Wednesday evening Bible activities and studies. However, the church members are unaware of the available resources that biblical counseling offers.

Currently, counseling at Troy First Baptist Church occurs with the senior pastor for an initial meeting (assessment). Often after the initial meeting, people are referred out to Agape Christian counseling (integrationist approach). The integrationist approach often takes a greater emphasis on secular methods rather than scriptural approach, which often disagrees with the idea that the Bible should be used in counseling. Biblical counseling communicates that Scripture alone is sufficient for all life matters.² The only counseling offered by Troy First Baptist Church is for funeral arrangements and pre-marital counseling, which both are required based on bylaws and church policy. Counseling regularly, in group settings or one-on-one, is rarely seen or is even frowned upon by church members as pastors are not “state licensed counselors,” which can lead to some legal issues.³ In the past, Celebrate Recovery (a Christian twelve-step recovery program adopted from Alcoholic Anonymous) was offered; however, Celebrate Recovery shifted to a new church six years ago.

Troy First Baptist Church has many seasoned members who are equipped with biblical knowledge yet are not presently being utilized by the local church to the fullest extent. These seasoned members serve in the greeter’s ministry, coffee ministry, music

² John F. MacArthur, Jr. and Wayne A. Mack, *Introduction to Biblical Counseling* (Dallas: Nelson Reference, 1994), 50.

³ Jay E. Adams, *Is All Truth God’s Truth?* (Stanley, NC: Institute for Nouthetic Studies, 2004), 2.

ministry, or a few serve as Sunday school teachers. The task to counsel with God's Word may seem overwhelming, but there is no greater time than now for equipping disciples to bring the biblical counseling movement back into the local churches. Many small group leaders often feel incompetent to counsel others; however, with proper training and with Scripture, small group leaders are able to encourage the flock.⁴ The opportunity to impact the community is abundant as Troy, Missouri, is a growing community with new families moving in. Recently, a new Middle School building was built close to Troy First Baptist Church, which indicates that the community is growing rather than plateauing. Troy First Baptist Church has a limitless opportunity to impact the community by being a shining light in the brokenness of sin by providing a biblical counseling ministry.

Rationale

Troy First Baptist Church regularly preaches the purpose of why it exists: to display Christ's glory in the community. Troy First Baptist Church's leaders desire to equip the saints for the work of the ministry (Eph 4:15). The biblical counseling program implemented through this project helped provide the framework, on a practical level, for people to overcome sin and sorrow that hinder them from fully knowing, loving and following Christ. Discipleship by definition is simply being a disciple. Every believer is a disciple, and every disciple is a believer. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer said well in his book *The Cost of Discipleship*, "The road to faith passes through obedience to the call of Jesus. Only he who believes is obedient, and only he who is obedient believes."⁵ A disciple is one who obeys Christ, demonstrated by a life of discipleship. In accounts in the book of Acts, being a Christian was synonymous for living as a disciple of Jesus Christ (Acts 6:1-2; 11:25; 14:20; 15:10). As one studies Christianity, one is studying the person of Christ,

⁴ William Bridge, *A Lifting Up for the Downcast* (Auckland, New Zealand: Titus Books, 2013), 204.

⁵ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Touchstone, 1995), 20.

the work of Christ, and applying it in one's life. A true disciple of Christ is one who not only believes the teachings of Christ but models Christ by putting Christ's instruction into action. As Christ Jesus himself said, "If you love me you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). In essence, discipleship is "Christianity." Biblical counseling helps people mature into more Christlikeness.

In general, churches face difficulty creating a solid yet replicable discipleship path for regular attendees, as well as newcomers, to take their next steps in their walk with Christ.⁶ Troy First Baptist Church mainly shepherds its flock through exegetical preaching and has not offered training programs outside of the Sunday school curriculum and Wednesday evening Bible studies. After project implementation, the plan is to offer an Association of Certified Biblical Counseling training program at Troy First Baptist Church.

One of the tasks of the pastor is "to equip the saints for the work of ministry" (Eph 4:12)⁷ by learning to listen and love in broken sin-tainted situation,⁸ which is the essence of Christ's incarnational ministry on earth (John 1:14). This model Paul sets forth challenges a consumer mentality Christianity that is often pushed by contemporary church culture. A healthy, biblical church is not simply staffed by a few for the few. God's plan is to make and mature disciples through all the saints for all the people.

John Piper asserts, "If you want God to be most glorified in your people, you must satisfy them with God."⁹ Troy First Baptist Church aims to create an environment

⁶ Daniel Im and Thom S. Rainer, *No Silver Bullets: Five Small Shifts That Will Transform Your Ministry* (Nashville: B & H, 2017), 23.

⁷ All Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.

⁸ Edward T. Welch, *Blame It on the Brain* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2012), 23.

⁹ John Piper, "The Glory of God: The Goal of Biblical Counseling," in *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, ed. James MacDonald, Bob Kellemen, and Stephen Viars (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2013), 29.

where the people of God will be more God-focused, Christ-centered, and Spirit-empowered disciples of Christ by grace through faith (Eph 2:8) to carry out the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20) for the glory of God to change the world (Gal 1:3-4).

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip the small group leaders at Troy First Baptist Church in Troy, Missouri, to disciple others using concepts of biblical counseling.

Goals

The following goals were established to determine the success of this project.

1. The first goal was to assess the current level of knowledge in discipleship with biblical counseling by small group leaders at Troy First Baptist Church.
2. The second goal was to develop an eight-week teaching curriculum on discipleship utilizing concepts of biblical counseling for small group leaders.
3. The third goal was to increase the leaders' knowledge in biblical counseling so that they can disciple others as they implement the training curriculum.
4. The fourth goal was to create a strategic plan to equip small group leaders to disciple those in their small group.

Research Methodology

The four goals determined the effectiveness of this project. The first goal was to assess the current level of knowledge in the discipleship with biblical counseling by small group leaders at Troy First Baptist Church. This goal was measured by administering the Discipleship Process Practice Inventory (DPPI) to ten small group leaders at Troy First Baptist Church.¹⁰ This goal was considered successfully met when ten small group leaders completed the survey, and the results were analyzed to create an introduction class to biblical counseling curriculum for small group leaders at Troy First Baptist Church.

¹⁰ See appendix 1. All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

The second goal was to develop an eight-week curriculum on discipleship utilizing concepts of biblical counseling to equip small group leaders at Troy First Baptist Church.¹¹ The introduction to biblical counseling curriculum covered the conviction to counsel from a scriptural foundation with the Bible rather than a humanistic secular psychology approach. Each session offered practical steps to help participants mature as disciples of Christ for an hour and a half of interactive teaching and discussion. Small group leaders completed homework assignments and engaged in group discussions. The seminar primarily focused on developing skill sets for leaders as they navigate through difficult situations with their small group members. An expert panel measured this goal by utilizing a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the curriculum. This goal was considered successfully met when the eight-week curriculum was completed.

The third goal was to increase the leaders' knowledge in biblical counseling so that they can disciple others as they implement the training curriculum. This goal was measured by the leaders taking the DPPI after the training was completed. This goal was considered successfully met when a *t*-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-training DPPI scores.

The fourth goal was to create a strategic plan to equip small group leaders to disciple those in their small group. Case studies were utilized in the exercises in order to practice scenario discussion for further training in disciple-making with concepts of biblical counseling. The DPPI was utilized to assess growth in knowledge, and a follow up interview was completed with each small group leaders who participated.¹² This goal was successfully met after meeting with each individual for an interview and evaluating

¹¹ See appendix 3.

¹² See appendix 5.

the post-survey to create a strategy to implement a biblical counseling ministry for Troy First Baptist Church.

Definitions and Delimitations

Certain terms used throughout this ministry project are defined here to aid in the reader's understanding of the subject.

Discipleship. For this project, *discipleship* is a lifelong process of living and loving like Jesus and helping others to do so as well. This project relies on David Powlison's more nuanced detail of discipleship: "Often people we disciple already know significant truth, but they don't know it in a way that changes their lives. Discipleship does the hard work of kneading what is true into how we actually live."¹³

Biblical counseling. John Henderson defines *biblical counseling* succinctly as a "focused process of discipleship."¹⁴ Robert Kellemen defines biblical counseling as

Christ-centered, church-based, comprehensive, compassionate, and culturally-informed one-another ministry that depends upon the Holy Spirit to relate God's inspired truth about people, problems, and solutions to human suffering (through Christian sustaining and healing) and sin (through Christian reconciling and guiding) to empower people to exalt and enjoy God and to love others (Matt. 22:35-40) by cultivating conformity to Christ and communion with Christ and the Body of Christ, leading to a community of one-another disciple-makers (Matt. 28:18-20).¹⁵

The priesthood of believers. Believers in Christ in the New Testament community are called to be priests, kings, and the holy people of God (1 Pet 2:9; Rev 1:6; 5:10; 20:6). The *Encyclopedia of Christianity* describes a priesthood of believers as "a

¹³ David Powlison, *Speaking Truth In Love* (Winston-Salem, NC: Punch Press, 2005), 56.

¹⁴ John Henderson, *Equipped to Counsel: A Training Program in Biblical Counseling, Leader Notebook* (Mustang, OK: Dare 2 Dream Books, 2008), 31.

¹⁵ Robert W. Kellemen, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2011), 36. These principles are more fully fleshed out in the Confessional Statement of the Biblical Counseling.

calling based on the election and calling of Israel” (Exod 19:6; Isa 61:5-6).¹⁶ The doctrine of the *priesthood of believers* is an integral aspect of both the Old Testament and New Testament.¹⁷ In this project, the definition lies in the ecclesiastical status Christians have in Christ. The history of the Christian church lays the foundation of the beauty of the laity’s role in the doctrine of ecclesiology (the Doctrine of the Church). Philip Schaff explains, “The social or ecclesiastical principle of Protestantism is the general priesthood of believers, in distinction from the special priesthood which stands to meditate between Christ and the laity.”¹⁸

Progressive sanctification. *Progressive sanctification* is unlike positional justification, which is a one-time happening (there is no progress in justification). John Walvoord explains, “Sanctification begins with regeneration, the implanting of spiritual life in a believer. From that starting point, sanctification is God progressively separating a believer from sin to Himself and transforming his total life experience toward holiness and purity.”¹⁹

Sufficiency of Scripture. Harold Rowley explains that the *sufficiency of Scripture* is the “belief that the Scriptures comprehensively and sufficiently show how the power of Christ relevantly and powerfully speaks to all the issues that require counseling no matter how extreme or challenging.”²⁰ This project presents Scripture as itself sufficient for faith and the fall of life.

¹⁶ Erwin Fahlbusch et al., eds., *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 351.

¹⁷ Charles Hannon Byrd II, *Pentecostal Aspects of Early Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2019), 216.

¹⁸ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (Vienna, Austria: Arkose Press, 2015), 24.

¹⁹ John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, eds., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary on Old and New Testaments*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 462.

²⁰ Harold Henry Rowley, *Dictionary of Bible Themes* (London: HarperCollins, 1968), 107.

Three delimitations were placed on the project. First, the project addressed discipleship in select small group leaders, but not the entirety of the church. The project participants led in various small groups at Troy First Baptist Church. The training deals with people in the small group context with specific sin problems coming from various backgrounds. The curriculum does not provide training in areas such as conflict management of leadership, which involves the entire church governance.

Second, the project was confined to eight weeks. This timeframe gave adequate time to prepare and teach the eight-week training sessions and conduct the post-series survey after sessions are completed.

Finally, this project was designed for the selected small group leaders in a discipleship context; therefore, the training was not provided for the whole leadership team (the pastors, deacons, or the transition with the elder board).

Conclusion

God has provided all believers with Scripture to make disciples and counsel by the work of the Spirit's leading. The following chapters show how Scripture contributes to the Christian's confidence and competence to effectively disciple one another. Chapter 2 focuses on the concepts of biblical counseling based on Ephesians 4:9-15. Chapter 3 focuses on the doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture, the doctrine of progressive sanctification, and the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers in disciple-making.

CHAPTER 2
THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION
FOR EQUIPPING THE SAINTS FOR
BIBLICAL COUNSELING

Introduction to Dilemma

The possibility of a Christian saying that discipling is not a biblical mandate would be rare. The task of Christians maturing one another (Eph 4:14), growing in grace (2 Pet 3:18), and increasing in faith (Luke 17:5) are key themes seen throughout the pages of Scripture. The idea of the “edification of the saints” (Rom 15:2; 1 Cor 8:1; 1 Thess 5:11) often is spoken, yet rarely seen, and merely ends on a theoretical level that fails to reach the practical level of church life. In twenty-first century evangelical churches, many have been deceived by believing that the primary jobs of a pastor are simply to marry, bury, and preach. Other matters, such as counseling, are given over to professionals, as pastors are not considered well-equipped to handle psychological issues. Andrew Lincoln refers to Martyn Lloyd-Jones explaining this dilemma¹ in the role of ministers in the exposition on Ephesians:

Let me emphasize also that this is not a letter addressed to some unusual and exceptional Christian people . . . but a letter to ordinary church members. That is from every standpoint a most important observation, and for this reason that everything the Apostle says here about Christians and members of churches must therefore be equally true of us. All the high doctrine which we have in this Epistle is something that you and I are meant to receive.²

¹ Martyn Lloyd-Jones and Christopher Catherwood, *The Christ-Centered Preaching of Martyn Lloyd-Jones: Classic Sermons for the Church Today* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 80.

² Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 42 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 187.

Twenty-first-century evangelical churches are either narrow specialists at one thing or broad generalists who do a little of everything. Local churches often get busy with ministry programs and end up in a maintenance in survival mode, rather than a multiplication in thriving mode (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor 10:16; 1 John 1:3). As a result of an increase in *busy* churches, discipleship is often the first ministry to be cast aside and falls to the bottom priority.

Despite the desires of the flesh, Scripture commands believers to “stir up one another to love and good deeds” (Heb 10:24). The local church (body of Christ) is in fact, as Best says, “One of the major, if not the major, theological theme of Ephesians.”³ Mark Dever writes, “We believe that the local church is the focal point of God’s plan of displaying the glory to the nations. Our vision is simple; Churches that reflect the glory of God.”⁴ The church needs constant reminders to return to the biblical mandate of discipling those whom God adds to His church (Acts 2:47; Eph 1:4-14).

As Christ’s followers on earth, believers are not yet fully conformed to the image of Christ. In the Christian life, there is no coasting lifestyle that holds one on the proper direction to the final distinction. Churches that live in biblical community have a responsibility to teach and admonish each another in that process (Col 3:16). David Powlison defines a true biblical community, living in light of the gospel:

The flourishing of wise, mutual, life-changing counseling is one proof that everything else about church is accomplishing what it’s supposed to. Every counseling model entails a “delivery system,” a social structure. Ideas and practices inhabit institutions. The most magnificent intuitional structure imaginable is a community living out how Ephesians 4 webs pastoral leadership with every member mutuality.⁵

³ Ernest Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2004), 65.

⁴ Mark Dever and David Platt, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, 3rd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 203.

⁵ David Powlison, *Seeing with New Eyes: Counseling and the Human Condition Through the Lens of Scripture* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2003), 3.

As David Powlison answers the questions at this major crossroads in chapter 1 of the book, the majority of today's evangelical churches view that legitimate lasting change can only come from psychologists with professional credentials that rely on social science.⁶ On rare occasions, the church allows clergymen to temporarily step into a family crisis; however, churches often assume that unless the person is seminary-trained or an ordained minister, God's people are not competent to counsel.⁷ The task of shepherding is to equip the saints for the work of the ministry⁸ through the counsel of God's Word (Eph 4:12; 2 Tim 3:16-17).

What should biblically-sound counseling in the evangelical church look like? Should one think of biblical counseling as a set of skills and techniques in praxis? For Christians, to counsel means to practice the 35 passages of Scriptures on the "one another ministries" in "brotherly affection" (Rom 12:10), such as "encourage one another" (1 Thess 5:11), "bear up with one another in love" (Col 3:13), "carry each other's burdens" (Gal 6:2), "love one another" (John 13:34-35), and "spur on one another" (Heb 10:24). These biblical categories are biblical commandments. The "one another ministries" are not merely options to be considered, but commands to be obeyed. The lack of a proper understanding of biblical counseling through discipleship is viewed too often as a foreign idea for Christian communities.

In the history of American Revivalism, each previous evangelistic movement gradually ended due to a lack of discipleship put forth from healthy churches after the

⁶ David Powlison, "Questions at the Crossroads : The Care of Souls & Methods Psychotherapies," in *Care for the Soul: Exploring the Intersection of Psychology & Theology*, ed. Mark R. McMinn and Timothy R. Phillips (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 23-61.

⁷ Jay E. Adams, *Competent to Counsel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 6.

⁸ Robert W. Kellemen and James MacDonald, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church: The 4e Ministry Training Strategy* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2011), 36.

“revival” ended.⁹ Bill Hull says the church attempts world evangelism without balancing evangelism with disciple-making.¹⁰ In *Growing True Disciples*, George Barna says the church in America is comprised of many converts and few disciples:

Here’s a morsel of perspective. In one recent nationwide survey we asked people to describe their goals in life. Almost nine out of ten adults described themselves as “Christian.” Four out of ten said they were personally committed to Jesus Christ, had confessed their sins, and believed they will go to heaven after they die because of God’s grace provided through Jesus’s death and resurrection. But not one of the adults we interviewed said that their goal in life was to be a committed follower of Jesus Christ or to make disciples.¹¹

In the post-modern era, too many church leaders equate numerical growth as the success of the gospel mission. Michael Lawrence explains, “Rather than focusing on growing life-long committed disciples who take up the cross and follow Christ, pastors have been caught in the lie of growing church numbers, converts, and collected decisions.”¹² Jesus told Christians to go make disciples, not to manipulate the harvest with collected decisions (Matt 28:19-20). Eugene Peterson rightly addresses the problem within the heart:

Classically, there are three ways in which humans try to find transcendence—religious meaning—apart from God as revealed through the cross of Jesus: through the ecstasy of alcohol and drugs, through the ecstasy of recreational sex, through the ecstasy of crowds. Church leaders frequently warn against the drugs and the sex, but at least, in America, almost never against the crowds.¹³

Unfortunately, pastors are warned little of the lie that numerical growth equals spiritual success, which often causes much spiritual damage in ministry. The success of

⁹ D. Michael Henderson, *John Wesley’s Class Meeting: A Model for Making Disciples* (Wilmore, KY: Rafiki Books, 2016), 152.

¹⁰ Bill Hull and Scot McKnight, *Conversion and Discipleship: You Can’t Have One without the Other* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 151.

¹¹ George Barna, *Growing True Disciples: New Strategies for Producing Genuine Followers of Christ* (Lincoln, NE: WaterBrook, 2013), 7.

¹² Michael Lawrence, *Conversion: How God Creates a People* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 59.

¹³ Eugene H. Peterson, *The Pastor: A Memoir* (New York: HarperOne, 2011), 156-57.

ministry does not lie within church size. The health of the church is not measured by the seating capacity, but ultimately by the serving capacity. Robby Gallaty is correct when he says that the church's focus on depth should be more important than width.¹⁴ Church leaders want immediate results; churches are easily impressed with a momentary feast rather than invested time with a few disciples who bear lasting fruit.

A true indication of growth in Christlikeness is bearing fruit (Matt 7:15-20). No longer are just the facts or numbers sufficient. As discipleship expands in various aspects of the Christian life, believers should address the heart level of how the gospel transforms everyday life. Jesus said, "You will recognize them by their fruits. Every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. Thus, you will recognize them by their fruits" (Matt 7:16-20). Scripture points out that the fruit of one's life reveals the truth of the hidden heart of the inner man (Prov 20:27). The transformed mind informs the will, and from the will, people act (Rom 12:2). Belief impacts behavior since belief systems fuel the behavioral pattern.¹⁵ David Powlison explains this dilemma:

How can we, as counselors, help our counselees connect that glorious grace to their everyday lives? There is often a gap between a person's "functional theology," that out of which they live daily, and the truth of grace in Christ explores two glories. First, you have a new identity in Christ: part of a plan, with a certain inheritance, a recipient of incomparable power, raised to reign with Christ. Second, you are part of a new community in Christ, included not isolated, part of a process of community growth.¹⁶

Churches fail to do what Scripture commands: "Abound in love for one another . . . you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another" (1 Thess 3:12; 4:9). Subconsciously, the impression left upon the world is that the Word of God is sufficient only for salvation and is unable to provide answers to emotional issues, such as those that

¹⁴ Robby Gallaty and Ed Stetzer, *Rediscovering Discipleship: Making Jesus' Final Words Our First Work* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 24.

¹⁵ David Powlison, *The Biblical Counseling Movement: History and Context* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2010), 6.

¹⁶ Heath Lambert and David Powlison, *The Biblical Counseling Movement after Adams* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 88.

that Paul speaks of: “For God has not called us for impurity, but holiness. Therefore, whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you” (1 Thess 4:7-8).

Amid a crooked and perverse nation (Phil 2:15), Paul calls believers to a life of sanctification (1 Thess 4:2-8). Jesus stands in direct contrast to the errant thinking that He is only sufficient for salvation—He is both the Savior who saves sinners from past sin and the King who calls believers to live set apart against current sin (Heb 10:10-12). In the miracle of incarnation (John 1:14), Jesus embodies and embraces a lifestyle that has been missed in the local congregation. In his earthly ministry, Jesus extended grace by welcoming sinners (Luke 15:2), yet revealed truth by rebuking Pharisees, “You brood of vipers!” (Matt 23:33). Christ turns to twenty-first-century believers and says, “Follow me” in a similar manner (Matt 4:19).

Counseling is where one party with questions, problems, and trouble seeks assistance from another whom they believe has answers, solutions, and help.¹⁷ Counseling is the art of speaking grace and truth (John 1:17), just as Christ has demonstrated. He left the early church with an example in Scripture for believers to demonstrate (John 13:35). Powlison writes, “By instinct, habit, and enculturation all of us tend to think of counseling as a human-with-human interaction. But in fact, a human-with-Savior interaction must come first.”¹⁸ Grace without truth is not grace, nor is truth without grace; as grace is an edifying growing tool for the spiritual maturity of the local church.

Biblical counseling is expressed when a community is living in true authentic and accountable relationships with one another (1 Cor 14:12). Scripture speaks of the

¹⁷ Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 13.

¹⁸ David Powlison, *Speaking Truth In Love* (Winston-Salem, NC: Punch Press, 2005), 7.

principle of maturing faith by equipping the saints (Eph 4:11-16). Scripture is the foundation on which Jesus builds his church (Matt 16:18) to equip future leaders; the biblical principles of one-another ministry was placed for the advancement of the gospel (Eph 4:2).

Believers are to live in the edification of the saints (Eph 4:12), in communal living with accountability and authenticity. God has spiritually gifted all members of the body of Christ so the local church may utilize the gift Christ administered to meet one another's need to grow in spiritual maturity (Eph 4:7-11).

God's Calling for the Church to Maturity

A follower of Christ must have the basic understanding that spiritual maturation and formation occurs within the community of faith. Christians ought to build their lives on the Father's unmerited love (1 John 4:19) and be strengthened by the Spirit through His Son to understand the unsearchable riches of glory (Eph 3:16). The first three chapters of Ephesians provide theological orthodoxy emphasizing doctrinal soundness (indicatives statements); on the other hand, the last three chapters include practical theology that shifts focus to Christian discipleship (imperative statements). In other words, Ephesians 1-3 is what God has done in Christ for believers and Ephesians 4-6 is the overflow of what God expects for believers.

The work of salvation is seen in the initial calling before the foundation of the world (1:3). The election is predestined in the love of the Father (1:4) for men to be redeemed through his blood (1:7). The mystery of His will is made known through the effectual calling (1:9) by the promised Holy Spirit's sealing work (1:13). God reconciles his people in one body through the cross (2:16), so that all who believe may be justified forever by grace through faith in Christ alone (3:21). John R. W. Stott writes, "God the Son, for it is in Christ, by virtue of our union with him, that God has blessed us; and its nature is spiritual, every spiritual blessing, a phrase which may well mean 'every blessing

of the Holy Spirit,' who as the divine executive applies the work of Christ to our hearts."¹⁹

God the Father sent His Son to die so that the Holy Spirit would apply transforming work to rule the hearts of His children. Spiritual maturity in the believer's life is not possible unless God first impresses upon the believer's heart. After Paul ends the first three chapters of Ephesians with God's divine monergism, he shifts his language by saying, "I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called" (4:1). Once again, maturity is only first possible by grace, found in Christ, by the effectual calling (4:1, 17; 5:2). The way God's people live no longer follows the futile pattern (4:17), but instead has the spiritual obligation to the one-another ministry (5:21). Paul describes what this one another ministry has done "with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love" (4:2). Foulkes points out, "It is closely connected with the spirit of submissiveness."²⁰ With a lifestyle that is kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving (4:32), believers are brought to spiritual maturation and holy living that leads to the testimony of God's glory.

God distributes spiritual gifts to all believers through the church so that all will grow into spiritual maturity (Eph 4:7-16). John MacArthur writes on the distribution of gifts: "Paul admonishes believers to 'be filled with all the fullness of God' (3:19), to 'attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge the Son of God, to mature manhood, to measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ' (4:13), and to 'be filled with the Spirit' (5:18)."²¹ Spiritual gifts are at the heart of Christ's strategy to build His church. God in

¹⁹ John Stott, *The Message of Ephesians* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1984), 33.

²⁰ Francis Foulkes, *Ephesians*, Tyndale New Testament Commentary, vol. 10 (1989; repr., Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2008), 109.

²¹ John MacArthur, *The ESV Study Bible*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 296.

His sovereign grace has given every member of the body the ability to make a unique and profitable contribution to the church. The gifts are for ministering to the church.

Ephesians 4:1-16 consists of two main sections (vv. 1-6, 7-16), the first of which reminds readers of their calling into membership of the body of Christ (4:1). The Spirit of God is working both in the invisible church and the visible church that leads to the, “one hope of your calling” (Eph 4:4). This calling takes the form of sanctification (1 Thess 4:7) made evident through the internal call of salvation. Sanctification does not provide justification, but sanctification proves justification. The rest of this lengthy paragraph underscores Paul’s distinctive concerns for the unity of the church. He admonishes his readers with the utmost urgency to preserve the oneness given by the Spirit (Eph 2:14–18; 3:6), a unity that is organically related to the divine intention of bringing all things together in unity in Christ (Eph 1:9, 10).

The second section (Eph 4:7-16) introduces diversity and demonstrates how it contributes to the unity of the body. Christ giving different gifts of grace to each is to enrich the whole, so that all may be prepared for full maturity when they meet their Lord (4:13). The passage, then, is concerned about unity, diversity, and maturity. Paul speaks of growing into Christ who is the head of the body. The process has its source in Christ and requires the active participation of each member of the body.²² Paul explains that God gives the multiplicity of various gifts as part of spiritual growth into one accord through the body of Christ.

God’s presence is manifested as the grace of God is given to all offices, therefore contributing to a unified church. The Greek passive verb “was given,” is shown here to distribute His victory amongst His people. The divine gracious act of Christ reveals this gift was given “according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” Wuest writes,

²² Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 286.

These gifted men are given the Church “for the perfecting of the saints.” The word “perfecting” is *katartizō* (καταρτιζω), “to equip for service.” These gifted men are to specialize in equipping the saints for “the work of the ministry,” that is, for ministering work, in short, Christian service. This is in order that the Body of Christ, the Church, might be built up, by additions to its membership in lost souls being saved, and by the building up of individual saints.²³

The doctrine of the church focuses on believers entering into a relation with God through Jesus Christ, made possible by abounding grace. A major image for this biblical church community is the body (Eph 4:4, 12, 16), and it is combined with the language of a building (4:12, 16), and the fullness of Christ (4:13). Ministries are given by Christ, particularly ministries of the Word, to enable the body of Christ to attain its goal, which is “the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (4:13).

The sentence beginning in verse 7, “but grace was given to each of us,” could be translated as “in spite of that,” or “on the other hand,” and is explained earlier in the context. In verse 6, Paul speaks about unity, now moving to the unique diversity in the body of Christ of “each other.” Paul says in Ephesians 4:4, “There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call.” Paul unites the body with One Spirit that ultimately leads to the one gospel on which Paul earlier focuses—the gospel of one singular focus of the good news where God’s unmerited favor is shown to the worst of all sinners (1 Tim 1:15). This gospel, given by one Lord (Eph 4:4-5), leads to the one baptism of God (Eph 4:6), who rules the world.

Within the flow of verses 7-11, the key theme is about Christ’s giving: “grace has been given [by him],” “according to the measure of Christ’s giving” (v. 7); “he gave gifts” (v. 8); and “it was he who gave” (v. 11). Christ sovereignly distributes his gifts to all members of his body. Recipients are not limited to some special groups, such as the ministers of verse 11. Each person is to be understood as part of the whole since ministry in the body of Christ includes Paul and all his readers (it is thus the counterpart to 1 Cor

²³ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Word Studies from the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 107.

12:7, 11). No one misses out on Christ's bounty.²⁴ Christians are participants in His divine grace that enables all to contribute because of the One who gave it all.²⁵

Peter T. O'Brien explains, "Within the unity of the body each member has a distinctive service to render for the effective functioning of the whole."²⁶ Due to the grace given by the ascended Christ, each person has the ability to perform this service. R Kent Hugh points out, "Grace is viewed in terms of its outworking in a variety of ways in the lives of individuals and thus comes to signify much the same as charisma does in the parallel passages by Paul" (1 Cor 12:4; Rom 12:6).²⁷ To disregard the importance of God's design of maturity undervalues God's command to ultimately reflect Christ's glory here on earth.

Maturity in Love That Reflects Christ

Love has a prominent place in the first half of Ephesians. Paul prays that the believers "be filled with the fullness of God's love" (Eph 3:19), which is a similar prayer to one in Colossians (1:1-9).²⁸ Chapters 1-3 climax with a prayer, which heightens the reader's awareness to the magnitude of Christ's divine love (Eph 3:17, 19). The second half (Eph 4-6) contains a series of instructions to love, the fulfillment of which is the outworking of the apostle's prayer. Matthew Henry points out in his commentary that the

²⁴ Wuest, *Word Studies from the Greek New Testament*, 107.

²⁵ Adam J. Johnson, *T & T Clark Companion to Atonement* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2017), 201.

²⁶ O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 316.

²⁷ R. Kent Hughes, *Ephesians, The Mystery of the Body of Christ*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 287.

²⁸ A. Skevington Wood., *Ephesians*, in vol. 12 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 21.

later chapter of the book of Ephesians²⁹ is summarized by the exhortation to “walk in love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself for us” (Eph 5:2). The key phrase “in love,” which occurs six times in the epistle, begins and ends this paragraph on unity, diversity, and maturity in the body of Christ (4:2, 15, 16). This forms an inclusion, or envelope, to the passage (4:1–16). Paul urges all Christians to live a life worthy of their calling (4:1), bear with one another in love (4:2), and testify to the truth of the gospel in love (4:15-16). “In love” describes the sphere of the Christian life and spells out how the ministry of all is to occur.³⁰

Paul emphasizes throughout Ephesians the importance of communal living in the local church. Paul says, “The body of Christ” (Eph 5:30), which depicts that the church is not an institutionalized organization but a living organism. Paul refers to Christ as “the head” (Eph 4:9), and all parts of the body, as a church, which are mutually connected and dependent on Him.

In the context of Ephesians 4:7-16, the imagery of the body presented here serves to highlight the importance of the ascended Christ giving gifts to his people. Born-again believers are to be firmly grounded in the apostolic teaching so that they may leave behind all immaturity and instability. Lincoln explains,

(τῆς ἐπιγνωώσεως). The full knowledge. Not identical with faith, since the article puts it as a distinct conception; but related to faith. Compare Philip 3:9, 10; 1 John 4:16. “Christians are not to be informed merely on different sections of truth and erring through defective information on other points, but they are to be characterized by the completeness and harmony of their ideas of the power, work, history, and glory of the Son of God.”³¹

Paul prays that the body of Christ may be able to comprehend with all the saints this measureless love of Christ. Saints, of course, is a reference to all believers, not

²⁹ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 2001.

³⁰ O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 331.

³¹ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 486.

just to some superior believers. The word means “holy ones,” or those who are set apart from the world unto God.³² The work of maturing in the body of Christ is entirely and all together based on the Son’s redemption. The work on the cross was not a mere salvific eternal transaction, but Christ’s finished work was accomplished so that pastors would prepare His people for the work of Christian service; namely to build up the body of Christ.

Christ now sets out to accomplish the goal of fulfilling all things by supplying his people with everything necessary to foster the growth and perfection of the body (Eph 4:13).³³ Abraham Kuruvilla writes, “The building of the body is inextricably linked with his [Christ’s] intention of filling the universe with his rule since the church is his instrument in carrying out his purposes for the cosmos.”³⁴

Believers enable others to be able to exercise their respective roles, so the body is built to biblical maturity, spiritual wholeness, and Christian unity. Those listed are ministers of the Word through whom the gospel is revealed, declared, and taught. The return to “each one” occurs in Ephesians 4:12 with its reference to the saints who have been equipped for the ministries that the apostle lists. Bruce observes that there are two pairs of offices in view here: (1) apostles and prophets, and (2) evangelists and pastor-teachers.³⁵

The specific mention, first, that Christ gave some as apostles and prophets, corresponds to the earlier references in Ephesians 2:20 and 3:5 of their foundational role

³² Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 363.

³³ O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 297.

³⁴ Abraham Kuruvilla, *Ephesians: A Theological Commentary for Preachers* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015), 125.

³⁵ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 2nd ed., New International Commentary on the New Testament Series, vol. 10 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 86.

as the authoritative recipients and proclaimers of the mystery of Christ.³⁶ Paul uses the term *pastor* or *shepherd* alongside *overseer* and *elder* for his fellow-evangelists to describe church leaders. In Acts 20:17, 28, the word *elders* is synonymous with the word *overseers*; Paul is using the term *pastor* in context of those who shepherd the flock.³⁷

The *pastors* and *teachers* are linked here by a single definite article in Greek, which suggests a close association of functions between two kinds of ministers who operate within one congregation (Eph 2:20). All pastors teach (since teaching is an essential part of pastoral ministry), but not all teachers are pastors. The term *pastor* is used only here in the New Testament to refer to a ministry in the church, although the related verb *to shepherd* appears several times in this sense (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:2; John 21:16), and the noun *flock* is used of the church (Acts 20:28–29; 1 Pet 5:2, 3). *Pastors*, whose functions are similar to those of *overseers* (cf. Phil 1:1) and *elders* (cf. Acts 20:17, 28; 14:23; 1 Tim 4:14; 5:17, 19), exercise leadership through nurture and care of the congregation.³⁸

Paul urges Timothy not only to pursue a teaching ministry himself, but to entrust what he has learned to faithful men who will be able to teach others (1 Tim 4:13, 16; 2 Tim 2:2). Teachers do not simply impart information or open up new ways of thought. They urge their hearers to live by what is taught (Eph 4:20–21). So important is this ministry for building the body of Christ that provisions are made for the succeeding generations.³⁹

³⁶ Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 298.

³⁷ Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 299.

³⁸ Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 300.

³⁹ Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 300.

The dominant view has been to take the first phrase, “for the equipping of the saints,” as directly related to the main verb, “he gave” (Eph 4:11), and to express the reason for Christ giving these ministries. Then, in line with the change of preposition, the phrase “for the work of ministry” has been understood as subordinate to the first “for the equipping of the saints.” The next phrase “for building the body of Christ” is dependent on the previous phrases together.

The letter emphasizes that all the saints receive Christ’s riches (Eph 1:3-19; 3:20), and as a result, the whole body is growing from the head as each part (Eph 4:16) does its work. The latter half of Ephesians 4:16 has several related meanings in the context. O’Brien explains in terms of the Greek usage in this context: “The phrase ‘joined together’ could be translated as ‘repairing’ (Matt 4:19; Mark 1:19), ‘equipping, preparing,’ ‘completing,’ and ‘training, disciplining.’ The notion of equipping or preparing, in the sense of making someone adequate or sufficient for something, best suits the context.”⁴⁰

The first purpose is “for the work of ministry,” an activity of the saints for which the leaders are to prepare and equip. Christ has given “special” ministers so that they will “make God’s people fully qualified” (Col 1:12), thus enabling them to serve their Lord by serving one another. The work of equipping includes developing, maturing, and disciplining for the edification of the saints, leading up to the one another ministry of the church. God does not give the ministry of the church only to the four described categories of leadership but also expects and requires every follower of Christ to actively participate.

To the metaphor of a building, Paul has joined the idea of growth. He previously used biological imagery of growth when referring to the building of the temple (Eph

⁴⁰ O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 303.

2:21; 4:16), but now employs building imagery in speaking of the church as a body.⁴¹

Growth in size is implied by mentioning the gifts of apostles and evangelists (Eph 4:11), while the body metaphor implies the notion of church development as an organism through the God-given life. Some interpret the expression “may be built up” as individually, yet this interpretation is misused since the language is more a communal corporate idea. Christian leaders are not only called to walk reflecting God’s glory but to enable others in the advancement of His kingdom by building the body of Christ.

God’s Gifts to Leaders and Members to Help One Another

In the process of building the body of Christ, Paul describes the final goal in terms of attaining unity in love within the Triune glory of His church. Paul exhorts the Ephesian believers to “walk worthy in the manner of your calling which you were called” (Eph 4:1) as imitators of God (Eph 5:1). There is one body, the bride of Christ (Eph 5:25), one Lord, the bridegroom (Eph 5:27), and one God, the Father of all (Eph 4:5-6). Paul then ties the unity of the faith to the maturity of faith in the latter part of Ephesians 4:14-16.

D. A. Carson further explains,

Church leaders were given by God, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain “to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” (Eph 4:13) Implicit within this passage is the need for competent leadership.⁴²

The work of the church points to the importance of the relationship between leader and follower as a vital role. Christian growth does not occur in isolation but happens in the church by speaking the truth in love (Eph 4:15). Paul illustrates with the picture of Christ as the head of the church and joining together in unity one body, built in love (Eph 4:15-

⁴¹ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 2012), 304.

⁴² Bruce, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 306.

16). God's people are moving toward the end goal of appropriating all-inclusivity in the unity of faith (Eph 4:5-7).

For the church to grow in spiritual maturation for the "unity of the faith" (Eph 4:13), each person must be united through adoption into the family of God (Eph 1:5). Once a believer experiences salvation, he/she can comprehend the knowledge of the Son of God (Prov 9:10). The knowledge is not salvific truth of the gospel but is a deeper knowledge of the fullness of Christ that leads to unity in the faith and spiritual growth (Eph 4:13). The fullness of Christ is the measurement of growth as Christians pursue Christlikeness in spiritual maturity (1 Cor 1:28-29).

The second statement indicates the destination of God's people on the final day as Carson explains further, "As Christians, all attain to the mature man" (Eph 4:13)⁴³ The phrase *mature man* is somewhat unusual since the term for an adult male or full-grown man is used, rather than the generic word for man or human.⁴⁴ This phrasing focuses on the mature adult person, in contrast to the infants of Ephesians 4:14 who are immature and unstable, like a storm-tossed boat blown in all directions by the winds of false teaching.

After the introductory clause, Paul further expands, "So that we may no longer be children" (4:14), providing general comments about their present circumstances ("no longer"). At the same time, biblical growth indicates what should occur if Christians are to make genuine progress. The ministry was given not only to enable the church to grow but also to resist forces that might corrupt or destroy it.⁴⁵ Bruce explains,

These concepts of the body of Christ and the temple of God are interwoven with the concept of the New man. In a mingling of the architectural and biological figures, we read in Ephesians 4:13 ff. of the full-grown man, "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," which is the climax of the Church's development as the body

⁴³ Bruce, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 307.

⁴⁴ Bruce, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 307.

⁴⁵ Bruce, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 308.

of Christ is built up, growing up to match him who is its head. Christ as the Second Man, the Last Adam, the head and embodiment of the new creation, meets us in Romans 5:12-19 and 1 Corinthians 9:20-28, 42-50.⁴⁶

Paul speaks in Ephesians 4:13 of mature believers in the fullness of Christ. On the other hand, he contrasts that with those who are immature believers in the doctrine of human cunningness. Paul then builds on the picture of children in the twisting of Scripture and the craftiness of manipulating in the deceitful teaching of the world. Paul writes tactfully as he pens these words since he associates himself with his readers by using the first-person plural, “we” (Phil 3:15). He too desires, along with them, to stand firm, not to be tossed to and fro, but to speak the truth in love and grow up into Christ, the head (Eph 4:15).

The contrast to “the mature person” of Ephesians 4:13 and the “children” here is pointed. Not only do the latter’s ignorance and instability stand against the knowledge of the mature adult (1 Cor 2:6; 3:1; Heb 5:13, 14), but the use of the plural “children” (with its implications of individualism) stands in contrast to the one “mature person” who is a corporate unity.⁴⁷

The nature of the children’s immaturity is graphically pictured in the following clauses and phrases: they are unstable, lacking in direction, vacillating, and open to manipulation. Like small, rudderless boats, they are tossed back and forth by the waves (Eph 4:14) and driven this way and that by the prevailing wind.⁴⁸

Paul’s language is graphic, if not forthright. The false teaching that causes so much strife is promoted by the cunning of men (Eph 4:14). “Cunning” in this context refers to dice-playing and is used metaphorically to describe a trickery that results from craftiness (Col 2:8, 22).⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Bruce, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 311.

⁴⁷ Bruce, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 311.

⁴⁸ Bruce, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 311.

⁴⁹ Bruce, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 309.

Paul draws a sharp contrast, heightened by a chiasmus, between the final words of verse 14 and this opening clause of Ephesians 4:15. Against the crafty scheming stands the expression “in love” (a key phrase in the letter), while “speaking the truth” is set in opposition to the words “of error.” Thus, “speaking the truth in love” lays out a two-fold contrast with the false teachers: the latter were deceptively presenting false doctrine, but against this, God’s people are to grow through proclaiming the truth in love.

O’Brien points to the fact that “the apostle is not exhorting his readers to truthfulness in general or speaking honestly with one another, however appropriate or important this may be. Rather, he wants them to be members of a ‘confessing’ church (Eph 3:16-21), with the content of their testimony to be ‘the word of truth’ (Eph 1:13-14), the gospel of their salvation (Eph 1:13).”⁵⁰ This truth, which is guaranteed by God and depicted as part of his armor, is the belt that believers are to buckle around their waist as they resist the onslaughts of the evil one (Eph 6:14).⁵¹

The goal of this growth comes from within the body of Christ. The goal of this growth of the body is Christ; He is the one into whom believers are to grow. The reference to increase in Ephesians 3:14-21 underscores his indispensable position as the foundation stone of the building that grows into a holy temple in Him (Eph 2:21). In the following paragraph of chapter 3, Paul sources the idea of the body’s expansion (Eph 4:16). The previous verse in Ephesians 4:15 stresses the readers’ progress and maturity toward Christ as the ultimate goal. Together, believers become more and more like their Lord, so they are fully and completely incorporated in him.⁵²

In this concluding verse of the paragraph, several prominent ideas of the earlier exposition, such as unity and diversity within the body, together with the body’s growth

⁵⁰ O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 311.

⁵¹ Bruce, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 311.

⁵² Bruce, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 312.

in love, are repeated in summary form. Although each member's distinct contribution to the life and development of the whole is highlighted through the clause as each part does its work, the stress still falls on the corporate growth of the body.⁵³

The importance of each member's active contribution to the growth of the whole body is asserted in the words "as each part does its work," in which Paul recalls his earlier words, especially "each one" according to the measure (Eph 4:7). Every member of the body, to whom grace has been given by the ascended Christ (Eph 4:7), receives the necessary enabling power to perform his or her proper function, so the growth of the whole body is in proportion to and adapted to each portion of the body.

Utilizing architectural imagery (Eph 2:21-22), Paul reiterates the ultimate goal of Christian growth in the final phrase: "For the purpose of building itself in love" (Eph 4:16). The whole body is involved in this process of building, not simply those who are leaders or who have special ministries. "Of itself" (Eph 4:16) adds to the previous reference to the church's active participation (though ultimately Christ is the source of growth).⁵⁴

Conclusion

Scripture explains thoroughly the need and necessity for God's people to grow in spiritual maturation. Each section in this chapter unfolds the guidelines. There is a great urgency today for the people of God to return to Christ-centered discipleship through biblical counseling. A pastor must follow the call of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry. The pastor can proceed in completing, with confidence in the Scripture, the task that is laid out—the plan to minister to one another for the glory of God.

The sufficiency of Scripture, progressive sanctification, and the priesthood of all believers play a role in the soul care of God's people. In a healthy church, all people

⁵³ Bruce, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 316.

⁵⁴ Bruce, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 316.

who are equipped by the Word of God will desire to care and counsel others. Every church should stand on the sole authority of the sufficiency of Scripture and minister to one another by progressively being transformed into the likeness of Christ through the local church.

CHAPTER 3
THE SHIFT FROM BIBLICAL COUNSELING TO
PSYCHOLOGICAL THERAPY WITHIN
THE LOCAL CHURCH

Introduction to Dilemma

In today’s culture, in the majority of cases in the counseling world, people tend to isolate preaching (public ministry of the Word) from counseling (private ministry of the Word).¹ Therefore, there is a significant disconnect that seminary students face once graduated and thrown into the complexity of ministry. Most Master of Divinity programs focus on serving in the pulpit ministry of the public ministry of the Word for teaching and preaching. Bob Kellemen and Paul Tripp explain the false dichotomy of the majority of seminary training. “Unfortunately, we also know by experience that few evangelical pastors receive anything more than one general course in the personal ministry of the Word—pastoral counseling. And typically, pastors take zero courses in equipping their congregations for the personal ministry of the Word – biblical counseling.”²

In my seminary years, there was a culture that highly elevated the importance of preaching ministry, yet there was not much conversation surrounding the topic of counseling ministry. For instance, many students in both classroom discussions and in the school cafeteria often debated who their favorite preacher was: John Piper, John McArthur, R. C. Sproul, Mark Dever and so forth. Naturally, many seminarians’ focus

¹ James MacDonald and Bob Kellemen, *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling: Changing Lives with God’s Changeless Truth*, ed. Stephen Viars (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2013), 267-68.

² Kevin Carson and Bob Kellemen, “Introduction: Speaking Christ’s Truth in Love,” in *Biblical Counseling and the Church: God’s Care through God’s People*, ed. Bob Kellemen and Kevin Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 16.

became public preaching of God’s Word, which took greater importance over the everyday shepherding side of ministry concerning the broken and hurting people within pastoral soul care. My first pastorate in Chicago was overwhelming. Some situations were complex, and many were horrendous, dealing with cases such as suicidal tendency, marital divorce, and even child abuse. In these moments, as members of the church sought counseling in their dark night of the soul, I thought to myself, “How could I possibly help all the people full of troubles, conflicts, and emotional problems of all sort?” Pastors often feel inadequate, useless, and helpless to offer hope in the situations mentioned. As a result, many often pass the load off to someone else, and point to their lack of training received in school. The lack of soul care ministry by the local church has led to the weakening of the Christian witness. In the midst of a sin-tainted broken world with ever increasing challenging problems, Christians can truly have an everlasting unshakable hope in Christ. Through the lens of Scripture and in the local church, Christians can find help and hope and be a witness to the world through Christ-centered counseling.

In the history of the church, the mark of the most significant theological breakthrough hinged on the resurgence of pastoral soul-care along with the Protestant Reformation.³ The Protestant Reformation movement occurred in the sixteenth century, led by Martin Luther. The inauguration was not ultimately caused by the Ninety-Five Thesis of theological debate but the doctrinal importance on pastoral soul-care. As a young man studying in the monastic, Luther, terrified by the holy wrath of God, sought counsel twenty times a day as he threw himself on the concrete floor with horrifying fits of depression linked to the question of his salvation.⁴ Amid trembling fear, Luther was

³ Bryan M. Litfin, *Getting to Know the Church Fathers: An Evangelical Introduction*, 2nd ed (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016), 16.

⁴ Roland Herbert Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009), 30.

not disconnected from the need of the counsel of God's Word for his troubled soul. He saw every sin committed as an infinite obstacle against the Holy Righteous God (Ps 145:17). The reformer's first approach was not how to rightly define the doctrine of justification, but to seek the counsel that would help him attain his own salvation: how can I be saved?⁵ Luther looked to the Word of God for counsel as he said, "Comfort yourself with the Word of God, the pre-eminent consolation."⁶ The protestant reformation perhaps could be rightly defined as the Pastoral Care Reformation.

There is a significant connection between preaching and counseling, and they ought not to be divorced from one another. A proper exegesis of God's Word through expository preaching ties into exegetical sound-doctrinal of soul-care ministry. The vital role of exegesis not only happens in the pulpit but in the trenches of the pit in soul care. Unfortunately, in difficult counseling situations within the church context, doctrinal orthodoxy crumbles first and shifts its reliance to secular psychological methodology.

In a case such as a mother who lost her son by a drunk driver, how should counselors provide guidance to one who is filled with rage? Secular counseling responds to coping skills or creating boundaries to avoid past pains. They may comment, "God didn't want this for you. Whatever you believe, you need to trust and go with it."

A faithful Christian committed to the inerrant Scripture will be radically counter-cultural to secular ideology. Counsel given by a biblical counselor, in contrast to advice tossed by secular therapists, will stand in line to scriptural truth. Romans 8:28 says, "We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose." God purposes to bring good in the person and the community as one experiences the grace of Christ. J. C. Ryle explains that trials and

⁵ Erik H. Erikson, *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History*, rev. ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1993), 183.

⁶ Martin Luther, *Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel*, trans. Theodore G. Tappert (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2003), 63.

tribulations occur in the Christian life “to make us think, to wean us from the world, to send us to the Bible, and to drive us to our knees.”⁷ As difficult as the circumstance may be for the person suffering, all events take place in God’s divine eternal permission and His providence.

In many cases, counseling techniques within Christian counseling are more informed by the world rather than by the Word. The world is driven by strife, jealousy, anger, and worry (Gal 5:20). On the contrary, the Word abounds in love, joy, peace, and kindness (Gal 5:22). If the person’s heart is not properly dealt with through clear biblical counsel rooted in Scripture, then the person may have difficulty overcoming sin.

The biblical counselor ultimately brings the Word of God to the people of God and points people to the incarnate Word of God (John 1:14). The ministry of the Word is not to simply bring people to saving grace of Jesus Christ, but to be conformed into the image of His Son (Rom 12:2), through God’s Word (2 Tim 3:16-17). If a person learns coping mechanisms for anxiety-disorder, people skills, conflict management, or anger, but does not have a greater affection for Christ, then the minister has failed. The counselor has created a false assurance of self-reliance with self-help advice that will drive the person further from Christ-reliance.

The task for the biblical counselor is to know Christ and to make Christ known through the counsel of God’s Word. Without Christ, one can do nothing, and any ministry of the church (discipleship) will be done in vain. Biblical counseling and discipleship focus on three pillars: (1) sufficiency of Scripture (Heb 4:12), (2) progressive sanctification (Rom 15:4), and (3) the priesthood of all believers (John 13:35).⁸

⁷ J. C. Ryle, *Matthew*, Expository Thoughts on the Gospels (Shawnee, KS: Gideon House, 2016), 180.

⁸ Garrett Higbee, “Biblical Counseling and Soul Care in the Church,” in Kellemen and Carson, *Biblical Counseling and the Church*, 65.

Sufficiency of Scripture

The doctrine of Scripture is the foundation for Christian doctrine. R. Albert Mohler, Jr., writes on biblical affirmation: “An affirmation of the divine inspiration and authority of the Bible has stood at the center of evangelical faith as long as there have been Christians known as evangelicals.”⁹ In the Christian tradition, the fundamental affirmation of the sole authority in Scripture alone places a dividing line as a distinguishing mark for being an evangelical within the twenty-first-century. In *Scripture Alone*, James White echoes,

Church history has repeatedly and clearly proven one thing: once the highest view of Scripture is abandoned by any theologian, group, denomination, or church, the downhill slide in both its theology and practice is inevitable. I firmly believe Christian truth requires a solid foundation in the belief that God made us, and God has communicated to us with clarity.¹⁰

The sufficiency of Scripture is vital not only for its power and authority (Luke 10:19) to have the assurance of faith (Heb 11:1) but is also vital in counseling. When churches refer congregants to secular counselors, those churches are subconsciously sending a message of self-reliance rather than scriptural-reliance; for whatever Christians have shown reliance over has placed authority and power over.¹¹ Secular therapists may advise with self-esteem talk—“You need to love yourself and affirm yourself more than you will find happiness”—rather than Christ-exalting prayer: “Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart” (Ps 37:4). Subconsciously, psychology has become elevated and more important than divine revelation. Even in the Bible-believing community that affirms the Bible as inerrant and infallible, the church has subconsciously communicated that Scripture is insufficient for everyday practical life

⁹ R. Albert Mohler, Jr., “When The Bible Speaks God Speaks: The Classic Doctrine of Biblical Inerrancy,” in *Five Views on Biblical Inerrancy*, ed. J. Merrick, Stephen M. Garrett, and Stanley N. Gundry (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 29.

¹⁰ James R. White, *Scripture Alone: Exploring the Bible’s Accuracy, Authority and Authenticity* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2004), 93.

¹¹ I. Howard Marshall, *Biblical Inspiration* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2004), 19.

issues.¹² David Powlison explains that, in essence, the message unintentionally communicates that “the Bible is a book to get people saved yet is unable to offer insight to the serious issues that people deal with on a day-to-day basis.”¹³ In other words, Scripture is only sufficient for salvific truth in theological areas of the afterlife, but is insufficient to help in the practical areas of the everyday life.

In twenty-first-century evangelical churches, the sufficiency of Scripture is theoretically asserted yet not theologically affirmed. Many churches do not outright deny the doctrine of *sola Scriptura*, but overtly deny that Scripture alone can help in troubling times. A church may hold to the divine inspiration of Scripture and even teach the inerrancy of Scripture, yet still deny the sufficiency of Scripture. As the Roman Catholics did at the Council of Trent (nineteenth-century ecumenical council in 1545),¹⁴ the core doctrinal importance of the sufficiency of Scripture has been forsaken and the Bible has been abandoned. To begin to shift to greater reliance on the sufficiency of Scripture, Cornelius Van Til mentions,

To instruct the church in certain positions of Scripture or to make them memorize a great deal of Scripture. In addition to this, they must possess a doctrine of Scripture as a whole. It is only if men see clearly that Scripture is what the orthodox doctrine says it is that they will, by the grace of God, be safeguarded against every wind of doctrine that so easily besets us.¹⁵

¹² Norman L. Geisler, *Inerrancy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 294.

¹³ David Powlison, *The Biblical Counseling Movement: History and Context* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2010), 143-65.

¹⁴ Everett Ferguson, *From Christ to the Pre-Reformation: The Rise and Growth of the Church in Its Cultural, Intellectual, and Political Context*, vol. 1, *Church History*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 514.

¹⁵ Cornelius Van Til, *Introduction to Systematic Theology: Prolegomena and the Doctrines of Revelation, Scripture, and God*, ed. William Edgar, 2nd ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2007), 240.

The authority and truthfulness of Scripture have been battled in the past century in the Protestant evangelical circles.¹⁶ In the early nineteenth century, because of the philosophical shift in the age of enlightenment, even people within the church began to question divine revelation. The reasoning leveraged on elevating intellectual reasoning of the mind, rather than the noetic effect of the mind.¹⁷ Today, the phrase famously coined by the age of enlightenment period, “Lordly reasoning is empirical” has dominated the western philosophy and infiltrated post-modern Christian churches.¹⁸ Therefore, many Christians have withdrawn from their belief in the sufficiency of Scripture. In addition, they see the Bible with error from the original manuscript and as an unreliable source of contrary facts.¹⁹ Over the past several decades the major debate of biblical doctrine was seen in denominational splits, such as the conservative reassurance that occurred in the Southern Baptist Convention in 1979.²⁰ Today, the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture is viewed from either of two extremes; one group has radical stance that is entirely theoretical and the second group does not openly recognize the sufficiency of Scripture.²¹ The real debate within the contemporary cultural context lies at the intersection in post-modernity where the Bible has its rightful place in authority, certainty, and the finality.

¹⁶ Alec Ryrie, *Protestants: The Faith That Made the Modern World* (2017; repr., New York: Penguin, 2018), 9.

¹⁷ Harry Blamires, *The Christian Mind: How Should a Christian Think?* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2005), 44.

¹⁸ John Webster, *The Domain of the Word: Scripture and Theological Reason* (London: T & T Clark, 2014), 128.

¹⁹ Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, rev. ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999), 63.

²⁰ Jerry Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation: The Conservative Resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention* (Nashville: B & H, 2000), 111.

²¹ Heath Lambert, Wayne A. Mack, and David Powlison, *Sufficiency: Historical Essays on the Sufficiency of Scripture*, ed. Doug Bookman (Glenside, PA: CreateSpace, 2016), 13.

In western society, modern intellectual reasoning has influenced people to live in a reflexive relativism, also known as “therapeutic relativism.”²² In this modern therapeutic age, most Christians are not aware that the explicit synergism of secular psychology plays a vital role in making the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture impossible. Martin Luther asserts the importance of the sufficiency of Scripture when talking about the law and the gospel.²³ Within protestant evangelical circles, there are two extreme responses in light of the relationship between law and the gospel. The first group leans more on the law, which practices a moralistic therapeutic deism (Pharisees) and overvalues the law. The second group leans more on grace, which practices antinomianism (against law) and overvalues grace. Both are equally far from the gospel and disconnect the relationship between indicative statements and imperative statements. Neither group understands the character of God nor causes theological challenge within the modern churches. Zacharias Ursinus explains the relationship of the gospel and law:

The law and gospel are the chief and general divisions of the holy scriptures, and comprise the entire doctrine comprehend therein. Because law and gospel define who we are, our spiritual needs, God’s provision and the promise of the gospel. The eschatological promises of wholeness become only in the glorification promised us in the accomplished work of Christ.²⁴

The therapeutic revolution gave the impression that an individual’s experience and identity are based on one’s circumstantial situation of cause and effect. The therapeutic culture has emerged from Sigmund Freud’s idea of societal wrong (victimization), asserting that any past unjust treatment, when properly traced back to the

²² Don S. Browning, *Christian Ethics and the Moral Psychologies* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2006), 104.

²³ C. F. W. Walther, *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel* (Beaver Falls, PA: Just and Sinner Publications, 2014), 158.

²⁴ Zacharias Ursinus, *The Commentary of Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism* (London: Forgotten Books, 2010), 2.

cause, can be fixed by psychological intervention.²⁵ The philosophy of therapeutic relativism that emerged in the 1950s eventually crept into seminaries, which has morphed into epidemic long-term consequences of the current state. As a result, today the best seller books in Christian bookstores are self-help books (self-reliance), omitting the life-long transformation that is only found in Christ (scriptural-reliance).

Biblical counseling is deeply and profoundly more than exposing sin²⁶ (church discipline) and telling people what to do (behavioral modification). Both practices must happen in the counseling room, however biblical counseling is more than an advice-giving session. Scripture-based, gospel-driven, and Christ-centered counseling dramatically separates biblical counseling from every other self-help, feel-good idea of moralistic therapeutic religion.²⁷ Cognitive behavioral therapy stresses more on the circumstance as an issue rather than pointing to the Word of God to first shift the outer deeds of the person dealing with stress.

Biblical counseling through Scripture alone informs the mind, ignites the heart, and invites the will to the reality of the Triune God. The gospel transforms the head, heart, and hands and was never, nor never will be a bandage over a scar. Jeremy Pierre writes, “People must know God to change. Knowing him relationally involves increasing in the knowledge of who he is from the Word (cognition) in such a way that addresses deeply held values or strongly felt emotions (affection) and calls them to submit to God as responsible moral agents (volition) in various contexts of their experience.”²⁸

²⁵ Sigmund Freud, *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, Classics of World Literature (Cody, WY: WordsWorth, 2015), 283.

²⁶ John Flavel, *The Works of John Flavel* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1968), 84.

²⁷ Christian Smith and Melina Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 13.

²⁸ Jeremy Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life: Connecting Christ to Human Experience* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2016), 75.

The doctrine of authority and the sufficiency of Scripture for soul care of God's people is affirmed by the Word of God (2 Tim 3:16-17). Biblical counseling in light of the sufficiency of Scripture is the most neglected doctrine in the history of Christianity. Biblical counseling hinges upon the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture.

In light of the doctrine regarding the sufficiency of Scripture in the practice of biblical counseling, the question often raised is, what about prescriptive drugs to deal with depression? And, does Scripture have answers to Christians fighting guilt in the matter of using a psychiatric medication? The battle of secular psychology as an authoritative source comes into a screeching intersection of physiology, biology, or psychology that will diminish the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture. In the context of therapeutic culture, people demand and feel a sense of entitlement to medicate sin and suffering. When medication becomes one's primary source of hope in their trials, then the person has crossed the line to sin. Medication can relieve symptoms but cannot offer a meaningful relationship that is only found in Jesus Christ (John 15:1-5).

Biblical counselors give the vertical and horizontal hope that has been broken in this sinful world. As an illustration, just as aspirin gives a temporary fix to a headache, so does secular counseling for the one seeking help. The biblical counselor is able to point to Christ as their ultimate source of hope. Christians who are suffering find hope for their souls in Christ, who gives hope beyond the grave (Ps 16:10-11).

The sufficiency of Scripture is the culmination of the inerrancy of Scripture, the infallibility of Scripture, and the inspiration of Scripture. If Scripture lacks in any of those areas, then Scripture becomes insufficient. Martin Luther stood before the Imperial Council Diet of Worms in 1521, saying, "Here I stand, I can do no other. God help me."²⁹ Luther held to the sufficiency of Scripture as he asserted to being bound by the Word of

²⁹ James M. Kittleson, *Luther the Reformer: The Story of the Man and His Career*, ed. Hans H. Wiersma, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016), 160.

God.³⁰ Today, the majority of evangelicals hold to the understanding that Scripture is the Word of God (in the divine authority) and believed as inerrant (infallible); however, it can be understood to be insufficient in the everyday counsel of the soul-care of man.

Christians who rely—to one degree or another—on the counseling insights of secular people are called integrationists, Christian counselors, or Christian psychologists—among other things. The significant difference between the biblical counselor and Christian psychologist lies within the truth claims of authority and certainty in counseling. In other words, biblical counselors solely trust in the sufficiency of Scripture (*sola Scriptura*), and integrationists rely more on the prevailing theories and methodologies of psychology. The saying that most popularized Christian psychology is, “All truth is God’s truth,” famously quoted by St. Augustine.³¹ There is partial truth in this statement, however, all truth does not carry equal weight by law. Basing this in the equation of theological mathematics of the hierarchy of knowledge, psychology rises to the top in secular institutional academia. The doctrine of man based on the Word of God naturally falls underneath secular psychology (man-studying-man), which then ultimately brings human intuition to the top of the animal chain of reasoning. Statements such as, “I was born as Eve, but today I feel like I am a Steve,” have become the political norm in the madness of the age. There are conflicting statements in evangelical circles, especially within the category of “truth” where there is no level of authority and certainty of objective reality. God’s inerrant revelation shown to man is undeniable. Lambert explains in his book the debate between David Powlison’s differing position:

Do secular disciplines have anything to offer to the methodology of biblical counseling? The answer is a flat no. Scripture provides the system for biblical counseling. Other disciplines—history, anthropology, literature, sociology, psychology, biology, business, political science—may be useful in a variety of

³⁰ Heiko A. Oberman, *Luther: Man Between God and the Devil*, trans. Eileen Walliser-Schwarzbart (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 152.

³¹ St. Augustine, *On Christian Teaching*, trans. R. P. H. Green (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 75.

secondary ways to the pastor and the biblical counselor, but such disciplines can never provide a system for understanding and counseling people.³²

The foundational reason for the dispute over the right methodology of counseling is due to the second area of fundamental disagreement between biblical counselors and Christian counselors: the sufficiency of the Bible as the primary and only counseling resource. Christian counselors believe that secular counseling theories and strategies are a necessary adjunct to the Bible but do not believe that Scripture alone is a sufficient counseling resource.

The doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture is often not taught to the counselee. The Bible speaks to the meaning of suffering, deals with personal sin, and assumes believers to commit to soul care ministry in the context of the local church. Therefore, the Bible offers a framework to understand the problem that people experience in their souls.

Secular counseling at its best communicates by careful listening, “I care for you. You can be honest with me. Tell me what is going on.” Secular therapists can offer an immediate help for a struggling counselee in a patient manner. However, the biblical counselor can provide a model and method that can alter the heart. The biblical counselor can point to the true and real hope in Christ. For instance, in a situation involving a person who struggles with anxiety disorder, rather than attempting to boost self-esteem, a biblical counselor can offer life changing hope in Jesus. The significance of hope found in Christ is not found in marriage, nor health, nor achievement as all things on earth will wither and fade away (Ps 37:2; Isa 40:8).

The sufficiency of Scripture is not only crucial for the ministry of counseling but is also a faithful handling of God’s Word through exegesis in the local church. When biblical counselors properly understand the role of the sufficiency of Scripture as they counsel the Word, counselees will begin to grow and transform more in the likeness of Christ (Rom 12:2).

³² Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 30.

Progressive Sanctification

Salvation is the work of the past (positional sanctification: Rom 5:1; Eph 2:5; Col 1:3), present (progressive sanctification: 1 Cor 1:2; Gal 5:19-23; Eph 5:18), and future (perfect sanctification: Matt 5:48; Rom 5:6-11; Eph 5:27). Salvation includes that which God gives, freely and finally, by His grace. Christians cannot be sanctified apart from the One who sanctifies; believers cannot be sanctified apart from union with Christ (John 15:5; 1 Cor 6:15-19; 1 Pet 2:4-5). Born again believers (John 3:1-21) cannot possess Christ's righteousness unless they are possessed of Christ himself on an ongoing basis (Acts 18:18-28). Based on the doctrine of union with Christ of past, present, and future work, progressive sanctification is a continual walking in communion with God by being united with Christ (Eph 1:4; Rom 8:1; Gal 3:26). The power of the living Christ, in his death and resurrection, has sanctified and continues to sanctify here on earth (1 Pet 2:13-17).

The ministry of the Word is paramount to the sanctification of the believer's soul. The combination of Word and Spirit (Eph 1:13-14; Heb 4:12-13), bring about sanctification in the life of a believer. As God conforms believers more in the likeness of Christ, He reveals more of Himself through the means of grace (Rom 8:29). Progressive sanctification presents mature believers in Christ; however, too often biblical counseling in light of progressive sanctification is misunderstood. The 1689 London Baptist Confession of the Faith clearly explains progressive sanctification:

They who are united to Christ, effectually called, and regenerated, having a new heart and new spirit created in them through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, are also farther sanctified, really and personally, through the same virtue, by his Word and Spirit dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts of it are more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to the practice of all true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.³³

³³ Hanserd Knollys, William Kiffin, and William Collins, *The London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689 with Preface, Baptist Catechism, and Appendix on Baptism* (Chapel Hill, NC: Chapel Library, 2016), 21.

With the proper definition of *sanctification*, a biblically faithful Christian united in Christ on this pilgrim's journey will be in the process of progressive sanctification. The local church helps to perfect the effectual call of God (Rom 8:28-30; Eph 2:1-5) through the Spirit's inner regenerating work (John 3:3-8; 1 Pet 1:3). The church's mission is to focus on Christ by cultivating and counseling the body to reflect the character of God amongst the people, community, nation, and the world (Isa 61:9; Acts 1:8).

By placing the Word of God before the counselee, the biblical counselor points to the work of Christ, which progressively reorients the person vertically to God. In a world disoriented by sin, people with disoriented hearts naturally create more disorientation; however, by the grace given by an unchanging God they are able to radically reorient their lives according to His will (Ps 102:27; Mal 3:6). Reformer Martin Luther reckoned with the reality of this world in the song "A Mighty Fortress is our God," based on Psalm 46, written in 1524. In verse 3 of the hymn says, "In a world with devils filled that shall threaten to undo God's people, His truth shall triumph through His Word."³⁴ Luther was aware of the intense struggle of spiritual warfare. Luther often turned to this very Psalm and sought the counsel of God's Word. Although at times the question of, "Why is there suffering?" is hard to answer, Scripture is crystal clear, pointing out that every problem in this world is the result of the fall of man (Gen 3:1-24), which leads to pain, suffering, and death (Rev 21:4). Timothy Keller writes, "The Bible does not say that every difficulty is the result of sin—but it does teach that every sin will bring you into difficulty. . . . All sin has a mighty storm attached to it."³⁵

³⁴ Robert Morgan, *Then Sings My Soul*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010), 14-15.

³⁵ Timothy Keller, *The Prodigal Prophet: Jonah and the Mystery of God's Mercy* (New York: Viking, 2018), 24-25.

At the same time, evil springs forth in one's own life from within the heart. Ecclesiastes 9:3 says, "For the hearts of the children of man are full of evil." Throughout the entire redemptive-historical narrative, Scripture reminds God's people that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Who can know it?" (Jer 17:9). Life on earth is filled with death, vanity, disappointment, disillusionment, heartache, and lostness as a result of the wickedness of the heart. Therefore, the human condition is opposed by the duo-evil of sin and misery. The realignment caused by the work of the Holy Spirit is known as progressive sanctification. Discouragement, disappointment, confusion, and wrong worship are reoriented by the means of grace through the sufficiency of Scripture and the gift of God's people. By God's special revelation (2 Tim 3:15-17), God sanctifies the body of Christ by renewing the mind (Rom 12:2) in Christ Jesus. He works purposefully by providing his presence, glory, and wisdom through the counsel of God's Word.

Sanctification is the progression by which one's moral condition is brought into conformity with one's legal status before God. In the midst of the process of sanctification, Christians are daily transformed more in the likeness of Christ. J. C. Ryle, in *Holiness*, explains the progression in the believer's life: "Sanctification is the work which the Lord Jesus Christ works in a man by the Holy Ghost when he calls him to be a true believer. He not only washes him from his sins in his own blood, but he also separates him from his natural love of sin and the world, puts a new principle in his heart, and makes him practically godly in life."³⁶ The process is a continuation at the point of regeneration by the work of Jesus Christ that will be applied by the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer until believers are brought home in glory. Sanctification is more than a past event (justification), it is an ongoing process. The new life in Christ is the outworking of the regeneration of God's work in believers (Heb 13:20-21).

³⁶ J. C. Ryle, *Holiness: Its Nature, Hindrances, Difficulties, and Roots* (Chicago: Moody, 2010), 19.

This paragraph highlights some of the ways each person of the Trinity is involved in progressive sanctification. The Father chastens those he loves (1 Thess 5:23; Heb 12:5-11). Jesus shepherds his people and serves the vine, from whom all people receive life. The Son intercedes as a mediator on behalf of believers (Rom 8:34; Eph 1:20). The Spirit also teaches and reminds of truth, convicts, and intercedes. He serves as an agent to produce holiness by His indwelling work (2 Thess 2:13; 1 Pet 1:2). The goal of conformity is “the likeness of his Son through sanctification so that he might be the firstborn among many” (Rom 8:29).

Scripture commands believers to “work out your salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil 2:12) Divine sovereignty and human responsibility are not opposed in the trinitarian salvific work. The role of sanctification is not passive as the latter depends on the former. Wayne Grudem writes, “The role that we play in sanctification is both a passive one in which we depend on God to sanctify us and an active one in which we strive to obey God and take steps that will increase our sanctification.”³⁷ Scripture commands believers to pursue holiness by “making every effort to supplement your faith with goodness” (2 Pet 1:5-7). For Christians, there is a responsibility to become more like Christ.

Tim Keller in his book *Prayer* makes an illustration of the Christian life to sailing on a ship.³⁸ The Christian life is never cruising through, but one’s hands are on the oar rowing and seeking His grace (Heb 4:16). Sanctification is dying to self and killing of the flesh (Acts 17:11; Gal 5:24). Only when believers have the right view and understanding of the Christian life and sail toward the harbor of heaven can they find the true eternal all-satisfying joy that is in Christ. Puritan preacher, John Owen spoke on the

³⁷ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 718.

³⁸ Timothy Keller, *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God* (New York: Viking, 2014), 258-60.

subject mortification of sin says, “Set faith at work on Christ for the killing of thy sin. His blood is the great sovereign remedy for sin-sick souls. Live in this, and thou wilt die a conqueror; yea, thou wilt, through the good providence of God, live to see thy lust dead at thy feet.”³⁹

New Testament passages say, “Keep away from sexual immorality” (1 Thess 4:3) and “cleanse us from every impurity of the flesh and spirit” (2 Cor 7:1). The goal of progressive sanctification is not for behavior modification but for believers to become more like Jesus in every manner. Peter reminds believers, “For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (Phil 2:13). The work of salvation has been already accomplished and purchased by Christ; therefore, Christians are not working for salvation but are working out their salvation to make Christ more evident in their lives (Matt 6:18).

The work of progressive sanctification is not so one can boast. God has enabled believers to become more like Christ by grace alone. The convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit is the initial work to reveal the idols of the heart.⁴⁰ Paul Tripp points out, “To make matters worse, this idolatry is hidden. It is deceptive; it exists underground.”⁴¹ The core of heart problem fundamentally lies within idolatry. Reformer John Calvin explains, “The human heart is an idol factory” where competing factors come rule in the heart of man.⁴² The ultimate change that is needed is a root problem of the sinful heart. The Holy Spirit convicts the sinful nature of man (John 16:8) that leads to repentance,

³⁹ John Owen, *Overcoming Sin and Temptation: Three Classic Works by John Owen* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 353.

⁴⁰ Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp, *How People Change*, 2nd ed. (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2008), 11.

⁴¹ Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change*, 2nd ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2002), 67.

⁴² John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, rev. ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 108.

belief, and obedience (Eph 4:17-24). Sanctification is wholly the work of God, but obedience is not passive on the believer's part.

Scripture commands, "Do everything without grumbling and arguing, so that you may be blameless and pure, children of God who are faultless in a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine like stars in the world, by holding firm to the word of life" (Phil 2:14-16). Paul urges Christians in Romans 12:9 to abstain from evil deeds. Christians are to be pure and put to death the deeds of the flesh (Rom 8:13).

Sanctification begins simultaneously the moment the person responds to the effectual calling of God by placing trust in Christ. In the study of *ordo salutis* ("order of salvation") within the steps of the Christian doctrine of salvation, progressive sanctification is unique as it is an ongoing lifelong process that will be completed in the future resurrection (glorification). Robert Morey describes the initial steps of sanctification:

There is a radical break with the total dominion and tyranny of sin so that the believer now struggles with remaining sin instead of reigning sin. Sin is dethroned, the believer dies to sin, the old self is crucified and there is a new principle of holiness implanted in the heart of the believer which all not allow sin to ultimately and permanently reign dominion over the believer.⁴³

Therefore, there is a lifelong process by which the Spirit makes believers more in the likeness of Christ (2 Cor 3:18). Progressive sanctification means not only being set apart from the world (Heb 10:10-12), but also set unto Christ (John 13:15). The conduct of life will persist with Christ' character (Rom 8:26-27; 2 Tim 1:14). It is also a work in which God and man cooperate, each playing distinct roles. Sanctification is a progressive work of God and makes men freer from sin and more like Christ in the believer's life. Sanctification brings great joy to Christians. The more that believers grow in likeness to Christ, the more they will personally experience the joy and peace given by the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22), and the more they will draw near to the kind of life that they will

⁴³ Robert A. Morey, *Studies in the Atonement* (Maitland, FL: Xulon Press, 2011), 236.

experience in heaven. As followers of Christ grow in holiness, they grow in conformity to the image of Christ, and the world can see more and more of the beauty of His character in the believers' lives. The goal of perfect sanctification is the ultimate goal of what Christians hope and long for, and which will be theirs when Christ returns. "And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure" (1 John 3:3).

Ultimately, believers' salvation is neither defined by nor based upon their choice, and their justification is not proven by their sanctification. Rather, their salvation, both justification and sanctification, are defined by and based upon a relationship to Christ, belonging to the personhood of Christ. The focus of the Bible is not the work of the redeemed (moral effort) but the work of the Redeemer (personhood). When the Christian faith is defined by personal identity and behavior, and not by who Christ is and what he did, then believers miss the gospel.

The Priesthood of All Believers

Too often, Christians believe that biblical counseling is only for professional ordained clergies. For believers there has been a strong doctrine of priesthood however, many Reformers,⁴⁴ Puritans,⁴⁵ the Methodist Church, and other Protestant movements have recently changed due to new humanistic ways of thinking.⁴⁶ As Christendom entered into the post-modernity age, the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers was minimized.

As a result of the decline of the rich doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, hierarchy within church polity separated lay ministry and ordained clergy. In twenty-first

⁴⁴ Martin Luther, *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude Preached and Explained*, The Precious and Sacred Writings of Martin Luther, trans. E. H. Gillett (Scotts Valley, CA: CreateSpace, 1904), 106.

⁴⁵ Christopher W. Bogosh, *The Puritans on How to Care for the Sick and Dying: A Contemporary Guide for Pastors and Counselors* (Yulee, FL: CreateSpace, 2011), 84.

⁴⁶ Higbee, "Biblical Counseling and Soul Care in the Church," 55.

century evangelical churches, counseling, if even recognized in the pastoral office, has shifted out as biblical counselors are too simplistic and are incapable of dealing with today's issues.⁴⁷ The Christian community, influenced by secular therapeutic culture, has embraced that Scripture is insufficient to counsel victims who have been abused or mistreated or to address everyday life issues by the Christian church.

Conversation about counseling, in general, must take place in the Christian circle first to determine the proper definition of biblical counseling. Ed Welch explains biblical counseling: "Our calling is to care for each other's souls. We want to bring our struggles to the Lord and to each other so that the church can be strengthened, and the world can witness wisdom and love."⁴⁸ Being quick to listen and slow to speak are biblical principles (Jas 1:19). The issues of anxiety (Phil 4:7), anger (Ps 86:5), lust (1 John 2:16), envy (Jas 3:14-16), bitterness (Heb 12:15), and division (Gal 5:20) constitute the major root problems in counseling cases. Scripture provides a clear answer for each of these issues by His Word and through His church. God has provided both His Word and His church to bring transformation in the lives of believers.⁴⁹ God has given the church the Scriptures as a means of instruction, equipping the saints, and soul care in counseling, which allows believers to become mature disciples of Jesus who trust in the sovereign will of God.⁵⁰ Heath Lambert, former Association of Certified Biblical Counselors Executive Director, mentions in *The Biblical Counseling Movement after*

⁴⁷ John MacArthur, *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically*, 6th ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 67.

⁴⁸ Edward T. Welch, *Caring for One Another: 8 Ways to Cultivate Meaningful Relationships* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 9.

⁴⁹ Holly Allen, Michael S. Wilder, and Timothy Paul Jones, *Mapping Out Curriculum in Your Church: Cartography for Christian Pilgrims*, ed. M. Roger White (Nashville: B & H, 2012), 53.

⁵⁰ Richard Baxter, *What Are the Best Preservatives against Melancholy and Overmuch Sorrow?* (Minneapolis: Curiosmith, 2018), 264-65.

Adams, “Counseling is a ministry, and ministry is counseling. The two are equivalent terms.”⁵¹

Ephesians 4:11-12 says, “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds, and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.” The main calling of pastors is not to simply to preach, teach, counsel, but to equip people to minister and serve one another. When the leadership of the church shifts the focus to equipping, the effectiveness of gospel advancement shifts in a drastic way.

The ministry of the Word that centers on Christ in grace and truth (John 1:17) does not separate professional versus lay ministers. The priesthood of believers calls all people to be equipped to love God and love others in a Christ-centered endeavor. Whatever gift or even personality type, the biblical mandate to care and to love their neighbors as themselves is a corporate and personal call (Matt 22:35-40).

The local church can provide a counseling ministry by the means of the edification of the saints (Eph 4:29). The local church is a community of true believers for all time; the church is made of all those who are truly saved (Eph 5:25). So great is God’s plan for the church that he exalted Christ to a position of highest authority for the sake of the church (Eph 1:22-23). He promised, “I will build my church” (Matt 16:18), and Luke tells that the growth of the church came not by human effort alone but was the work of God each day (Acts 2:47).

The purpose of the church is found in ministry to believers: the church must nurture those who are already believers and build them up to maturity in the faith (Col 1:28; Eph 4:12-13). It is contrary to the New Testament pattern to think that the local church’s only goal is to bring people to initial saving faith. The church’s goal must be to present to God every Christian “mature in Christ” (Col 1:28). Jesus told his disciples that

⁵¹ Heath Lambert and David Powlison, *The Biblical Counseling Movement after Adams* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 24.

they should “make disciples of all nations” (Matt 28:19). The ministry of the Word is not accomplished until this evangelistic work of declaring the gospel is the primary ministry that the church has toward the world by all the saints.

John Calvin said, “We who have charged the people to teach the people must not only see what is profitable unto man in general but also must see with everyone according to its age. In a journal article edited by D. A. Carson, he mentions, “Christians must also mark that it is not enough for a man who is a shepherd of God to preach and cast abroad the Word into the air, we must have private admonition also.”⁵² Calvin continues,

This is the point where many deceive themselves, for they think the church was made for no other end in purpose, but they should come to church one hour in the week for certain days and hear a man speak as he comes out of the pulpit he should hold his peace. Those who think to show themselves sufficiently that they never knew what Christianity or God’s Word meant. For as we see, when he has preached the Word about the people must have an eye for his people to warn that their faults privately. Therefore, if we want to do our duty toward God, and to those who are committed to our charge, it is not enough for us to offer them the doctrine generally, but when we see any of them go astray, we must labor to bring him to the right way, when we see another in grief and sorrow, we must go about to comfort him when we see anyone who is dull of the spirit, we must prick him and spur him, as his nature will bear.⁵³

Hebrews 10:23-25 reads, “Let us not hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”

There are approximately thirty-five one another biblical mandates for followers of Christ to follow. As covenant members brought into union with Christ, God’s people can fulfill the one another ministry in three areas: (1) roles, (2) relationship, (3) responsibility. Believers are purchased by blood; therefore, Christians are now united to

⁵² D. A. Carson, in Ray Van Neste, “The Care of Souls: The Heart of the Reformation,” *Themelios* 39, no. 1 (May 2014): 56.

⁵³ Jacob T. Hoogstra, *John Calvin: Contemporary Prophet* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1959), 51.

Christ (role), which dramatically transforms how they relate with others (relationship), because of the biblical mandate (responsibility) to one another. “Speak truth and love to one another” (Eph 4:25); “encourage one another” (1 Thess 5:11); “bear with one another” (Col 3:13); “Carry each other’s burdens” (Gal 6:2); “forgive one another” (Eph 4:32); “love one another” (John 13:34-35); “prefer one another” (Phil 2:3); “welcome one another” (Rom 15:7); “instruct one another” (Rom 15:14); “wait for one another” (1 Cor 11:33); “do not provoke one another” (Gal 5:26); “be humbled to one another” (Eph 4:2); “Be devoted to one another (Rom 12:10); and “spur on one another” (Heb 10:24). These one another ministries are not options to be considered, but all are great commands to be obeyed.

Without a proper understanding of the role, relationship, and responsibility of the priesthood of all believers, people will begin to seek counsel outside of the local church or will privatize personal sin by disregarding scriptural mandates. In a sense, every church is a counseling center. Because of a lack of discipling, equipping, and training in understanding the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, many Christians are still spiritual babes in their walk with Christ (1 Cor 3:1).

To return to the biblical standards of every believer’s task to counsel, churches must embrace the priesthood of all believers in a healthy one-another ministry to nurture and grow in Christlikeness (1 Cor 2:16; 2 Cor 10:4-5; Phil 2:5; Col 1:9-10). The brokenness of pain and suffering stems originally from the fall (Gen 3). Therefore, as Lambert explains,

The Bible, which is God’s Word, describes to us that we are made in the image of God and tells us what it means to be made thus. Since counseling problems are related to some failure to accurately represent God, we need the Bible to show us where we are off course and to help us know how to get back to where we ought to be. This requires biblical counseling.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 190.

Every Bible-believing church and ministry, according to the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, must recognize the essential part counseling plays in the lives of Christians.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates the theological significance and historical movement of the local church's role in soul care ministry. Scripture explains and approaches the topic of biblical counseling, not only for the professionals but as the ministry of every mature believer. There is a significant disconnect between theological truth and the biblical mandate due to the lack of discipling and equipping of saints (Eph 4:12). For the body of Christ to grow in maturity and transform more into the likeness of Christ, pastors must model, train, and release the spiritual soul care to lay ministry leaders.

Based on the authority and sufficiency of Scripture, men and women already know that they are commanded and are competent to counsel with God's Word. In time, as the church eagerly follows this calling, the church will be found faithful in the task of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry. May God help pastors continue the task entrusted unto the saints to believe and embody the gospel truth and carry it to the nations.

CHAPTER 4
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Introduction

In the fall of 2019, Troy First Baptist Church (TFBC) offered an introduction to biblical counseling seminar. The seminar covered equipped ministry leaders to disciple members by using concepts of biblical counseling. The small group leader participants completed a DDPI pre-survey before participating in the seminar. After all the seminars, the participants completed a post-survey to measure the increase in knowledge.

TFBC did not have a counseling ministry to the community except for offering pre-marital counseling for weddings. The congregation lacked biblical counseling knowledge in their current ministry outreach. Upon the completion of this project, to create a culture of equipping and discipling, the church will introduce a new ministry of biblical counseling for the entire church body. This project equipped the small group leaders to confidently and competently counsel members and the community with Scripture.

The implementation of this project was developed from TFBC's conviction to faithfully disciple members with God's Word (Prov 11:14; Ps 73:24; Jas 3:17). TFBC believes that Scripture is sufficient for all matters of life. Second Timothy 3:16-17 says, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." Through an intensive eight weeks of discipleship seminars on biblical counseling, the people of God could confidently "equip the saints for the work of the ministry" (Eph 4:12).

Training and teaching small group leaders will eventually lead TFBC to becoming a certified training center for the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC) with the pastors/elders overseeing the counseling ministry by utilizing Scripture in all the ministries with confidence and competence in biblical counseling. The closest training center is currently in Joplin, Missouri, which is six hours away. The long-term goal is to not only equip the small group leaders, but for the entire flock to be trained in biblical counseling by growing disciples and making disciples (Matt 28:18-20).

Weekly Project Description

The length of the project was ten weeks. The first week was spent contacting selected small groups leaders and completing the pre-survey, followed by eight weeks of classroom teaching, and a final week of evaluating the effectiveness of the class by the participants completing the post-survey. The seminars met on Tuesday evenings for approximately one hour. The seminars began with nine people and finished with six. The overall participation level and growing interest of those who completed the course were encouraging.

The content of the seminars included more materials and resources than could be taught in a sixty-minute session. For each seminar, additional information on practical resources were provided to each participant to assist in finishing the homework assignments.

Selecting and Screening Participants

In preparation for the seminars, I sent invitations to each small group leader in the church. Each participant completed the DDPI pre-survey of questions designed to find deficiencies in (1) cognition, understanding, (2) affection, feeling, and (3) volition, doing. The results of the surveys are discussed further in chapter 5.

Seminar 1: The Importance and Need for Biblical Counseling

I began the first seminar by explaining that even some well-intended Christian counseling programs are not truly biblically based. In today's culture, there is a confusion and disconnect in the language of what exactly a "Christian truth" or "biblical truth" is, which leads to frustration in the area of Christian counseling. Twenty-first-century evangelical churches need true biblical, loving encouragement through biblical counseling, rather than secular informational insight. The majority of pastors feel incompetent to handle people's sinful tendencies,¹ such as stubborn fleshly desires, heart-wrenching adultery, volcanic anger, chronic miscommunication, guilt-ridden pornography struggles, calorie-phobic eating disorders, and hidden same-sex attractions.

Christians tend to justify not counseling others because "the Bible doesn't say anything about this problem." Then they suggest, "Let's find you a professional counselor." Personal ministry and counseling are hard. In the majority of North American Bible schools/seminaries, training heavily focuses on the public ministry of the Word (expositional preaching) and little on the private ministry of the Word (biblical counseling). Biblical counseling is a private side of ministry of the Word that often hinders younger pastors from being trained and equipped in this area. The lack of training and misunderstanding often hinders young pastors from being equipped further to counsel God's Word. As a result, pastors are genuinely often caught off guard when entering the pastoral soul care ministry.

Counseling is not only the task of a pastor but is the job for the church as a whole, "teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ" (Col 1:28). The church today has many more consumers than committed participants. The task of the pastor is "to equip the saints for the work of the ministry" (Eph 4:12), by "speaking the truth in love" (Eph 4:15), which is the essence of

¹ John MacArthur, *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically*, 6th ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 7.

Christ incarnational ministry on earth (John 1:14). This Christ-likeness model that Paul sets forth challenges the post-modern individualistic consumer mentality culture that is often skewed by contemporary churches.

The tendency toward ecclesiastical consumerism has weakened the church. For most, the church is merely an event to attend or an organization to which one can belong. The passive body that pays the professional culture of the modern evangelical church must be forsaken for the ministry model God has so wisely ordained. Many churches face difficulty in creating a solid yet replicable discipleship path for regular attendees, as well as newcomers, to take their next steps in their walk with Christ.

I shared the different methods of ACBC counseling, giving examples to help each participant see and hear the complexity in the Christian counseling. At the closing of seminar 1, I shared the historical significance of the origin of counseling in the 1900s. Before the early twentieth century, biblical soul care ministry was a norm, yet shifted due to the rise of secular psychology led by Sigmund Freud, Alfred Adler, B. F. Skinner, and others, who sought answers within the self to provide help for people who struggled in life. Because these secular psychologists were atheist, their belief system stemmed from men being good and that man has answers within himself for solutions to all of life's problems.

Seminar 2: Biblical Counseling and The Role of Scripture

The famous saying, "All Truth is God's Truth," suggests that all thoughts and theories are from God himself. John Calvin states, "The tongue exists to reveal our hearts."² In the integrationist model, natural psychology (neuroscience) becomes more important than the inerrant Word of God. Speaking of authority and certainty of

² John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, rev. ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 51.

Scripture, all truth is not equal as there are two realities in truth: objective reality—divine revelation; and subjectively reality—feelings and intuition.

For Christians, if the presupposition of the understanding of man is wrong, then the solution to man’s problem becomes wrong. Secular counseling is an error at the foundational level. In *Courage to Be Protestant: Reformation Faith in Today’s World*, David Wells explains the phenomenon of the move in post-modernism beliefs:

A revolution began in the 1960s, unnoticed though it was at the time. It was a turn inward to the self. In addition, it was a turn away from all that the Enlightenment had stood for: a rationalistic world, a naturalistic view of life, meaning that is universal, and moral norms that are embedded in the nature of things and can be discovered with just a little effort, as can structure, order, and coherence.³

The integrationist exchanges the truth of God’s Word for something that is often contrary to Scripture. Colossians 2:8 says, “See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits.”

Scripture is divine revelation and is sufficient for all matters of life. The sufficiency of Scripture in the context of pastoral care and counseling is perhaps the most controversial topic in modern evangelicalism. Most believe that theology is to ministers what psychology is to counselors, but the sad reality is that a majority of people subconsciously believe that theology and psychology do not have much to do with each other. There are indeed some overlaps between the two fields. The sufficiency of Scripture drives biblical counseling, unlike other methods. The Bible alone is what stands in contrast to any other methods. The authority and power of Scripture transform the lives of people within the church.

Many think the Bible is necessary for salvation and doctrine, yet not for the everyday troubles of life. John Frame writes, “Theology is a practical discipline not merely a theoretical one. Theology is the application of the Word to all areas of life. All

³ David F. Wells, *The Courage to Be Protestant: Reformation Faith in Today’s World*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017), 78.

theology is applicable.”⁴ The doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture is the foundation for the biblical counselor. The sufficiency of Scripture is important, not only as it speaks of authority and trust, but of giving hope to the hurting within a counseling room.

Seminar 3: Biblical Counseling and the Goal of Progressive Sanctification

Progressive sanctification is also a work in which God and man cooperate, each playing distinct roles. This application of redemption is called sanctification: Sanctification is a progressive work of God and man that makes believers more and more free from sin and in turn, like Christ.

A Christian cannot be sanctified apart from the sanctified One, one cannot be sanctified apart from union with Christ. Christians cannot be possessed of Christ’s righteousness unless they are possessed of Christ himself.⁵ The power of the living Christ, in his death and resurrection, has sanctified Christians and will continue to sanctify until “absent from the body and to be present with the Lord” (2 Cor 5:8).

Believers progress in sanctification throughout their lives (2 Pet 3:18). They are sanctified through their obedience to the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives (Gal 5:17), with the goal of conformity “to the likeness of his Son through sanctification, so that he might be the firstborn among many” (Rom 8:29).

Sanctification brings great joy to a child of God (1 John 3:1). The more that believers grow in likeness to Christ by the Holy Spirit (Rom 15:15), the more that they will personally experience joy and peace as part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22) and draw near to the kind of life they will have in heaven.

⁴ John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2008), 9.

⁵ Matthew Barrett, D. A. Carson, and Stephen J. Wellum, *The Doctrine on Which the Church Stands or Falls: Justification in Biblical, Theological, Historical, and Pastoral Perspective* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019), 413.

The believer's purpose is to glorify God through a life that reflects Christ and conforms to Christ (Rom 8:28-30; 1 Cor 1:2). Philippians 2:12-13 shows that God is the prime cause of sanctification, but Christians are expected to exert effort as well (1 Cor 6:12-18; 1 Tim 6:11; 2 Tim 2:22).

The end goal of biblical counseling is not merely to counsel broken sinners with a boost of self-confidence apart from greater reliance on the Holy Spirit. That would be misleading and mistaken. Counseling is coming alongside another believer to help them become more like Jesus. The final aim for biblical counseling is only Christlikeness and not a state of normalcy, as Paul describes, "Not conform to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind" (Rom 12:2). The further a person strays away from the image of God (Christ), the easier it is for sin to settle in and cause normalcy and unrest of the soul. Augustine of Hippo explains, "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."⁶ Because this earth is not our home, comfort of the soul could never be met by earthly possession as the world promises. Christians are sojourners passing through this earth (1 Pet 2:11), waiting for the return of Christ (Matt 24:27) in this already-not-yet state (1 John 3:2), for the fulfillment in Christ the eternal glory (2 Cor 4:17). Christians hope and long for the eternal perfect sanctification in the return of Christ. The hope in Christ sets believers free from the bondage of the present reality and purifies thoughts more in the future kingdom. First John 3:3 says, "And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure." As disciples of Christ, waiting in the present reality in Christ weans away from the world and drives people to their knees by being sanctify more in the likeness of Christ.

⁶ St. Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University, 2009), 5.

Seminar 4: The Crucial Importance of Understanding the Heart within Biblical Counseling

Seminar 4 opened up with five key elements that contribute to a person as a whole. (1) Situation/circumstance: “For he makes his sun rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the just and unjust.” (Matt 5:45). Life happens under God’s omniscience (Ps 147:4-5). (2) Thinking/mind: “Set your minds on the things that are above, not on things that are on earth.” (Col 3:2) God calls for His people to think biblically on all of life’s matters. (3) Feeling/emotions: “For as a man thinks in his heart, so is he” (Prov 23:7). Emotions are great indicators of the heart yet must not be the dictators of life. In general, Scripture suggests that feeling and thinking are closely affiliated. (4) Doing/action: “Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life” (Prov 4:23). “Out of the heart, actions overflow” (Luke 6:45). (5) Character/habit: “Knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness” (1 Pet 1:5). The end goal of biblical counseling is Christ-like character; therefore, the character is revealed in consistent godly habits of self-control.⁷

In many cases, Christians respond incorrectly as the interpretation of the circumstance is based on one’s presupposition of self rather than the divine revelation of Scripture. For this reason, many Christians interpret God, based on the circumstances of who He is and His deeds. Because of the testing, trials, and tribulations of life, many Christians can sense hopelessness and believe that God has forsaken and turned away from them (Ps 22:1). Present helplessness leads to future hopelessness that leads either to frustration, confusion, or apathy.

At times, people who experience depression have the wrong thinking of God, in fact, they often are not even thinking about God in the situation. God does not always

⁷ Jay E. Adams, *Godliness through Discipline*, 2nd ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1983), 2-6.

change the circumstance when there is hardship in life, but He gives people grace to persevere through the situation.

The affection of the heart influences both the cognition of the mind and the volition of the behavior.⁸ If biblical counselors can cause people to think differently with the Spirit's assistance, then believers will begin to see the transformation within the heart and will see through the revealed Word of God a different pathway of decision making. Scripture indicates that people have two choices in the heat of the situation: (1) feeling-oriented (selfish), or (2) commandment-oriented (God). Matthew 15:19 says, "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander." The inner man thinks in two different ways. Second Corinthians explains, "So, whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him." There are only two choices out of the heart: to please God or to please yourself. The heart ultimately leads to the point of decision to choose the hard way that leads to God/delight—"If anyone wants to come after me, let him deny himself and carry up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23)—or the easy way that leads to self/destruction—"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Prov 14:12). Even though Scripture-oriented commands are difficult to follow, the path gets easier with the help of the Holy Spirit (Prov 4:8; Matt 11:30). Both paths eventually lead to habitual obedience/disobedience that leads to the character of man (1 Tim 4:7; Heb 5:13-14; 2 Pet 2:14).

The heart dynamic is often overcomplicated by society, yet Jesus makes the problem of the heart quite simple. For biblical counselors, the aim is to lead the counselee to Scripture so he/she may dwell richly in Christ's Word and that the heart may be filled with thanksgiving rather than worldly sorrow (Col 1:16). People can choose to either please God or to please self (2 Cor 5:9). The manifestation of the heart can lead to good results/fruit (Gal 5:22-24) or the bad result/fruit (Gal 5:19-21).

⁸ Jeremy Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life: Connecting Christ to Human Experience* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2016), 19.

Seminar 5: Three Areas Dealing with the Sinful Nature

Seminar 5 opened with the idea that the fundamental problem of humanity is the sin of self-sufficiency. While current culture promotes, preserves, and protects self, Jesus Christ calls believers to crucify the self (Gal 2:20).

The fundamental question in dealing with any sin is, “Where is the sin coming from?” For biblical counselors, habitual sins are often traced back to various actions, and namely, three areas: (1) pride, (2) lust of the flesh, and (3) lust of the eyes (1 John 2:16). The pride of life points to boasting in earthly achievement centered in self-sufficiency rather than wholly trusting in Jesus alone. The lust of the flesh means being tempted to satisfy the desire of the heart by acting in sinful patterns of this world, contrary to the will of God. The lust of the eyes is like sinful people craving, coveting, or looking to the things of this earth (creation) rather than to God himself (Creator). In fact, throughout the entire scope of Scripture, often any sin can be covered by all three areas. In the Old Testament, for instance, Adam and Eve in the Garden (Gen 3:1-7) display (1) “delight to the eyes” (lust of the eyes), (2) “good for food” (lust of the flesh), and (3) “desire to be wise” (pride). In the New Testament, Jesus became the true and better second Adam to undo what the first Adam was incapable of doing (Luke 3:23-38). For instance, Jesus faced three areas of temptation according to the gospel account (Luke 4:1-13): (1) “loaf of bread” (lust of the flesh), (2) “the kingdom” (lust of the eyes), (3) “the Holy City” (pride).⁹

The good news is that throughout the New Testament Jesus is mentioned as the last and greater Adam (1 Cor 15:45). Paul indicates in Romans 5:14, “Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.” Adam was the first man who failed, yet Christ was the man who finished the victory on the cross (John 19:30). Luke 3:23-38

⁹ Brandon D. Crowe, *The Last Adam: A Theology of the Obedient Life of Jesus in the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017), 123.

points to the genealogy of Christ where the lineage begins with Adam. Scripture proves that Christ is the descendant of the human race. Before the genealogy account, Luke confirms Jesus as the beloved Son of God (Luke 3:21) through baptism by John the Baptist (Luke 3:1-22). Adam, though referred to as the Son of God (Luke 3:38), had failed even though he was in the most idealistic place of the garden (Gen 2:8-15). He could have eaten fruit from any tree except the tree of knowledge (Gen 2:16). There was eternal condemnation because Adam failed in the garden.

In contrast, Jesus Christ was in the wilderness filled with temptation and wild beasts (Mark 1:12-13), He had not eaten for 40 days and was hungry (Luke 4:2), and He was alone and tempted by the devil (Matt 4:1). Yet, Jesus undid what Adam could not accomplish and made a path to eternal life (John 17:3). Scripture points to this account: “For one man entered sin. Death spread to all men” (Rom 5:12). Jesus with one act of righteousness undid what Adam was not able to do within his flesh. Jesus was faithful where Adam could not be. Jesus was able to do what the children of Israel could not.

Christ is rarely mentioned or pointed as the sole solution to life’s problem in an integrationist counseling session. Scripture defines sin as a condition that results in behavior. If people are sick, then people need a doctor, not a medical book. If a person is being sued, that individual needs a lawyer, not a law book. Likewise, when people face the last enemy—death—they do not need a doctrine written in a book, but a Savior, which is Jesus Christ (1 Tim 1:15). Human beings cannot step out of their sinfulness by human doing. People who are suffering need more than love and encouragement, information, and insight. The counselee needs a divine rescuer. Anything less will not address the problem of the heart. Human beings cannot walk through life on their own. People need rescue, healing, and forgiveness that is only offered in Christ Jesus who offers those things freely for anyone who confesses Him as Lord (Rom 10:9-10).

At the end of the seminar 5, I offered a spiritual diagnostic chart dealing with habitual sin in the counselee’s lifestyle. This spiritual diagnostic chart, as taken from

Wayne Mack's acronym PREACHED, determines specific issues with sin: (1) physical; (2) relational; (3) emotional; (4) actions; (5) conceptual; (6) historical; (7) desires.¹⁰ The diagnostic questions were examples to be utilized by participants in counseling sessions. Some questions were, How have you been doing physically? What is status of relationship now with he/her that you are seeking counsel? How does the current circumstance of conflict make you feel? What actions have been taken already? What do you believe is happening in the other person's heart? What events have happened in the past? What do you hope to see take place in the future? These questions can draw out the counselee's belief system and expectations that could later be addressed in the counseling session.

Seminar 6: The Role, Relationship, and Responsibility of Biblical Counselors

Seminar 6 opened up with the idea that it would be rare for a Christian to say that discipling is not a biblical mandate. The task of Christians maturing one another (Eph 4:14), growing in grace (2 Pet 3:18), and increasing in faith (Luke 17:5) are key themes seen throughout the pages of Scripture.

The idea of the "edification of the saints" (Rom 15:2; 1 Cor 8:1; 1 Thess 5:11) is often spoken in academic circles yet is rarely seen in practice, such as with church discipline (Matt 18:15-17), that often ends on a theoretical level. Living life together in fellowship goes against natural fleshly desires (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor 10:16; 1 John 1:3). Edification of the saints often takes place in church through teaching, discipleship, and encouragement, and should not be done primarily through biblical counseling, yet ought to happen more on a regular basis in these other areas.

Counseling is the art of speaking grace and truth, just as Christ demonstrated. Scripture speaks of the principle of maturing faith by equipping the saints (Eph 4:11-16).

¹⁰ Wayne A. Mack, *A Homework Manual for Biblical Living: Personal and Interpersonal Problems* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1979), 38.

Proverbs 27:5 says, “Better is open rebuke than hidden love.” A caring Christian will speak forth by saying, “There’s something I want to share out of love and concern for you. This will change you. I want to be a brother to you so that we can become more like Christ.” The convictional biblical counselor will prompt the conscience (Eph 4). True biblical love does not ignore and overlook sin.

The apostle Paul desires that people be members of a “confessing” (Eph 3:16-21) church, with the content of their testimony to be “the word of truth” (Eph 1:13-14)—the gospel of their salvation (Eph 1:13). This truth, which is guaranteed by God and depicted as part of his armor, is the belt that believers are to buckle around their waist as they resist the onslaughts of the evil one (Eph 6:14).

This growth of the body has Christ as its goal: he is the one into whom believers are to grow. Ephesians 4:15 stresses the readers’ progress and maturity toward Christ as the ultimate goal.

God has not only given His inerrant Word that is sufficient for all matters of life, but He has also given His church to His people. The church of God is not an institutional but a supernatural entity, which is in the process of growth toward Christ. Its members are in Christ and are knit together by a supernatural kinship. Their gifts and activities continue the work of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, which originates from Christ, and are coordinated by him toward the final goal.

Why does the local church matter? The most important reason why Christians live in a community is that believers often overlook that God Himself is a community. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit live together in perfect fellowship, harmony, and unity. When the apostle Paul disciplined new believers, he repeatedly reminded them that there was help in Christ and Christ’s people, the church (1 Cor 12:12). Believers are “fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household” (Eph 2:19). Christians are “being built together to become a dwelling place in which God lives” (Eph 2:22). It is impossible to read these passages of Scripture and come away with the idea that

Christianity is a “just-me-and-God” religion. Salvation is something that connects believers to God and his people.

In the twenty-first century, evangelical Christians live in a context where individualism is elevated and personal autonomy of privatized faith is an automatic expectation, and further, a personal right.

To end seminar 6 with a practical component in the counseling session, each person participated in a church discipline scenario. For many believers, church discipline is not taught, spoken, nor even practiced. Even within the paid ministerial staff, eight out of ten agreed that church discipline only brings more division rather than unity and growth. One of the pastors in the room even mentioned that Christians should not bring that issue up to the person as it will make him more upset. Our church is growing so let’s not talk about it and hope it will just tone down. Unfortunately, church discipline is often viewed as a divisive issue and an unhealthy practice. The assumption too often when speaking on the topic of church disciplines is the final step, where the church excommunication takes place and a person exits the community; as a result, churches avoid the conversation of church discipline as the practice seems extreme. However, biblical counselors must embrace and understand that biblical church discipline first begins by loving the individual and coming alongside the person in prayer and support as a process of growth of discipleship.¹¹ Wayne Mack writes, “Though it may seem a completely unloving thing to put someone out of the fellowship of the church, Jesus commands us to do this when someone refuses to repent of his or her sin. In reality, since Jesus commanded it, it would be unloving not to do it.”¹²

¹¹ Heath Lambert and David Powlison, *The Biblical Counseling Movement after Adams* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 88.

¹² Wayne Mack, *To Be or Not to Be A Church Member* (Merrick, NY: Calvary Press, 2007), 70.

Seminar 7: Key Principles in Communication for Biblical Counselors

In seminar 7 the teaching covered key principles for a biblical counselor. New biblical counselors are not aware of how a counseling session should flow or what should be expected. Seminar 7 laid out the practical nature of listening and giving counsel, and how to set up counseling sessions to navigate through various struggles the counselee faces.

From the initial meeting, the biblical counselor aims to build a warm, welcoming, godly relationship so that the counselee will gain hope and have trust in the counselor as God's instrument. Ultimately, the relationship would lead the counselee to a saving and growing relationship with Jesus Christ. A true Christlike relational interaction for a counselor would express compassion, humility, gentleness, patience, love, and respect (Col 3:12-14; 1 Cor 13:4-7). The goal of each counseling session is to communicate five general principles to the counselee: (1) welcome, (2) know, (3) hope, (4) plan, and (5) commitment.

The initial counseling session may start by affirming and thanking the person for taking time to meet, and by saying something like, "I am so glad you are wanting help! I thank God for bringing you here and your willingness to work through this. I was reading through your paperwork and I am hopeful about what God can do in our time together." Creating a loving affirming environment, granting hope in the situation, and ultimately committing the situation unto the Lord ought to be the ultimate goal for all biblical counselors.

By carefully listening and understanding the counselee's need, the counselor should aim to extend Jesus in the situation. The biblical counselor should seek to listen and ask questions with wisdom and discernment that flow from God's Word. Proverbs 8:13 says, "He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him." The session must be conducted without quick invalid assumptions about the person or situation. Wise questions may consist of open questions, intentional questions, or a questionnaire

before diving into the initial counseling session. Active listening by taking notes and attentively caring shows compassion to the counselee. As the session goes forward, it is important to move progressively from the person's circumstance/situation toward the heart of the matter. It is important for a counselor to reflectively listen and validate understanding of the situation as the counselor interacts with the counselee's problem.

As mentioned, a person's goal of coming to counseling may not be God's end goal for counseling. After careful intuitive listening, it is crucial to organize and interpret the information biblically and determine the true need that leads to the goal. Paul says in Colossians 3:23, "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men." The present helplessness of a given situation has morphed and evolved into what seems like future hopelessness. The four common lies from the devil are (1) "no one else has ever gone through anything like this before," (2) "God has abandoned me," (3) "I cannot handle this," (4) "I am not going to get through this. I'm done." God's Word gives comfort/hope for the wounded. Instead of the four lies, Paul gives four promises from God: "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. But God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation, he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it" (1 Cor 10:13).

In the beginning stages of the counseling sessions, it is important to not only set the right goals but to explain expectations and requirements. Four essential expectations should be communicated to the counselee before the counseling session. The counselor's four expectations are (1) a posture of a learner spirit—the permission and agreement to "speak the truth in love" (Eph 4:15) as the counselor speaks God's Word for comfort or confronts the person's sin when not in line with biblical truth. (2) An essential component for homework: the counseling hour is not the "magic hour" that brings lasting change. There must be a commitment to the Word of God through the counselee's life. (3) Recognition and patience with time: the counselee's habitual sin or situation did not arrive overnight. Neither is the particular sin overcome overnight. The

time commitment can be different for each counselee. (4) The urgency of broken/desperate need: instead of going through the motions and conversing through sinful patterns, there must be a willingness to change the heart.

A counselor cannot assume the basic fundamentals of Christian living in the believer's life. The principles of God's grace working in and through the life of the counselee may be a foreign concept. The counselor should explain and breakdown the homework assignment that connects the relationship between God's grace and personal sanctification: (1) Bible reading (Acts 20:32); (2) prayer (Heb 4:16); (3) deepening intimacy with Christ (John 1:16-17); (4) singing and worship (Col 3:16); (5) Scripture memorization (Col 3:16); and (6) in fellowship with close proximity (1 Pet 4:10).

Biblical counselors must work with counselees to establish an action plan for change through practical application. For instance, the homework assignment for prayer/supplication includes four tasks (1) pray for yourself: "Search me, O God and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts" (Ps 139:23); (2) pray for your counselor: He does not have all the answers, but Christ does. "Wonderful Counselor" (Isa 9:6); (3) pray for your enemy/spouse (antagonist); (4) pray together as a group. "For where two or three gathers in my name, there am I with them" (Matt 18:20). The goal of the action plan is to instill and reinforce in the counselee a firm grasp of Christ's identity and work in the person's life. Counselors must be aware of three sins that could block God's grace working in one's life: (1) pride (Jas 4:6); (2) bitterness (Heb 12:15); (3) idolatry (Jonah 2:8).¹³

At the end of seminar 7, I gave the following outline as a general guideline to facilitate an initial counseling session: (1) update on the current situation (example: I just lost my job."); (2) open in prayer; (3) give hope in the situation; (4) point to the next week's homework assignment and expectations; (5) close in prayer.

¹³ Brad Bigney, *Gospel Treason: Betraying the Gospel with Hidden Idols* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2012), 24-25.

Seminar 8: Counseling Sticky Cases: The Differences in Anger (Pride) and Worry (Fear)

The final seminar covered how to deal with hard situations in counseling as part of living in a fallen and sin-tainted, cursed world. Christians will struggle with difficult situations (2 Cor 12:7). Christians will face various trials (Phil 4:11-13), yet followers of Christ can rejoice in suffering (Rom 12:12). Tribulation or perfection will not cause believers to fall away as God sustains and uses the hard times to *metanoia* (a change of mind). A genuine transformative heart leads to outward behavior (Acts 3:19). Hardship does not undermine man's ability to serve effectively but can become an opportunity for greater reliance of the sovereign will of God through His Word. Biblical counseling moves from information to transformation when the person truly chooses to repent.

In counseling sessions, anger is often tied to the sin of pride/arrogance. Biblical anger is seen in the following ways: (1) divine anger (the most common form of anger in the Bible); (2) righteous human anger; and (3) sinful human anger (Matt 5:21-22; Eph 4:30-31; Jas 1:20). Robert Jones writes, "Anger is a whole-person response arising from a negative moral judgment against perceived evil and is done before God and incurs his judgment."¹⁴ Anger is not just an "emotion," but it includes our emotions. Anger is the overflow of the heart of man, as anger engages the whole person. Anger is a response to something/someone to a particular circumstance that often provokes (but does not *cause*) action. Therefore, anger is a choice. According to the book of James, anger manifests in five ways: (1) entrenched desires, (2) ruling wants, (3) covetousness, (4) selfish-motives, and (5) sinful reasons (Jas 4:1-12). God's plan of response to anger is found in James 4:1-12. James addresses the cause of anger (v. 1) and roots the cause of

¹⁴ Robert D. Jones, *Uprooting Anger: Biblical Help for a Common Problem* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2005), 14.

heart beliefs and motives. Amid the anger, God provides grace to be humble by His peace (v. 6).

Anger does not always connect to pride, yet anger and pride often interrelate with one another. Pride is being consumed with selfish love for one's own excellence. Anger then is manifested by tempering bitterness, and says, "My will be done, my kingdom." When one does not get the desired result that was willed from their throne of self-centeredness, all hell breaks loose. One who deals with unforgiveness must be overthrown and needs a heart transformed by the Spirit alone. Unforgiveness from within is a conscious, deliberate decision to release feelings of resentment or vengeance toward a person who harmed self, regardless of whether they deserve it.¹⁵ Forgiveness is not easy, but with God, it is possible (Phil 4:13). To forgive is not natural for a person.¹⁶ Forgiveness goes against every fiber of the human flesh. Forgiveness is supernatural and it comes with the help of the Holy Spirit of God, and it is possible for all.

Christians have a choice to be bitter or to be better. To refuse to forgive is to be held hostage to emotions. The individual holding onto anger/pride by not extending forgiveness is letting the offender control his/her life. Refusing to extend forgiveness gives self a false sense of power. A lack of forgiveness ultimately breaks the fellowship with God and with one another (Matt 6:14-15).

Finally, living a life marked by anger, pride, or unforgiveness often leads to a life of fear and anxiety. The terms "anxiety" and "fear" can often be used interchangeably (with a panic attack as a severe form of fear). The New Testament verb (*merimnaō*) and noun (*merimna*) translate "worry" in a good or bad sense, depending on context (Phil 4:7). Anxiety/worry could be manifested in the inner being as (1) craving of the heart; (2)

¹⁵ Lewis B. Smedes, *Forgive and Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve*, 2nd ed. (New York: HarperOne, 2007), 111-23.

¹⁶ Chris Brauns, *Unpacking Forgiveness: Biblical Answers for Complex Questions and Deep Wounds* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 15.

self-gratification; (3) fear of man; (4) others-focused living; and (5) idolatry-savor. The outward manifestation consists of (1) constant worrying; (2) panic attacks; (3) quickening heartbeats; (4) insomnia; and (5) fear of losing control.

An important component in the counseling room is to ask the counselee about his or her concerns (not their worries), which will indicate the spectrum of differences. Then, the counselor can be understanding and compassionate about concerns and help the counselee see how some concerns cross the line into worry/fear.

At the end of the final session, participants broke into groups and dealt with a real-life scenario of a couple that had persistent problems in the marriage. The couple had strife in areas such as, bi-polar disorder, anger and depression, all of which were leading toward divorce. The case study was interactive and informative, as all participants engaged in the discussion with practicality of how to deal with the problem, rather than a mere theory level. Participants conversed about the human tendency to deal with the problem by simply removing the person from the difficult situation, rather than first seeking God's will in His Word. Trials are opportunities for biblical counselors to reach the heart level that God desires to bring lasting change. Since emotional responses rise from the inner heart (Matt 16:1-12), a person's problem can be brought forth by their deeds. The goal of biblical counseling is not simply to treat symptoms, but to understand what he/she treasures most that is the ultimate problem, whether that be a bi-polar disorder, anger, or depression.

Questionnaire and Evaluation

Weeks 9 and 10 were the final two weeks of the seminar and were followed by a post-survey questionnaire for each participant. The post-seminar questionnaire was the same set of questions as the pre-seminar questionnaire except for the addition of three questions:

1. What were the strengths of this class?

2. What were the weaknesses of this class? What could have been done better?
3. Were the notes provided for each class helpful?

Conclusion

The class sessions began on Tuesday, August 27, 2019, and concluded on Tuesday, November 6, 2019, for a total of ten weeks. Following all eight sessions of the project implementation, the small group leaders gave their feedback. There is a need in the community and surrounding area for biblical counseling training for Christian lay leaders and pastors. The following chapter contains a thorough evaluation of this project.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

Christians have the biblical command to encourage one another (1 Thess 4:18), build each other up (1 Thess 5:11), love one another (1 Pet. 3:8), and spur on one another (Heb 10:25). The goal of biblical counseling is for Christians to be transformed more into Christlikeness (Rom 8:29, 2 Cor 3:18). Robby Gallaty writes about disciple-making: “Disciple-making . . . is intentionally equipping believers with the Word of God through accountable relationships empowered by the Holy Spirit to replicate faithful followers of Christ.”¹

The opportunity to make disciples through biblical counseling is immeasurable. However, discipleship through concepts of biblical counseling needs a proper understanding and method to make disciples who make disciples. David Powlison makes the connection of Jesus Christ’s suffering:

Jesus’s first three words (from the cross) reach with mercy to others. His last four words reach out in need to His Father. Why is this significant? Jesus’s actual first-person experience expresses the fundamental extroversions of candid faith and personalized love. We can easily imagine how being tortured to death and facing imminent asphyxiation would pull any one of us into a whirlpool of self-absorption in pain and vulnerability. A person in such agony reacts in typical ways: despair, impotent rage, self-pity, terror, and an overwhelming urge to numb or escape pain. But amid intense suffering, Jesus cries out to the Father and cares for the people around Him. We watch and hear how honestly; He lives the Psalms. We witness how specifically He lives out the commandments to love His God and His neighbors. We stand in awe.²

¹ Robby Gallaty, *Growing Up: How to Be a Disciple Who Makes Disciples* (Nashville: B & H, 2013), 19.

² Dave Browning, *Deliberate Simplicity: How the Church Does More by Doing Less* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 38.

Personal problems tie into spiritual problems in all matters of life. The fundamental problem of the sinfulness of mankind is rooted in the inner self/heart (Matt 15:19). People sin because they are sinners. The task of biblical counseling is not necessarily fixing people but allowing the believer's hearts to conform in the likeness of Christ.

The goal of biblical counseling is to lead counselees to a saving and growing relationship with Jesus (Rom 15:7) and then toward God's plan of redemption. In whatever circumstance the counselee may be in, counselors can present that God accepts all men as they are, in Christ (justification, adoption), to transform the saints into what He wants the believers to be (growth, maturation, "progressive sanctification"). Christ's incarnation (Matt 9:35-36; Luke 15:1-2; John 1:1-18) and life is demonstrated in Hebrews 2:10-18: (1) Jesus humbled himself by entering this world and taking on human flesh; (2) Jesus identified with sinners' experiences; and (3) people desire to come with confidence to Jesus, who gives healing for His glory. As God listens to his people, believers must listen as well, as Jesus Christ himself demonstrated (Exod 2:23-25; Isa 59:1).

While going through the certification program for the Association of Certification of Biblical Counseling, I have counseled over 100 individuals dealing with issues such as drug addictions, same-sex attraction, suicidal tendencies, marital divorce, panic attacks, sexual sin in pornography, marital affair, and loss of loved ones. Before this project, the congregation did not know about biblical counseling. Because Troy First Baptist Church does not provide a formal counseling ministry, many ministry leaders feel incompetent to help struggling believers.

The prayer and aim of Troy First Baptist Church are to have every small group leader to be competent to counsel. Ephesians 4:12 puts a clear emphasis on the scriptural responsibility of leaders to build up the body of Christ for unity and maturity in Christ (Prov 18:13, 15).

The Bible alone is the ground of authority (Luke 4:17; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 3:16) for human reasoning and knowledge (Matt 15:6). There is no divine revelation beyond the Scriptures (John 10:35). No authority concerning the formation of truth has been given beyond the New Testament writers (Isa 55:1). The sufficiency of Scripture is vital not only for its power and authority (Luke 10:19) to have the assurance of faith (Heb 11:1) but it is also vital in counseling.

The evaluations and observations of the project are the focus of this chapter.

Evaluation of the Project Purpose

The purpose and the goals were accomplished at the end of this project. This project's purpose was to reinforce the importance and need to utilize the Scripture. The biblical conviction of sole authority in Scripture alone lies within (1) convictional certainty of sufficiency, (2) convictional certainty of finality, and (3) convictional certainty of authority.³ The Scriptures are authoritative because they are God-breathed (2 Tim 3:16), written by chosen men who were "borne along" by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 1:20-21), the words employed by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:13), accredited by those who first received them (1 Thess 2:13), attested by the Lord Jesus, and were received, delivered, and attested by the prophets.

God's inerrant revelation that has been shown to man is undeniable. In biblical counseling, by God's special revelation (2 Tim 3:15-17), God sanctifies the body of Christ by renewing the mind (Rom 12:2) in Christ Jesus. He works purposefully by providing his presence, glory, and wisdom through the counsel of God's Word. No man-made writing is sufficient to equip for every good work; only the Word of God can do that (Rom 12:2).

³ William Bridge, *The Works of William Bridge* (Charleston, SC: Nabu Press, 2010), 398.

It is the conviction of the pastors, staff, and church leadership of Troy First Baptist Church that God’s people are competent to counsel. There is a significant connection between preaching and counseling, and they ought not to be divorced from one another. The vital role of exegesis not only happens in the pulpit but in the trenches of the pit of soul care. Unfortunately, when a difficult counseling situation occurs within the church context, doctrinal orthodoxy crumbles and shifts its source of reliance to secular psychological methodology.

Biblical counseling is deeply and profoundly more than exposing sin (church discipline) and telling people what to do (behavioral modification). Scripture-based, gospel-driven, and Christ-centered counseling dramatically separates biblical counseling from every other self-help, feel-good, moralistic therapeutic religion.⁴

God purposes to bring good in the person and the community as one experiences the grace of Christ, as J. C. Ryle explains, “to make us think, to wean us from the world, to send us to the Bible, and to drive us to our knees.”⁵

Biblical counseling ultimately brings the Word of God to the people of God and points people to the incarnate Word of God (John 1:14). If a person learns some coping mechanisms for anxiety-disorder, conflict management, or anger, but does not have a greater affection for Christ, then the task of the minister has failed. The counselor has created a false assurance of greater self-reliance with self-help advice that drove the person further from Christ-reliance.

Biblical counseling is the task of a pastor and the church members. The church today has many more consumers than committed participants. The tendency toward ecclesiastical consumerism has seriously weakened the church. For most, the church is

⁴ Christian Smith and Melina Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 121.

⁵ J. C. Ryle, *Matthew*, Expository Thoughts on the Gospels, vol. 1 (Shawnee, KS: Gideon House, 2016), 180.

merely an event to attend or an organization to belong to. The “passive body that pays the professionals” culture of the modern evangelical church must be forsaken for the ministry model God has so wisely ordained.

The task of the pastor is “to equip the saints for the work of the ministry” (Eph 4:15), which is the essence of Christ’s incarnational ministry on earth (John 1:14). The model Paul set forth challenges consumer Christianity that is often pushed by the contemporary church culture. A healthy biblical church is not simply staffed by a few for the few. Instead, it is God’s call to counseling and discipleship by all the people for all the people.

The project was created to train small group leaders at Troy First Baptist Church to counsel with God’s Word. The purpose of the project was completed as six participants were equipped to provide biblical counseling through small group ministry at Troy First Baptist Church. In comparing total scores of the DDPI pre-survey and post-surveys using a one-tailed, paired *t*-test, there was a statistically significant change ($t(5)=2.9763, p=.0139$) in participants’ self-assessments.

Evaluation of the Project Goals

The first goal was to assess the current level of knowledge in the discipleship process of small group leaders at Troy First Baptist Church. The awareness of the resources available for the discipleship ministry at Troy First Baptist Church was known by small group leaders, yet biblical counseling was unfamiliar to the majority of church members. Before the project implementation, not only were conversations about biblical counseling absent, but there was no understanding even within the staff for biblical counseling. The goal was implemented after a careful evaluation of the effectiveness of the small group ministry. In winter 2018, before the project implementation, the small group leaders were trained to begin discipleship ministry. According to the DDPI pre-survey, participants were aware of the need to make disciples and multiply leaders,

however, the post-survey revealed the greater urgency to not only grow attendance but for attendees to witness transformation through biblical counseling.

The second goal was to develop an eight-week teaching curriculum of discipleship utilizing concepts of biblical counseling for small leaders. The DDPI pre-survey was created with twenty-three statements, each being multiple choice. Each question was scored with a value of “1” to “6.” “Strongly agree” was “6” and “strongly disagree” was “1” for each of the questions, except for questions 10, 16, and 23, which were asked in the negative and therefore scored in opposite order. This particular goal was successfully met when those who enrolled in the class completed the DDPI pre-survey.

The third goal was to increase the knowledge of the leader to disciple those in their small group. The curriculum intended to increase small group leaders’ confidence and competence to counsel God’s people. Based on the DDPI pre-survey, the majority of participants were hesitant to counsel other believers. The small group leaders were aware of the biblical mandate to make disciples but were uncertain where to begin in ministry.

The participants felt that the three doctrinal pillars emphasized in the sessions were helpful: (1) Scripture: sufficiency of Scripture to counsel with God’s Word; (2) Christ: progressive sanctification to maturity in Jesus by God’s Spirit; (3) church: communion of the saints to counsel through God’s people. The post-survey revealed an increase in confidence to counsel God’s people through biblical counseling.

The core sinful issues discussed in the later seminars were (1) lust of the flesh, (2) lust of the eyes, and (3) boastful pride of life. In the last four training seminars, all small group leaders were given case studies of various counseling sessions and challenged to role-play the situation. The participants were able to cognitively process the particular sin problem by participating in the discussion. The comparison of the DDPI pre-survey and post-survey revealed that a great number of small group leaders increased their understanding of how to disciple members using concepts of biblical counseling.

The final goal was to create a strategic plan to equip ministry leaders to disciple those in their small group. This goal was completed with the final session, which equipped the small group leaders to counsel in various sinful patterns with biblical counseling. The church’s vision is to provide discipleship materials and opportunities to counsel by continued training to launch a full orb ed biblical counseling ministry in winter of 2020.

Reviewing the Process

I assessed each participant that completed the pre- and post-surveys. The following results include only the participants that fully and successfully completed all eight sessions. Each participant completed the DPPI pre-survey prior to the eight-week sessions. The DPPI pre- and post-survey focused on the areas of cognition, affection, and volition to reveal the current understanding and practice of biblical counseling by small group leaders at Troy First Baptist Church. The post-survey included three additional questions to gather the participants’ feedback for each seminar.

By looking at the means of two-tailed conventional criteria, the project implementation was successful because there was a significant positive statistical difference between the pre-survey and the post-survey. The mean of group 1 minus group 2 equals – 10.00. There was a change of 95 percent confidence interval from the difference of -17.49 to -2.51. The results of the pre-survey and post-survey scores are shown in table 1.

Table. Pre and post-course survey scores

Participants	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
1	103	116
2	93	110
3	102	112
4	110	112
5	100	111
6	92	109

With the 95 percent confidence level, the data showed a statistically significant increase in the participants' confidence to use Scripture to biblically disciple members. With the standard "before minus after" analysis, the increase in knowledge of biblical counseling expressed is a positive value.

The post-survey questionnaire was identical to the pre-survey except for the addition of three questions. The first question was, "What are the strengths of this class?" The most common answer given was the content of the sessions. There was also a common theme of individuals having a greater appreciation for utilizing Scripture and the sufficiency of Scripture in all matters of life.

The second question was, "What are the weaknesses of this class? What could have been done better?" A few participants gave no comment as the class was helpful and informative. On the other hand, some stated the sessions could have gone longer and, in fact, wished it would have kept going as the content was helpful. There was a desire and longing to learn about discipleship and to feel more competent to help others to grow in Christlikeness. One participant noted that toward the last four sessions he wished there was more time to participate in further discussions in the case study.

The third question was, "Were the notes provided for each class helpful?" All participants said that the notes were helpful, and they enjoyed making notes and following along in the lecture.

Strengths of the Project

The project implementation training for small group leaders to counsel with concepts of biblical counseling had four major recognizable strengths. First, the strength of the session was its overall commitment to gospel-driven and biblically saturated content based on counseling in the Scripture. In an age of division and confusion of not only methods, but also means of counseling, the foundation of the sessions focused on the core commitment regarding the sufficiency of Scripture to counsel. Because Scripture is

fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, authenticity and authority are proven in power and certainty. The authority of Scripture alone, which is both inerrant and infallible, is the only means to bring lasting change.

Second, the sessions emphasized the importance of not only the theological standpoint, but the practical standpoint of how to walk through people's sin issues with biblical counseling. Many of the small group leaders who participated expressed a desire to learn and grow in biblical counseling after the project implementation.

The third strength of the project was the outline and structure for the sessions. The first four seminars focused on doctrinal theological implications to address practical implication of counseling from a scriptural standpoint. The final four sessions focused on core-doctrinal truth with practical steps to help small group leaders process through real-life biblical counseling situations (2 Cor 10:5).

The fourth strength of the sessions was the dynamic make-up of the participants as well as the size of the group. The group included ten individuals that were diverse in age, gender, ethnicity, nationality, socio-economic, education, experience, and background. The group did well to reflect the makeup of Troy First Baptist Church. They brought a variety of viewpoints and yet were moldable as the small group leaders were humble, teachable members. Discussions in the practical application through case studies were open and lively, which was the most impactful for many participants, according to the post-survey.

Weaknesses of the Project

The first weakness of the project was that, although the project was an introduction to biblical counseling, the participants wanted the sessions to continue and go longer than what was originally planned. The sessions were created as an introduction to biblical counseling, yet the great interest and excitement showed a greater need and urgency to continue training and equipping leaders to further study and research on the subject.

The second weakness was that the seminars were not long enough. The chosen time of Tuesday evening from 6:30-7:30 p.m. was when other discipleship groups met on the campus of Troy First Baptist Church or in-home groups. Each participant wanted to learn more and expressed a desire for ninety minutes of classroom time.

The third weakness was the time of year in which the teaching took place. The weekly teaching sessions began on the Tuesday after Labor Day, from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Q&A occurred before and after each session. The sessions scheduled at this time of year because Labor Day weekend marks the new semester of church ministries, such as a new budget calendar year, preschool, Christian Academy and mid-week Bible study. Although the teaching did not occur during the busy months of summer break, where families are often out of town with vacation or outings, many participants were double booked later in the month with other ministry responsibilities. Many of the small group leaders serve in multiple capacities, such as prison ministry, deacon ministry, evangelism team, and sports ministry, which made it difficult for them to commit to the full eight weeks. Other reasons for absence occurred, such as a job traveling schedule, but some were able to join in via webcam/telephone. All of those who missed a session met with me to go over the material after their absence.

The fourth weakness of the project was having to rethink the amount of material taught in the sixty to seventy-five-minute sessions. The original intent was to prepare the small group leaders after completion of this project implementation to pursue certification with ACBC; however, preparing too much material to cover in eight seminar of a sixty to ninety minutes session once a week was an unrealistic expectation.

The final weakness of the project was the size of the group. Many of the small group leaders expressed that they wanted more time for group discussion in the case studies and the Q & A. The group could have used more time with the in-seminar discussions as participants brought their personal experiences and expertise that enhanced and helped lead the classroom participation and engagement. The majority of the

participants expressed how beneficial the later sessions were with the practical components in biblical counseling. All participants mentioned in the interview that they desired more classroom time discussing how to extend divine help and hope for people who were hurting. If the amount of teaching material had been laid out in a longer study, such as twelve weeks, then perhaps more conversation in the correlation of theological orthodoxy and practical counseling could have been allowed.

Student Feedback

The students expressed many relevant strengths and weaknesses in the post-course interview. The students communicated appreciation for the course through the following statements:

I know now if we let the truth of scripture speak to people it changes things. My opinion of my ways of thinking won't change anybody. That is the beauty of the Word, you will know the truth and it will set you free.

If we are going to reach people, we have to use the scripture as it's our only source as reaching people. We need to use it as much as possible, we don't use it enough.

I think it is what the church needs to take it more seriously. It is something that the church needed for years. It is one of the things, "Church doesn't need it. They got professional"

After going through the class, I think it is important. It is probably the best kind that there is out there. When I was little I went through counseling with the pastor as I did what was wrong and it changed me.

I think more people should use it and study it more on how to relate to people. They are getting to know them, just ways of reaching out to others. By showing the people the Bible and using the scripture to disciple or help them through difficult situations.

I was convinced that was the best and only way to effective who is a Christian. Biblical counseling is the only true answer to the counseling issue.

Students had the most positive feedback concerning the final four seminar sessions, which were "Three Areas Dealing with the Sinful Nature," "The Role, Relationship and Responsibility of Biblical Counselors," "Key Principles in Communication for Biblical Counselors," and "Counseling Sticky Cases: Differences in Anger (Pride) and Worry (Fear)."

The project not only assessed the level of understanding of the discipleship process in a believer's life among members at Troy First Baptist Church, but also revealed the lack of understanding and practice of biblical counseling by ministry leaders in knowledge, perception, or practice. The following was assessed for each participant: (1) knowledge/understanding, (2) affection/desire, (3) practice/action. After completion of the project, the majority of the participants increased confidence in their ability to counsel with biblical counseling, not only in knowledge or perception but in practice as well.

Personal Reflection

I remember ten years ago stepping into ministry as a licensed minister sitting in my church office. I was twenty years old, single, and was still in Bible college. I was overwhelmed by the amount of counseling for which I was not prepared. Some of the situations were complex, and truth be told some situations were horrendous. The inner-city, poverty-stricken families of at-risk youth left me with a sense of helplessness. Family members who sought counseling made me feel inadequate and often useless, but I knew I could not say, "Well, pastors aren't trained in those areas and Scripture doesn't speak on those matters, so you have to seek help elsewhere."

Fast forward ten years, and I am encouraged that I have chosen the route to receive my education at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary with biblical counseling. My conviction of the sufficiency of Scripture has been strengthened and I am further humbled in how God could use even a sinner such as myself to counsel using God's Word.

I have learned that learning in a classroom versus in the counseling room are two different things. I am thankful unto the Lord for how He allowed me to be informed by the top-level faculty in the field of biblical counseling at Southern Seminary over the past five years. I have learned my own personal blind spots when it comes to giving counseling to the flock, specifically my own personal pride in intellectual knowledge

which hinders me loving my neighbor by not listening well and jumping into immediate conclusions. I have also noticed my blind spot in my own personal walk with the Lord as participants asked excellent questions during the seminar sessions. I want to grow as a better disciple-maker who will equip others to counsel God's Word well within my own church and I am excited to see what God will do in the future through His bride.

Studying biblical counseling for the past six years made me to be a more faithful Christian, a better listener as a friend, a selfless husband, an intentional disciple-making father, a continual growing spiritual leader, and an equipped pastor who is competent to counsel. By grace through faith and in Christ I continue to grow in love for Him and for truth of God's Word. To God alone be all the glory due unto His Name.

Project Modifications

The ministry project was successful; however, some revisions or updates would strengthen the content. If I had to complete this project again, I might modify the project by having the seminar extend to 15-16 weeks and extend the seminar sessions to an hour and half sessions. The sessions provided several opportunities for further discussion and future studies to strengthen the local church. I would also have a follow up equipping training course for participants interested in being certified with ACBC as an intensive course with an internship model of allowing each to meet with counselees to quickly implement what they learned.

Overall, the project was prepared in an orderly fashion and each seminar moved from point to point within the teaching sessions. The positive feedback gave me the impression that the information provided in the notes was arranged and the teaching on the whiteboard followed predictably. The seminars were taught in the same conference room at Troy First Baptist Church each time and no seminars were canceled. Each class took between 75 to 90 minutes.

Theological Reflection

Scripture has laid bare and clearly articulated the task of the local church and all believers. The seminars pointed to the fact that people need the gospel made known by grace through faith by the cross alone (Eph 2:8-9). The ultimate answer to life's issues is found in the good news of the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ presently at work till his return. The solution to the troubles of this life are found in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Churches have a responsibility to counsel one another (Rom 15:14; 1 Cor 16:20). People within the church have a cognitive deficiency in utilizing Scripture to "stir up one another in love and good deeds" (Heb 10:24-25).

The project participants now have greater awareness and confidence in Christ to counsel and point people to Jesus. To God be all the glory.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an evaluation of the ministry project. This project allowed Troy First Baptist Church to take a first step toward creating reproducible discipleship through biblical counseling. The goal moving forward is to assist the congregation in implementing a biblical counseling ministry. My hope and prayer are that this vision will be caught by the body as many will hear testimony of lives being transformed by the gospel. I have witnessed people who sought counseling and had an opportunity to lead them to the transforming power of God's good news. I have witnessed people whom I have never met find hope. I have also seen broken marriages restored because God's Word was applied. I pray that the church, even before being known as a counseling center, will be known as a place where lives are saved and men and women are joining the church not because of programs, but because God's people are diligently applying God's Word in other's lives. Troy First Baptist Church desires to see more people empowered by God through Scripture to practice disciple-making through biblical counseling, for Christ's glory.

APPENDIX 1
DISCIPLESHIP PROCESS PRACTICE
INVENTORY (DPPI)

The following is an assessment to understand the current discipleship process at Troy First Baptist Church. These fourteen questions were provided through an in-person survey. The participants for the survey were randomly selected from those currently enrolled as members at Troy First Baptist Church. This inventory assessed each member's level of theological understanding and confidence in participation in discipleship with biblical counseling.

Date: _____

Full Name : _____

Gender _____ Age _____

General Questions:

1. How many years have you been a follower of Christ? _____
2. How long have been a member of TFBC? _____
3. Are you currently serving as a ministry leader or teacher?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
4. Are you currently discipling another believer? If yes, who? _____
5. Are you currently being discipled by another believer? If yes, who? _____
6. How much time do you average each week reading your Bible for personal study or devotions? _____
7. Do you regularly memorize Scripture?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

8. Do you daily pray with and for other people?
- Yes
 - No
9. Is someone currently intentionally discipling you? If so, please describe.
-
-
10. Are you currently intentionally discipling others? If so, please describe.
-
-
11. Briefly define what discipleship is:
-
-
12. Have you ever been discipled by someone? If so, please describe.
13. Have you ever received any formal leadership training in church? If so, please describe.
14. How often do you intentionally help others with personal problems in life? If so, please describe
- Daily
 - Weekly
 - Monthly
 - Seldom

APPENDIX 2
DISCIPLESHIP EIGHT-WEEK
TEACHING CURRICULUM

The following appendix includes the eight-week curriculum.

Class 1 / Implementation

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Introduction: Prayer

What is Biblical Counseling?

Biblical counseling. Biblical counseling may be succinctly defined as a “focused process of discipleship.” Robert Kellemen defines biblical counseling as

Christ-centered, church-based, comprehensive, compassionate, and culturally-informed one-another ministry that depends upon the Holy Spirit to relate God’s inspired truth about people, problems, and solutions to human suffering (through Christian sustaining and healing) and sin (through Christian reconciling and guiding) to empower people to exalt and enjoy God and to love others (Matt. 22:35-40) by cultivating conformity to Christ and communion with Christ and the Body of Christ, leading to a community of one-another disciple-makers (Matt. 28:18-20).

What are Some Road Blocks in Biblical Counseling Ministry?

The Need and Importance to Counsel God’s Word

Counseling is not only the task of a pastor, but of the local churches.

“If you want God to be most glorified in your people, you must satisfy them with God.” -
John Piper

The aim of TFBC is to create an environment where the people of God will be more God-focus, Christ-centered, spirit-empowered disciples of Christ by grace through faith in order carry out the Great Commission for the glory of God to change the world.

The Great Opportunity to Grow

TFBC understands the purpose of why it exists to display Christ glory in the community.

TFBC has limitless opportunity to live the vision in order to impact the community by being the shining light in the brokenness of sin by utilizing lay people trained through discipleship through using the concept of biblical counseling.

Class 2 / Implementation

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What is Truth ?

Objective Reality

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Subjective Reality

What Makes Biblical Counseling Biblical?

Most believe that theology is to minister what psychology is to counselors and the two do not really have much to do with each other.

Sufficiency of Scripture to Counsel God's Word

The doctrine of Scripture is the foundation often for our Christian doctrine. The sufficiency of Scripture is important not only as it speaks of our authority and trust we have, but even in the counseling realm.

Biblical counseling unique from other counseling methods?

_____ and _____ : *5 Ways of Christian Psychology*: Todd Hall:
& Talbet Biola

How does the role of the local church play in the role of personal transformation? Can one grow apart from the local church?

Class 3 / Implementation

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Why Take the Task of Biblical Counseling?

God has called us to counsel God's people. John Frame says it as, "All Theology is applicable."

If you want to have the applied practical theology, it must start from the BIBLE.

The Role of Sanctification

Salvation is

- The past (Positional Sanctification),
- The present (Progressive Sanctification),
- The future (Perfect Sanctification).

Read: Romans 8:28-30

Our purpose on earth is to continually be conformed into the image of Christ and that God uses *all* things in our life to shape us accordingly.

Read: Philippians 2:12-13

God is the Prime Cause of our sanctification (v.13) but we are expected to exert effort as well (v.12 & 1 Cor 6:12-18; 1 Tim 6:11; 2 Tim 2:22).

Because we cannot be sanctified apart from the sanctified One, we cannot be sanctified apart from our union with Christ (1 Cor. 6:11).

The believer also progresses in their sanctification throughout their life (2 Pet. 3:18). They are sanctified through their obedience to the work of the Holy Spirit in their life (Gal. 5:17). God's predetermination and the persons to a specific end; it is in Christ (Eph. 1:11), and through Christ (Eph. 1:15), and with the goal of our conformity "to the likeness of his Son through sanctification, so that he might be the first born among many" (Rom. 8:29).

The End goal of Biblical Counseling

Not to simply make decent people apart from the Holy Spirit. That will be misleading and mistaken. Counseling is coming along another believer and help them become more like Jesus.

The “Normal” is truly, “Christ-likeness” The further away from Jesus you are, you are abnormal.

Eph 1–3: Gospel Doctrine,
Eph 4–6: Gospel Culture.

If you start at Ephesians 4, you are starting too early. There is Ephesians 1-3 in order for people to understand who God is. The doctrine of Scripture is the foundation often for our Christian.

Class 4 / Implementation

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Why is the Heart a Big Deal? Why Does it Matter?

1. Stimuli (Circumstances or Situation): Life happens. We cannot help with that
2. Thinking: God calls us to think about that
3. Emotions: Setting things in general, what you are thinking saying about yourself change how you feel, you take actions there.
4. Actions
5. Character

Thinking = Feeling

“For as a man thinks in his heart, so is he.” (Prov 23:7)

Diagram of Understanding the Heart

The Heart is Where People Think

What does God say about that? Repentance to turn around.

- 1) NEW THINKING = Wrong Thinking (FACTS)
- 2) NEW FEELING (FAITH)
- 3) NEW DOING (FEELINGS)

What happened? “Sorrow has filled their heart” (John 16:6).

“Filled” in the Greek πληρόω (plēroō) could be render as, “DOMINATING” In essence to take control of the heart.

“Intoxication” (Acts 13:52; Rom 8:4; Eph 5:18): Same WORD! Let it not rule and dominate you.
Examples: (1) Betrayal, (2) Sorrow, (3) Grief; Let it not dominate and control your life.

The question in the midst of pain, “Why did this happen?”

1. You’re not THINKING RIGHT

Scripture: Help reorient the way you’re thinking.

2. Your emotion IS NOT RIGHT

Meditation: The desires will warm up your affections.

3. Your actions are ALL OVER

Communion: This will help your choices of life.

Class 5 / Implementation

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What is The Main Task for Biblical Counselors?

1. _____
The Timeless Wisdom of the Saints: Meditation (Joshua 1:8).

What we need most: TO BE IN THE WORD: God through His Word. Not few minutes in the Word

2. _____
The Edification of the Saints (Eph 4:12).

All unto Thy Name we live, not to look to ourselves. That is an unsaved person (2 Cor 5:15).

3. _____
The Communion of Saints: Latin communion sanctorum (Rom 12:4-13; 1 Cor 12:12-27).

Each member contributes to the good of all. The Spirit bond in unity in the confirmed hope and love of the saints. The central role in formulations of the Christian life and belief is found in this doctrine that is affirmed in the Apostle’s Creed as well.

The 35 One Another Ministry in Scripture

“Speak truth and love to one another” (Eph 4:25).

- Seem to be people good with just dropping the truth bomb, but not whole a lot of love.

“Encourage one another” (1 Thess 5:11).

- Don't we need a bit of encouragement in our society?

“Bear up with one another in love” (Col. 3:13).

- This is not speaking of sin. This is dealing with people's imperfection and strangeness. We are all odd. We are all strange. When we live with one another it will be seen.

“Forgive one another” (Eph 4:32).

- Willing to grant forgiveness as a gift and you will not demand that the other person first pay a price. Not seeking revenge, even in the cynical harsh word or a hard attitude.

There is biblical command in ALL OF THESE CATEGORIES.

The 35 one another commands just don't go away. These are not options. These are all commands.

Class 6 / Implementation

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Case Study: Rick was raised in a “Christian home”. He turned 14 and started realizing that “Christianity” was getting in the way of his social life. As he continued into High School, his desire to be accepted began to outweigh his desire to maintain his high religious standards. During the of college time he started going to church again. He married soon after graduating from college. Marriage has been a disappointment to him. Now 5 years into marriage, he expected his wife to be over her insecurities and fears. He thought she would be an encouraging voice in his life, not a drain. They go to church. They talk about God. But he realizes his walk with Jesus is shallow. He admits being angry all the time and constantly stressed about work.

Question: What additional questions would you ask? How would you explain his suffering?

Speaking Truth and Love from Ephesians 4

Sin separates: It is ANTI-RELATIONAL (Gen 3). Ultimately Problem = SELF
Therefore, ask question: That will often bring conviction.

If I love someone, open admonition is better than concealed love (Prov 27:5).

“Well, doesn’t love covers sin? (Prov 10:12). YES, after IT IS DEALT WITH! It doesn’t ignore and overlook sin. You overlook it and you walk through it.

Counseling is the art of speaking grace and truth, just as Christ has demonstrated. Grace without truth is not grace, nor is truth without grace; as grace is the means of an edifying growing tool for spiritual maturity of the local church.

The Major Three Areas of Sin Issues

1. Lust of flesh = Find all the way what is going on
2. Lust of eyes = gateway of the eye.
3. Pride of life = Going after significance, approval from others, the fear of man

The fundamental question: “Where is my sin coming from?”

Eve in the Garden (Gen 3:1-7).

1. “Delight to the the eyes” (v. 6: Lust of the eyes)
2. "Good for food” (v. 6: Lust of the flesh)
3. “Desire to be wise” (v. 6: Pride of life)

Jesus on the Mount of Temptation (Matt 4:1-11).

1. Loaf of Bread (v. 3 Lust of the flesh)
2. The Kingdom (v. 8: Lust of the eyes)
3. The Holy City (v. 5: Pride of life)

Class 7 / Implementation

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Case Study: Erik is a 20-year-old Believer who has been struggling with pornography for the last three years. Before that time, he knew that pornography existed, but had never seen it because his parents carefully monitored all the technology in their home. Erik discovered porn on a trip out of town when some of his friends from High School showed it to him on their phones. Since then Erik has frequently looked at pornography. The problem became worse when he moved to college and had unfettered access to the Internet on his laptop computer. Several weeks ago, Erik became convinced that as a Christian he must begin to deal aggressively with this sin. He did the hardest thing he had ever done and told his dad about the problem. Erik’s dad loves his son and wants to help him but has no idea what to do about a problem like this. They came together to meet you for counsel

Question: Assume that the information you have here is a straightforward presentation of the facts, how would you initially respond to this first meeting with him (60 minutes)? What are specific issues you will address with Erik in counseling sessions?

Awareness: Grace Blockers

- 1) _____ - James 4:6
- 2) _____ - Hebrews 12:15
- 3) _____ - Jonah 2:8

How do you plan the way of the counseling session (60 mins)?

ADVISE: This is not right or wrong in the counseling session.

1. Updates: Example: "I just lost my job." Depending on the update, this may turn the conversation depending on initially have prepared.
2. Opening Prayer: (Transition).
3. Homework: Look at what the person has accomplished. Not the entire meeting to take away.
4. One Major Point: Depending on the counseling matter.
5. Hope to extend: Other questions if the person has or not. That will be depend on the person.
6. Next week's Homework
7. Closing Prayer

Class 8 / Implementation

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Case Study: Tim and Emily come from a church across town for help for persistent problem they have had in their marriage. They explain that in their six years of marriage Tim has always had a "short fuse." He regularly "loses it" when he comes home from work which fills the evenings with tense communication. About a year ago Tim went berserk screaming at Emily, kicking the kitchen table and throwing plates on the floor in response to Emily's complaint that he came home late without calling. She was truly scared. Tim met with the therapist for a few sessions, who ultimately recommended he see a psychiatrist for medical care. When Tim met with the psychiatrist, he was told that he had bi-polar disorder and began to take the medications prescribed by the physician. Tim and Emily both profess faith in Christ and relate their testimonies of conversion in their teen years. Both are also terribly discouraged. Tim doesn't know how to treat Emily better since he is "plagued" by this disease. Emily loves Tim and would like their marriage to work, but she is worn out with the lack of change. She feels badly about

wanting to leave because she knows he has an illness, but she is increasingly convinced that God is telling her to divorce Tim.

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

Counseling Sticky Cases: Differences in Suffering (Forgiveness), Anger (Pride), and Worry (Fear).

People wait till it's HORRIFIC: "I don't love you anymore. I have no feelings for you anymore. We won't divorce because we are Christians."

The Core of the Problem: An Unregenerate Believer

Listen to the language of the people in the counseling room. Scripture says, "I can do all things through Christ" (Phil 4:13).

The Personal Sin as Hinderance

True Repentance "See my own sin first, see my sin as worst, and see my sin to be working most"

Metanoia: A change of mind that leads to a change of BEHAVIOR (Acts 3:19).

If a couple wants to talk more about wonderful BIBLE INFORMATION, then you know you are off track. You need to flesh it out in ACTION.

Biblical Anger

The biblical anger is seeing the following three categories;

- a. Divine anger (By far the most common form of anger in the Bible).
- b. Righteous human anger.
- c. Sinful human anger. (Matt 5:21–22; Eph. 4:30–31; Jas. 1:20).

According to the book of James, anger manifest in the following five categories; (1) Entrenched desires, (2) Ruling wants, (3) Covetousness, (4) Selfish-motives, (5) Sinful reasons (James 4:1-12). God's plan of response to anger cause found in James 4:1-12.

Biblical Forgiveness

Un-forgiveness kills the person from within. It's like drinking poison and hoping it kills the other person. It is a conscious, deliberate DECISION to release feelings of resentment or vengeance towards a person who harmed you, regardless of whether or not they actually deserve it or not.

What forgiveness is NOT

- Absence of pain
- Necessarily reconciliation
- Staying in a hurtful situation
- Condoning bad actions
- Forgetting
- Allowing someone to take advantage of you

We have a choice, to be bitter or to be BETTER. Lack of forgiveness breaks out fellowship with God (Matt 6:14-15).

Biblical Anxiety

The term “anxiety” and “fear” can be often used interchangeably (with panic attack as a severe form of fear). NT verb (merimnaō) and noun (merimna) translated “worry” has a good or bad sense, depending on context (Phil. 4:7).

Methodologically, ask counselee about their concerns (not their worries) and that will put the differences on the spectrum. From there the counselor can be understanding and compassionate about their concerns and help them see how some are crossing the line into worry/fear.

Concluding Counseling Session: When would you End Counseling Sessions?

Disagreement in the Couples? (Parenting / Finances).

Determining Willingness (Homework)

Question: “Were you able to do any of the homework?” That is helpful.

Consistently not following up?

Stop and say: “I want to really help you and I need you guys to do this. Maybe you’re not at the position of doing it. If we need to start with later date, that is quite alright.”

Responses: “Well, I’m so busy, I got a lot going on, work and kids... etc”

Answer to Counselee: “Guys, I love you both. Let’s stop. When you still have margin in your life. I am ready to help you both.”

APPENDIX 3
DISCIPLESHIP CURRICULUM
EVALUATION RUBRIC

The following curriculum evaluation was sent to an expert panel of one TFBC pastor, one lay elder member, and one ACBC member. This panel evaluated the course material to ensure it was biblically faithful, sufficiently thorough, and practically applicable.

Name of evaluator: _____ Date: _____

How many sessions did you attend (maximum = 12): _____

Discipleship Small Group Leader Curriculum Evaluation					
1 = insufficient; 2 = requires attention; 3 = sufficient; 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Biblical Hermeneutics					
The content of the curriculum is theologically sound. Scriptures are comprehensively incorporated throughout and is clear and concise.					
The content of the curriculum is biblically saturated.					
Content Points					
The content of the curriculum overtly communicates each of the sub points of the assessment questions issue that are brought forth.					
The curriculum sufficiently covers all the basics of biblical discipleship definition, deliberation, and delegation.					
Methodological Approach					
The curriculum sufficiently addresses the discipleship methodology.					
The curriculum availed the variety of learning techniques from teaching, discussion time, questionnaire, and application.					
Practical Application					
The curriculum reveals the various opportunities to replicate discipleship in small groups.					
At the last lesson of the curriculum, small group leads are expected to be to implement discipleship principles.					

Please include any additional comments regarding the curriculum below:

APPENDIX 4

SMALL GROUP LEADER EVALUATION FORM OF POST-ASSESSMENT

Course participants used the information they learned to simulate discipleship sessions with one another. After completion, the small group leader evaluated how effectively the leaders applied the course material.

Directions: Please mark the appropriate answer. Some questions may ask you to give your opinion using the following scale:

- SD = strongly disagree
- D = disagree
- DS = disagree somewhat
- AS = agree somewhat
- A = agree
- SA = strongly agree

1. The Bible calls all believers to the task of discipleship.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
2. Every Christian in the local church has sufficient spiritual resources to disciple another believer.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
3. I am knowledgeable enough to lead a person in conversation with scripture who are suffering from sin issues.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
4. I am growing in my understanding of the Bible to counsel a person who faces issues of suffering.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
5. I am aware in my understanding of discipleship process for a person to grow an intentional disciple making.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
6. I am certain in the blueprint of discipleship process to help develop a person to full maturity in Christ.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
7. I can clearly articulate the gospel and lead someone to salvation.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
8. I have a clear road map to lead a person through discipleship from the beginning to end.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
9. Many problems in life require a professional licensed counselor.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
10. Secular psychological therapy can bring about lasting change.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
11. The Bible is absolutely sufficient and authoritative to address all matters in life.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
12. If a friend is struggling with anxiety or depression, I would recommend he speak with a pastor or Christian counselor.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

13. If a friend is struggling with sinful lust, I would recommend he speak with a pastor or Christian counselor.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
14. The way people are raised determines how they react to issues in life.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
15. Sin is the ultimate source of people's problems.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
16. Suffering is never God's plan for his children.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
17. The Bible gives clear guidance for how to deal with anger.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
18. The Bible gives clear guidance for how to deal with anxiety.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
19. I know the scriptural command for the process of making peace between two believers in conflict.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
20. When someone offends me, I should wait until I feel ready to forgive the person before I personally speak to the person.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
21. The end goal of discipleship is to help a person to be better disciples.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
22. I would like to learn how to equip others to grow in their faith.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
23. TFBC expects all members to make disciples like Jesus did.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

APPENDIX 5

EXPECTATION AND REQUIREMENT FOR DISCIPLESHIP LEADER

Agreement to Participate

TFBC is committed to making disciples who make disciples of Jesus. One of the ways we fulfill this commitment is by equipping the saints for the work of the ministry. Our desire is to love one-another well as Christ did and be saturate with scripture as we speak truth in love for one another (Eph. 4:12). This research will be an agreement to participate for the research in order to fulfill the vision TFBC has set forth.

My Commitment to Troy First Baptist Church Discipleship Training

I have carefully read all the document for expectation and requirement for the agreement. Having weighed the benefits and costs, I am willing to commit myself to fulfilling all my requirements. Therefore, I would ask you to prayerfully consider me for selection as a trainee.

(Signature)

(Date)

Your Personal Cost and Commitment Inventory

Jesus taught us to “count the cost” (Luke 16:25-35) to determine if we have what it takes to complete the commitments we are about to make. New Life Counselor Training involves a cost on your part (though it promises many benefits). Please prayerfully weigh these costs.

Training Time Commitment

1. In-Class Training Time

Troy First Baptist Church Discipleship Training is twelve weeks long. We will meet once a month parallel with the small group sessions. Consistent attendance is vital, so it will be necessary for you to be in attendance at least 90 percent of the times that we meet.

2. Out-of-Class Training Time

The following commitment may be required outside of class:

- One hour per week reading/responding to homework questions.

- Two hours per month meeting with your encouragement partner.
- One hour per month meeting with your mentor.

Ministry Time Commitment: Everyone who completes the training will be asked to serve in a ministry for the following year. Some possible ministries include

1. Biblical Discipleship

If you choose to serve as a disciple leader for small group, you would:

- Counsel one or two hours per week with a person in the group.
- Meet with your mentor one hour per month (in individual and/or group supervision).
- Spend one hour per week in prayer, study, and preparation for your group gathering.

2. Leadership for Small Group

If you choose to serve as a small group leader, you would:

- Lead one small group per week or engage in weekly discipleship.
- Meet with your mentor one hour per month (may be individual and/or group supervision)
- Spend one hour per week in prayer, study, and preparation for your group leadership or personal discipleship.

As you ponder whether you can commit to this training, we would ask you to evaluate yourself carefully, prayerfully, and honestly. We would also encourage you to gain feedback from others who know you. If you are married, please have your spouse help you weigh the costs and benefits.

If, after carefully counting the cost, you decide that you want to be considered for our Biblical Counselor Training, then the next steps in your process will be to:

1. Sign and date this Personal Commitment Form.
2. Complete the Discipleship Training Application Form.
3. Return these two documents to yhayashi1029@gmail.com by _____ (due date).
4. Arrange a personal interview with Jonathan Hayashi by contacting yhayashi1029@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

EQUIPPING SMALL GROUP LEADERS AT TROY FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH TO DISCIPLE MEMBERS USING CONCEPTS OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020
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This project sought to equip the small group leaders at Troy First Baptist Church in Troy, Missouri, in concepts of biblical counseling. Chapter 1 presents the history and ministry context of Troy First and the goals of this project. Chapter 2 provides exegesis of passages of Scripture to show that every disciple is capable to make disciples and counsel one another faithfully. Chapter 3 presents the primacy of the Word of God for its sufficiency through process of progressive sanctification with the of the Priesthood of all believers. Chapter 4 describes the project implementation and recounts the content and teaching methodology of the specific course curriculum. Chapter 5 evaluates the efficacy of the project based on completion of the specified goals. This project equipped believers with the confidence and competency to minister to one another with the truth of the gospel and the love of Christ for the sake of unity of the local church.

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BA, Moody Bible Institute, 2012
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ORGANIZATIONS

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“Biblical Counseling: The Church’s Response to Urban Poverty: Counseling Adolescents and Broken Families with the Gospel.” *D6 Family Ministry Journal* 18, no. 1 (2019): 224-26.

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