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TEACHING BIBLICAL COUNSELING PRINCIPLES AT SAN  
FRANCISCO BIBLE CHURCH, SAN FRANCISCO,  
CALIFORNIA

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A Project  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

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by  
Roger Jeong  
December 2021

**APPROVAL SHEET**

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FRANCISCO BIBLE CHURCH, SAN FRANCISCO,  
CALIFORNIA

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A tremendous thank you to my wife for your endless patience and support. May you love  
Jesus more as we run this race together.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ICC	International Critical Commentary
NAC	New American Commentary
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
<i>REBC</i>	<i>Expositor's Bible Commentary</i> , revised
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary

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## PREFACE

This project was completed due to the loving encouragement and support that God has placed in my life to continue to grow in Christlikeness and love for people. First and foremost, I am grateful to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit for granting me salvation and giving me a heart to minister the Word of God faithfully to the people who are in my life.

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Fifth, I am thankful for San Francisco Bible Church, my home church in every sense of the word and the church where I have the privilege of serving the body of Christ as a pastor. Their love and reverence for the Word of God is encouraging and makes pastoring, though not easy, a blessing. I am grateful for the congregation who have graciously allowed me to go back to school so that ultimately, I can use my studies to care for them better.

Finally, and certainly not last, I am grateful for my wife, Stacey. Our entire marriage has consisted of schooling and you have patiently and sacrificially supported me through it all. I am grateful that our trials have led to an even greater love and appreciation for one another and for our Lord. Aside from salvation, you are the best gift I have received from God and you are my best friend. I am grateful for you.

Roger Jeong

San Francisco, California

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

A crucial component to the mission statement of San Francisco Bible Church is to make disciples to the glory of God. As the church seeks to grow in its desire to make disciples to the glory of God, the elders of the church realized that one of the ways that this goal can be accomplished is through the creation of a biblical counseling ministry. Biblical counseling ministers to Christians through the proclamation of Jesus Christ to everyone, in public and private settings, so that they can be more like Christ. This maturity that results in becoming like Christ occurs through admonishment and teaching that comes from the wisdom found in the Scriptures (Col 1:28). If San Francisco Bible Church is going to be successful in its mission to make disciples to the glory of God, the church needs to learn how to minister the Word of God to others in a way that seeks to compassionately understand the people at the center of their ministry and teach them in an appropriate manner so they might more readily receive instruction from the Word and grow in Christlikeness (1 Thess 5:14).

#### **Context**

San Francisco Bible Church (SFBC) in San Francisco, California was founded in 1964 with the expressed desire to preach the gospel to English-speaking Chinese Americans. The church planting pastor's passion to preach the gospel created an evangelistic culture in the church which allowed for many to hear the Word of God and respond to the call to repent from sin and believe in Jesus Christ. Because church leadership heavily emphasized sharing the gospel and inviting people to visit the church, the congregation was known as a loving and hospitable church. Since 1999, SFBC's

current senior pastor has reminded the congregation that hospitality must flow from sound theology. The reemphasis on sound theology has bolstered the church as many in the church wish to hear the Scriptures preached faithfully.

SFBC is a growing church due to a steady influx of transfer members every year. The transfer growth primarily stems from college graduates who are moving to San Francisco for graduate school or work. One of the reasons many of these visitors stay at SFBC is the church's commitment to the Bible as God's inspired and inerrant Word. From midweek fellowship groups to the Sunday morning preaching, every ministry in the church finds its basis and ministry objectives in the Word of God.

God has used SFBC's emphasis on the primacy of the Bible to cause the congregation to embrace an intellectual understanding of the Scriptures. However, there has been an unintentional overemphasis on gaining knowledge rather than on thoughtful application of the Word. Despite the congregation's tendency to focus more on learning the Scriptures than applying the Scriptures, God has brought thoughtful and godly individuals into the church in recent years who desire not only to gain knowledge, but also to apply knowledge to their lives.

Many of these individuals have joined our church membership and are active parts of the body. As of the senior pastor's most recent survey, the church has 264 active members across two English speaking congregations and one Cantonese speaking congregation. Since the church regularly records close to 350 attendees on any given Sunday, about three quarters of the congregation are recognized as members in good standing. Though the church has not quantified the depth of relationships between the regular attenders and members of the church, the elders of SFBC have observed that the church's commitment to the faithful teaching of God's Word, desire to fellowship, and exercise hospitality has created a church culture that longs to display Christ to one another.

In the past four years, the majority of the congregation expressed a greater

desire to develop the church's discipleship ministries. SFBC continues to see leadership growth in the congregation, but many of these godly individuals who join leadership teams came to the church already equipped to lead due to the discipleship they experienced in their previous churches. SFBC, though loving and hospitable, struggles with internal leadership development, something that many in the congregation recognize. As a result, many of the regular attenders and members in the church still have many areas of life that does not match up with the doctrine they profess.

SFBC's hospitality towards visitors have brought many people to the church, but as these people come to church, they will naturally bring their problems with them. The failure to disciple members so that they can apply the Scriptures to their lives has caused many in the church to recognize that knowing the Bible well intellectually does not automatically translate into knowing how to use the Bible to help people with their problems. As SFBC continues to grow, this weakness in discipleship must be addressed so that the church can be faithful ministers of the gospel to those in the church and those outside the church.

Discipleship is SFBC's overarching point of emphasis in this period of ministry life, but SFBC also desires growth in biblical counseling because it is a natural aspect of discipleship ministry. Upon discovering biblical counseling, the elder board wanted to prioritize counseling in the life of the church as a means of focused discipleship for church members. As a result, SFBC's elders would like to establish a formal counseling ministry within the church to help those who are struggling with difficult issues from a biblical perspective.

SFBC has made a few small steps towards establishing a biblical counseling ministry by encouraging members to attend a biblical counseling conference held by another church in Northern California which has hosted training conferences for the last ten years. These conferences, the NorthCreek Counseling Training conference, have been very helpful for many who have attended the conference, but the elders noticed that the

number of people who are actively involved in counseling ministry is small in comparison to those who attend. In an attempt to make training more accessible to those who could not travel to receive counseling training, SFBC began hosting its own conference in 2017 to promote biblical counseling to the congregation and other believers in nearby cities who are interested in learning about counseling. Attendance for the conference has been strong, but since the conference is in its infancy, time will tell whether hosting these conferences will have the intended effect of encouraging the members of SFBC to desire more knowledge of biblical counseling for their private lives and result in the appropriate practice of biblical counseling in their respective ministries.

The elders' lingering concern regarding biblical counseling is the desire of SFBC's members to participate in the ministry. Though many members affirm the importance of biblical counseling, few seem willing to pursue biblical counseling training. The elders believe that though the majority of the church views counseling as an important ministry, it is not necessarily an important part of how they currently participate in body life. Despite the fears of the elders, there are a few members who have already taken steps to participate in biblical counseling ministry. Three ladies in the church have already received biblical counseling certification through the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC) and are actively serving in biblical counseling ministry in the church. Certification is not necessarily the end goal for everyone involved in the counseling ministry of SFBC, but it certainly is an endeavor that the church welcomes as many people need counseling care.

### **Rationale**

SFBC believes that they need to establish a biblical counseling ministry to minister to those who are suffering within the church and those who are suffering in the community. Hosting conferences and expecting people to pursue biblical counseling as a result of the ministry of another church will not necessarily solve SFBC's counseling



needs. What SFBC must do to meet this ministry need is train members in the congregation who share the vision of the church to minister the Scriptures to one another. Since biblical counseling is related to Jesus' command to make disciples, the church must be engaged in this area of ministry.

Biblical counseling enables the church to do this work in its community especially when the church holds to a high view of God's Word. If the church believes that the Bible is inerrant because it is inspired by God and is profitable for ministry to all people because God has given us everything we need pertaining to life and godliness in His Word, then ministry to people primarily on the basis of any other authority fails to meet their primary spiritual needs (2 Tim 3:16–17; 2 Pet 1:3). As the living and active word of God that is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart, the Word of God does not need updating to be effective in people care (Heb 4:12). Instead, those involved in biblical counseling ministry can effectively counsel those who are hurting or struggling with issues from the Word of God.

SFBC acknowledges that some of the issues that future counselees may present will be medical in nature and in those situations, SFBC will defer to medical professionals to address the medical issues. However, the church believes that in all matters of life, it is the church's responsibility to minister to individuals from the Scriptures. In areas where potential conflict will arise between the medical professionals and the church, SFBC will ask counselees to submit to their doctors or seek a second opinion. The church does not want to violate ethical lines by encouraging counselees to disobey their doctors.

If SFBC desires to engage in biblical counseling to minister to those who are hurting within the church and those outside the church, counseling training must occur so that the members of SFBC who wish to serve in the counseling ministry will know how to skillfully, thoughtfully, and compassionately bring the Word of God to bear on people's problems (1 Thess 5:14). In order to meet this need for a biblical counseling

ministry, I wrote and taught a twelve-week curriculum that trained select members in biblical counseling principles.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to teach biblical counseling principles at San Francisco Bible Church in San Francisco, California.

### **Goals**

In order to accomplish the stated purpose to teach biblical counseling principles at San Francisco Bible Church, this project focused on accomplishing the following four goals.

1. The first goal was to recruit a group of participants to be trained in the principles of biblical counseling.
2. The second goal was to assess the counseling competency among select members of SFBC.
3. The third goal was to develop a twelve-session introduction to biblical counseling course.
4. The fourth goal was to increase counseling competency among participants by teaching the biblical counseling course.

Definitive research methodology was used to determine when these four goals were accomplished. The description of the research methodology and instruments used to measure the success of each goal will be detailed in the following section.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> All of the research instruments used in this project will be performed in compliance with and approved by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

## **Research Methodology**

Four goals determined the effectiveness of this project. The first goal was to recruit a group of participants to be trained in the principles of biblical counseling. The goal was measured by the number of participants who commit to taking the twelve-week course and take the pre-course assessment. Recruitment took place through an emailed Google Forms interest survey that gauged interest and determined the best time for a class to meet. In order to assure that the project had sufficient data, recruitment continued until a minimum of 15 students committed to taking the class. While having more than 15 students commit to an introduction to biblical counseling course was welcome, a twelve-week course is understandably a large commitment. Therefore, the goal was considered successfully met when 15 individuals committed to taking the twelve-week course and take the pre-course assessment.

The second goal was to assess the current level of counseling competency among select members of SFBC who wished to take the introduction to biblical counseling course. Prior to the first session, a Biblical Counseling Knowledge Assessment (BCKA) was administered to the members of SFBC who wished to take the course.<sup>2</sup> This pre-course assessment gauged participants' initial level of biblical counseling knowledge by examining their general knowledge of the Scriptures, understanding of biblical counseling principles, and ability to generally apply biblical counseling principles to scenarios. The pre-course assessment was open for all members of SFBC interested in participating in the biblical counseling training.

The assessment was administered electronically through a Google Forms email link which was sent to the church membership. This method of assessment allowed participants to take the survey on their own time. The assessment goal was considered successfully met when 15 members completed the BCKA. Since the course was an

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<sup>2</sup> See appendix 1.

introduction to biblical counseling, the results of the survey did not impact curriculum development.

The third goal was to develop a twelve-session introduction to biblical counseling class. The introduction class took place in an online classroom setting and included instruction and discussion in each session. Each session was scheduled for one and a half hours since the class only met once a week. Since the class was an introduction to biblical counseling, the curriculum focused on the definition of biblical counseling, the foundation for biblical counseling, the difference between biblical counseling and other counseling models, the process of biblical change, and how biblical counseling is applied in the counseling setting.

The curriculum development goal was measured by an advisory panel who consisted of the two staff pastors of SFBC, an elder on the elder board of SFBC, one member in ACBC, and an outside ACBC certified fellow. The advisory panel utilized a rubric to measure the biblical faithfulness, depth of content, and the applicability of the curriculum to train individuals in the basics of biblical counseling.<sup>3</sup> In addition to the evaluation criterion, the advisory panel was asked to provide feedback and suggestions for improvement to the curriculum for use in the future. The curriculum development goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of ninety percent of the evaluation criterion meet or exceed the sufficient level for the revised curriculum.

The fourth goal was to increase counseling competency among participants by teaching the biblical counseling course. The participants in this equipping course were the same as those who were recruited. Following the twelve weeks of instruction, the BCKA was re-administered to the participants who finished the course.<sup>4</sup> Counseling

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<sup>3</sup> See appendix 2.

<sup>4</sup> Participants will be required to attend all sessions if they commit to taking the course. If participants cannot attend all the sessions in person for whatever reason, they may arrange to have the session recorded.

competency was measured through the re-administration of the BCKA. The goal of increasing counseling competency was considered successfully met through the analysis and comparison of the data using a t-test for dependent means. A t-test for dependent means looks at a single group of the same subjects under two conditions, in this case before the start of the introduction course and after the course's conclusion.<sup>5</sup> Should the t-test for dependent means demonstrate a positive statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-assessment results, this goal can be considered successfully met.

### **Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations**

The following definitions of key terms were used in the ministry project:

*Biblical counseling.* Biblical counseling is as John Street describes it, "The whole counsel of God delivered in a systematic, understandable, relevant, and loving manner."<sup>6</sup> Stated in another way, "Biblical counseling is God-centered, Bible-saturated, emotionally-in-touch use of language to help people become God-besotted, Christ-exalting, joyfully self-forgetting lovers of people."<sup>7</sup>

*Sufficiency of scripture.* The sufficiency of Scripture is the belief that Bible is relevant to all of life. Kevin Carson writes, "The Bible delivers to us the necessary relevant instruction, in conjunction with our position in Christ through the gospel, to impact our responses to living life in a broken world."<sup>8</sup>

Two limitations applied to this project. First, the timeframe in which the project can be run was determined in part by the church calendar. While the church was

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<sup>5</sup> Neil J. Salkind, *Statistics for People Who (Think They) Hate Statistics*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2008), 189.

<sup>6</sup> John D. Street, *Men Counseling Men* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2013), 27.

<sup>7</sup> John Piper and Jack Delk, "The Glory of God: The Goal of Biblical Counseling," in *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, eds. James MacDonald, Bob Kellemen, and Steve Viars (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2013), 23–24.

<sup>8</sup> Kevin Carson, "The Richness and Relevance of God's Word," in *Scripture and Counseling*, eds. Bob Kellemen and Jeff Forrey (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 39.

in full support of the project, the busyness of the church calendar may have prevented those who were interested in participating in the course from participating. Second, the effectiveness of the training was limited by the constancy of attendance. While provisions were made for attendees to make up class on their own time so that they can receive the training and complete the course, there were some participants who fell multiple weeks behind and were not complete the course.

Two delimitations were placed on the project. First, the project was limited to the members of SFBC. Requiring membership for participation assured that those who received training were believers who desired to be trained in biblical counseling. Second, the teaching portion of the project was confined to a twelve-week timeframe. While it was possible to teach the basic principles of biblical counseling in this timeframe since it is similar to the amount of time allotted in an academic setting, the pace of an academic institution in a church setting was too fast for some. The scope of the project was twenty-four weeks, including the twelve weeks of instruction. These twenty-four weeks included curriculum development, pre-assessment, course instruction, and post-assessment.

### **Conclusion**

Biblical counseling is a necessary ministry of the church that allows believers to minister the Scriptures to all by calling those entangled in sin to repentance and comforting those who suffer. Though many may not feel called to this particular ministry, biblical counseling can be understood as a form of discipleship that strengthens those who are weak so that they can pursue further godliness. This project served as a tool to help a select number of SFBC's members become equipped in ministering the Word of God to one another so that everyone may see the goodness of God and the great treasure he has given us in Jesus and in the Word.

CHAPTER 2  
THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR  
ESTABLISHING A BIBLICAL COUNSELING  
MINISTRY

**Introduction**

Though some Christians may believe that those who wish to provide hope and help to people who are struggling with life problems would best help these struggling people with referrals to professional counselors, a belief in the sufficiency of God's Word provides other Christians with confidence that the Bible provides answers to all issues regarding life and godliness. This chapter will examine the biblical and theological evidence for God's provision of his Word to Christians so they can begin to minister to one another from the principles found in the Bible as they face the issues of life together. This examination will first explore how the Old and New Testaments attest to the authority and superiority of the Scriptures. It will then proceed to observe how an expectation of ministry to fellow believers exists as a result of salvation.<sup>1</sup>

**Old Testament Affirmation of Scripture's Sufficiency**

**The Context of Psalm 19**

Psalm 19 is not the only text in the Old Testament which affirms the sufficiency of Scripture, but the psalm provides insight into how King David and the nation of Israel viewed God's Word. At first read, it is unclear how the first section in the psalm (vv.1–6) relates to the second (vv. 7–14). The first section speaks of the revelation

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<sup>1</sup> The conclusions of this chapter do not invalidate the necessity and usefulness of medical care, including the use of medication, for people. Rather, the conclusions in this chapter help demonstrate the Scripture's usefulness in ministering to people.

of the glory of God as seen through the heavens. The second section oddly switches topics as David describes the Law of the Lord and how it affects the worshiper. This disjointedness in the psalm has led some scholars to believe that Psalm 19 may have been constructed out of two or three different parts, the first section a hymn and the second section wisdom poetry.<sup>2</sup>

The disjointed nature of the psalm does not only refer to the form of the two sections of the psalm, but also applies to the themes of the psalm. John Goldingay notes that the themes of Yahweh's teaching and the cosmos's acknowledgment of Yahweh recur in the Psalter, but generally appear separately. Psalm 19 juxtaposes these themes without telling readers how to relate them.<sup>3</sup> Since David gives no clues as to how his psalm should be read and interpreted, those who study the psalm must determine how David intended these two themes to complement one another in the psalm rather than strive to discover which psalms David may have used in order to construct Psalm 19.

Even though it is plausible that the psalm was initially composed through the unification of two separate psalms, many scholars have come to accept Psalm 19 as a whole unit and have determined it is best to study it as a whole unit.<sup>4</sup> The composition of the psalm has considerable implications on the case for the sufficiency of Scripture since authorial intent determines the interpretation of the psalm. David could have written Psalm 19 either as a standalone psalm or compiled it using two other psalms, but what is more important for readers to understand is why he brought these two themes together, regardless of whether it was a compilation or an original work.

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<sup>2</sup> Rolf A. Jacobson, "Psalm 19," in *The Book of Psalms*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014), 203; Peter C. Craigie and Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 1-50*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 19, 2nd ed., (Nashville: Nelson Reference & Electronic, 2004), 179.

<sup>3</sup> John Goldingay, *Psalms 1-41*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms, ed. Tremper Longman III, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 284.

<sup>4</sup> Jacobson, "Psalm 19," 203; Goldingay, *Psalms 1-41*, 284.



In the first part of the psalm, David explores how creation reveals God’s existence to people. This type of revelation is known commonly as “general revelation.” Wayne Grudem helpfully explains, “The knowledge of God’s existence, character and moral law, which comes through creation to all humanity, is often called “*general revelation*” (because it comes to all people generally). General revelation comes through observing nature, through seeing God’s directing influence in history, and through an inner sense of God’s existence and his laws that he has placed inside every person.”<sup>5</sup> Though general revelation helps mankind recognize the existence of God, it is not enough to help mankind know specifics about God or his purposes. As a result, David describes how God has made himself known to people specifically through the Scriptures. This specific knowledge of God and his purposes is known as “special revelation.” John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue note, “While general revelation discloses observable truths about the Creator, special revelation conveys, in language, truths about God that cannot be discerned merely by observing the creation.”<sup>6</sup> The conclusion readers are meant to draw following the description of the two different types of God’s revelation is that the benefits of special revelation far outweigh general revelation, making special revelation more superior to general revelation.

### **An Exposition of Psalm 19**

In verses 1–2, David personifies the heavens as witnesses who testify about God’s glory and the work of His hands. This testimony of God is described initially as if it were audible speech that makes God’s presence and works known to the whole world. In verses 3–4, David changes his description of this testimony from that of an audible,

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<sup>5</sup> Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press; Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 2004), 122–23.

<sup>6</sup> John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, eds., *Biblical Doctrine* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 107.

speech like, proclamation of God to a proclamation which does not contain a speech, a witness that communicates to all regardless of language barrier that Yahweh has done something in creation. James Rosscup notes that the result of such a witness across the whole heaven during both the day and night communicates God's designing skill, unsearchable power, and vast wisdom to all men.<sup>7</sup>

While it is clear from the numerous references to speech within the first four verses that all creation declares what God has done, there is also a sense in which the message is not understood. This is especially noticeable as verses 3 and 4 communicate that no speech nor words are uttered as the testimony of the heavens has gone throughout the earth and to the end of the world. As Rolf Jacobson observes, "The voice and tongue of nature may speak, but not in words that human beings can discern."<sup>8</sup> Creation rightfully proclaims God's presence and power, yet God limits its ability to explicitly testify of his works because creation was never intended to be the only means by which God makes himself and his plans for mankind known.

Even though verses 4b–6 describe a more specific witness in the form of the sun in the sky, the witness of the sun is not enough to adequately reveal more about God to mankind. The sun, like the rest of creation, may function as a witness to what God has done as it journeys through the sky, but its witness, though seen by everyone, is still undecipherable. Instead of recognizing the Creator who put the sun in the sky, many of Israel's neighbors chose to worship the sun instead, believing it to be a god. The sun is not a god and has no power on its own. Just like the heavens, the sun is a created thing which testifies not of itself, but of its Creator.<sup>9</sup>

Since the heavens and the sun are not adequate witnesses to reveal Yahweh to

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<sup>7</sup> James E. Rosscup, *An Exposition on Prayer in the Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2008), 881, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>8</sup> Jacobson, "Psalm 19," 207.

<sup>9</sup> Jacobson, 207.

the nations, David demonstrates the superiority of the Torah as a witness to Yahweh's glory in his description of the Scriptures (Ps 19:7–14). Peter Craigie and Marvin Tate suggest the psalm is a subtle elaboration on Genesis 1–3, beginning with creation and its praise of God, but moving to something greater, the Torah of God and its place in the life of mankind.<sup>10</sup> Because mankind cannot understand this witness, God provides mankind with his Law so that all of mankind will not just know of the existence of God, but will also know of his intentions to extend salvation to the rest of the earth through his chosen people (cf. Gen 3:15; 12:3).

In verses 7–9 David describes the special revelation of God with six synonyms. Willem VanGemeran observes that the choice of synonyms for God's revelation provide a comprehensive emphasis that all the words of the Lord are more beneficial than the benefits of natural revelation.<sup>11</sup> Derek Kidner pushes further writing, "Together, these terms show the practical purpose of revelation, to bring God's will to bear on the hearer and evoke intelligent reverence, well-founded trust, detailed obedience."<sup>12</sup> How exactly do these particular terms show the practicality of God's Word on the life of the believer?

In verse 7, the first synonym David uses is, "The law of the Lord." The word "law" is the comprehensive term for God's revealed will and can refer to the work of prophets, thinkers, oral teachings, and written teachings.<sup>13</sup> The comprehensive nature of the law of the Lord revives life by providing God's people with enduring spiritual nutrition necessary for spiritual life since its perfection reflects God's perfection.<sup>14</sup> God's

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<sup>10</sup> Craigie and Tate, *Psalms 1-50*, 182.

<sup>11</sup> Willem A. VanGemeran, *Psalms*, in vol 5 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, rev. ed, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 217.

<sup>12</sup> Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 15 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 117.

<sup>13</sup> Kidner, 117; Goldingay, *Psalms 1-41*, 290.

<sup>14</sup> Craigie and Tate, *Psalms 1-50*, 182.

Word can also be considered restorative to the soul in the sense that it provides assurance of forgiveness and cleansing while it provides the necessities of spiritual life.<sup>15</sup> The second synonym used is, “The testimony of the Lord.” “Testimony” refers to the truthfulness of God’s Word as attested by God himself and can also be understood as a part of his stated covenant relationship with his people.<sup>16</sup> The sureness of the testimony of the Lord refers to its effectiveness in making those who are unwise wise after instruction from the Word.<sup>17</sup>

David writes in verse 8, “The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.” The word “precept” is translated from the Hebrew, פְּקֻדֹת, which means instructions or procedures.<sup>18</sup> In conjunction with the word “commandment,” a sense of precision and authority is communicated to those who hear God’s Word.<sup>19</sup> These two facets of God’s Word are said to bring joy into the life of the believer as there is less mystery to God’s will. Believers can know God’s will, do what God desires, stay in the place of God’s blessing, and live encouraged because God’s righteous standard is observed.

David continues his description of the benefits of special revelation in verse 9 writing, “The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether.” A proper recognition of the Scriptures as God’s Word leads to a reverent response from those who have heard or read what it contains. Recognizing that the Scriptures also contain the judgments, or judicial decisions, of God

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<sup>15</sup> VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 217.

<sup>16</sup> Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, 117.

<sup>17</sup> Rosscup, *An Exposition on Prayer in the Bible*, 883.

<sup>18</sup> Ludwig Köhler et al., “פְּקֻדֹת,” in *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (New York: E. J. Brill, 1994), 959, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>19</sup> Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, 117.

regarding righteous human conduct in light of his holiness.<sup>20</sup> In light of all God has revealed in his Word about himself, David concludes in verse 10 that the worth of God's Word is "more desirable than gold" and "sweeter than honey." By comparing the Word of God more favorably to the most valuable treasure known to man at that time and a highly valued food commodity, David makes the great worth of God's law unquestionable.<sup>21</sup>

In verses 11–14, David is moved to prayer after he reflects upon creation's witness and the revelation of God through the Scriptures. David recognizes that the Scriptures provides instructions for life, but he also recognizes that the instruction from God's Law reveals the high standards of holiness. As a result, he prays for God's grace in his life through the forgiveness of sins committed in ignorance and protection from future sins of presumption or impudence. Should Yahweh forgive David and protect him from future sins, the result will be a blameless walk and acquittal.<sup>22</sup> Fittingly, David's final prayer request is that through his own mouth he will bring glory to God.<sup>23</sup>

### **Psalm 19 and Biblical Counseling**

Psalm 19 provides those who argue for the sufficiency of Scripture with some of the clearest arguments for the superiority of special revelation over the wisdom of man. While Scripture does not invalidate science, the wisdom and knowledge of men is not sufficient to properly understand God's redemptive plans for mankind. There are certainly times when men will make accurate observations about the world around them through general revelation, but the special revelation God provides through his Word is a far superior witness of God's greatness. Most importantly, the special revelation of God

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<sup>20</sup> Kidner, 117.

<sup>21</sup> Craigie and Tate, *Psalms 1-50*, 182.

<sup>22</sup> Rosscup, *An Exposition on Prayer in the Bible*, 885.

<sup>23</sup> Craigie and Tate, *Psalms 1-50*, 183.

found in the Scriptures reveal the sinfulness of mankind and the need for God's salvation. Even though not every trouble a person faces may be a direct result of their own personal sin, sin is the ultimate cause for trouble in people's lives. Since the Scriptures reveal how the forgiveness of sin is possible through God's salvation plan, people in bondage to their own sin and people affected by the sins of others can have hope.

Before the limited unveiling of the specifics of God's salvation plan for Old Testament saints was complete, Psalm 19 made it clear that it would be through the Word of God that those who love God would learn to live rightly before him. Since the Word of God truly is perfect and can restore the soul, make wise the simple, rejoice the heart, enlighten the eyes, and help believers learn to live righteously before God, Christians are reminded that God's provision of his word is not merely meant to reveal his presence, but it is also meant to change lives. While the Bible was not meant to be a comprehensive textbook on how to respond to every situation in life, the principles found in the Scriptures can still apply to those who are hurting because they were given by God to help all who are affected by sin. Though the instruction from the Scriptures may not take away the pain of particular hurts, it can teach Christians how and why they can place their trust in God, even if there is no guarantee that their problems will go away. The usefulness of Scripture for people affected by sin is not only attested to in the Old Testament, but it is also attested to in the New Testament.

### **New Testament Affirmation of Scripture's Sufficiency**

2 Timothy 3:16–17 is often cited as proof that the Scriptures are useful to instruct people in godliness so that Christians may be adequate and equipped for every good work. While this passage certainly has application for those involved in preaching ministry, it can also apply to how Christians understand the impact of the Bible on their lives and those they interact with in life. In 2 Timothy 3, Paul prepares Timothy for the difficulty which lies ahead for him in ministry. Chief among those difficulties will be

ministering to those who are given over to their sins and love themselves more than they love God (2 Tim 3:1–7, 13). Because of these challenges which were to come, Paul provided some instructions for Timothy for the road ahead.

### **An Exposition of 2 Timothy 3:14–17**

In contrast to those who were deceiving and being deceived in 2 Timothy 3:13, Paul commands Timothy to “continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them . . .” (2 Tim 3:14). This command for Timothy to continue in the things he learned is a command to allow what he has learned in the past to continually influence his life. It was not just a command for Timothy to hold to orthodox teaching, but also a command for Timothy to live and abide by what he was taught.<sup>24</sup> But what was the content or doctrine that Timothy learned and was to continue to live by in his life? Faith in Jesus Christ is assumed by Paul who noted that Timothy’s sincere faith was a result of his grandmother and mother (2 Tim 1:5), but Paul points to another source of teaching about God that prepared Timothy for saving faith.

Paul reveals that the things Timothy has learned also include “the sacred writings which are able to give you wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” which he had learned from childhood (2 Tim 3:15). Despite the fact that Timothy’s father was a Gentile and that Timothy had not been circumcised in the customary time for a male of Jewish descent, Timothy was brought up in the instruction of God by his mother and grandmother, a fact that Paul already recognized.<sup>25</sup> Timothy’s instruction in the things of God came in the form of what Paul identifies as “the sacred

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<sup>24</sup> Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, New American Commentary, vol. 34 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 233.

<sup>25</sup> I. Howard Marshall and Philip H. Towner, *The Pastoral Epistles*, International Critical Commentary (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 789.

writings.” Interestingly, the Greek words Paul uses to describe the Scriptures, ἱερὰ γράμματα, are not used elsewhere in the New Testament, but are words found in the writings of Philo and Josephus in order to refer to the Jewish Scriptures.<sup>26</sup>

William Mounce makes a compelling case that “sacred writings” must include the gospel message as well since it is doubtful that Paul would argue that the Old Testament alone could instruct Timothy in salvation. According to Mounce, Paul’s choice of an anarthrous plural construction develops Paul’s argument in the direction of joining the Hebrew Scripture and the gospel as Scripture.<sup>27</sup> While the gospel of Jesus Christ is included with what Timothy has learned from his childhood (2 Tim 1:5) and must continue to live by, Mounce seems to put more weight on the unusual anarthrous phrase than is warranted by the context.

Mounce previously established that the gospel was a part of Timothy’s instruction in verse 14, making the inclusion of the gospel with the “sacred writings” unnecessary to explain how the Old Testament provides wisdom that leads to salvation. This is especially true when one considers that Jesus himself taught that his coming was not to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it (Matt 5:17–19). As George Knight III helpfully points out, “Scripture’s instruction does not itself bring salvation but points “to” (εἰς) it or leads one toward it (εἰς σωτηρίαν also in Rom 1:16; 10:1, 10; 2 Cor 7:10; Phil 1:19; Acts 13:47; Heb 9:28; 11:7; 1 Pet 1:5; 2:2).<sup>28</sup> When read together, verses 14 and 15 already make the point that the Old Testament served as the foundation for the gospel of Jesus Christ which Timothy heard and believed from his grandmother and mother.

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<sup>26</sup> Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006), 582.

<sup>27</sup> William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, WBC, vol. 46 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2000), 564.

<sup>28</sup> George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Carlisle, England: Paternoster Press, 1992), 444.



It is for this reason that Paul reminds Timothy, “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness” (2 Tim 3:16). As William Hendriksen and Simon Kistemaker note, “*All scripture*, in distinction from “(the) sacred writings” means everything which, through the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the church is recognized by the church as canonical, that is, authoritative. When Paul wrote these words, the direct reference was to a body of sacred literature which even then comprised more than the Old Testament.”<sup>29</sup> Peter later demonstrates that the church understood and recognized that God was continuing to add to Scripture when he encourages believers to consider the patience of God as salvation just as Paul had explained to them even if Paul’s writings are being distorted as the untaught and unstable do with the rest of the Scriptures (2 Pet 3:15–16). By equating Paul’s writings with Scripture, Peter makes it clear that the scope of Scripture expanded beyond the Old Testament and includes new writings that taught about Jesus. With the understanding that these writings which are considered Scripture are inspired, or God-breathed, by God, Paul explains to Timothy how the divine source of the Scriptures impacts Christian life.

The first impact the Scriptures have on Christian life is its profitability for teaching. By acknowledging the profitability of teaching, Paul commends the importance of the Scriptures, including the Old Testament, as the source of sound doctrine which includes God’s revelation which leads to Christ.<sup>30</sup> Without the Old Testament, the truth being revealed in the New Testament would have no reliability. However, because of the Old Testament, people can recognize God’s Word as revealed in the New Testament. The second impact of the Scriptures on the Christian life is reproof. Tied closely with the idea

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<sup>29</sup> William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles*, New Testament Commentary, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1957), 301, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>30</sup> Lea and Griffin Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 236–37; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 70; Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 449.

of teaching, “reproof” can be thought of as convicting a sinner and helping them realize that they have done something wrong.<sup>31</sup> Thomas Lea and Hayne Griffin, Jr. explaining that the aim of this rebuke is not to make a person feel awful about their failure, but is meant to help those who fail remedy their error and lead them to a new sense of peace and wholeness.<sup>32</sup> Thirdly, the Scriptures are profitable for correction. This correction provides restoration or improvement as the one who is convicted of sin is corrected by the Scriptures in order to live a more righteous life. Finally, the Scriptures are helpful for training in righteousness or training designed to produce righteous conduct in the life of believers.

Verse 17 demonstrates that the profitability of Scripture has the intended purpose of making “the man of God adequate, equipped for every good work.” The word “adequate” is the Greek word ἄριστος which means “well fitted for some function, complete, capable, proficient.”<sup>33</sup> The point Paul drives home is that God’s Word is capable and sufficient to equip Christians for the demands God will have of them in their lives. Because the Bible is from God and thus carries his authority, every Christian can be sure that they have the resources they need in order to grow in godliness.

## **2 Timothy 3 and Biblical Counseling**

2 Timothy 3 affirms the profitability of Scripture for equipping of God’s people for the good works that he intends them to perform. The wide scope of Scripture’s applicability to life clearly demonstrates that the Scriptures are meant to minister to the whole person. Those interested in biblical counseling must realize that the aim of the Scripture to change the whole person must first start with themselves. Before the

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<sup>31</sup> Marshall and Towner, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 795.

<sup>32</sup> Lea and Griffin Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 237.

<sup>33</sup> Walter Bauer, Frederick W. Danker, and William Arndt, “ἄριστος,” in *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 136, Logos Bible Software.

powerful effects of the Scriptures are used to equip others, they must first impact those who are interested in counseling. Since the Bible teaches, reproves, corrects, and trains in righteousness, the hope of adequacy or proficiency for the good works God intends his people to do is sure. He himself assures that adequacy will occur. The Scriptures promise that all Christians will be changed as a result of scriptural instruction which means that those who may feel like Christlikeness is impossible can have hope that God's desire for them to be like Christ is not an impossible task, but one that God himself enables.

While the implications of 2 Timothy 3 must first apply to Christians on an individual level, it also has implications on ministry to other Christians. Biblical counselors are reminded from 2 Timothy 3 that those who are affected by sin can be helped by the resources found in the Scriptures. The Scriptures provide instruction that can train all of mankind in righteousness, a standard that God holds all human beings to uphold (Rom 1:18). As a result, those who desire to counsel others biblically and those who seek to be counseled can have confidence that the Scriptures have the power and ability to impact their lives even if the results of growth may not be immediate. Since God affirms the power of the Old and New Testaments to change individual lives, Christians who seek to show others God's ways can have confidence that when they point others to Scriptures to encourage them to obey God, that God will accomplish his purposes in his timing as his Word goes forth (Isa 55:11).

### **Sanctification's Effect on the Believer**

The sufficiency and authority of the Scriptures to address the sinfulness of believers through the righteousness supplied by God is not the only proof that God desires believers to help other believers in their pursuit of godliness through the application of the Scriptures to their lives. While the Bible clearly possesses the God given authority necessary to speak regarding the issues found in the lives of all people, it can be beneficial to examine how specific Scriptures demonstrate God's expectation for

Christians to be like Christ impacts the way believers interact with one another in Christian community. For this reason, this next section will examine how Colossians 3:1–17 reveals the life changing result of the Gospel and how that impacts life within the body of Christ.

### **An Exposition of Colossians 3**

In the beginning of his letter to the Colossians, Paul makes his prayer for the Colossians spiritual life known, praying that the Colossians would walk in a manner worthy of the Lord. This life would be defined by obedience to God, righteousness, and thanksgiving to God because God rescued Christians from the domain of darkness and transferred them into the kingdom of Christ, in whom Christians are all unified (Col 1:10–14). Paul appeals to the believer’s unity with Christ as he later exhorts them to “keep seeking the things above, where Christ is” (Col 3:1). James Dunn notes, “The very fact that an exhortation to ‘seek what is above’ was required and needed to be repeated is sufficient indication that what was in mind was a change of perspective, not (yet) a (complete) ontological change.”<sup>34</sup> The change Dunn refers to is every believer’s conformity to Christ’s character since they have been made one with him in salvation, a transformation of character commonly known as sanctification (Col 2:10–14). Since Christians have all their transgressions forgiven and are one with Christ, they have been changed from those who were dead in their transgressions to those who have been made alive with Christ.

Even though this new spiritual reality has been made possible through Christ, Christians’ full conformity to Jesus’ holy character is still in process as evidenced by Paul’s command for believers to continually seek the things above. Douglas Moo explains that this continual and deliberate pursuit of the things above is a commitment to

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<sup>34</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Carlisle, England: Paternoster Press, 1996), 203.

living out the values of the heavenly kingdom and using those values as the guidepost for our thinking and acting.<sup>35</sup> The reason why believers are called to set their minds on things above in contrast to the things on earth is due to their death to sin and their life being hidden in Christ (Col 3:2–4). Paul uses the aorist to describe the believer’s death to sin in order to firmly demonstrate that their previous way of life has been put to death and has been buried. As a result, Christians are free to live a different life that is driven not by their old fears and loyalties, but by their new and primary loyalty to Christ.<sup>36</sup>

Paul proceeds to explain how this life changing reality practically affects believers in verses 5–11. Space does not permit a full exegesis of all these verses, but a look at some of the key language found in these verses will reveal the believer’s required response to the salvation found in Christ. In verse 5, Paul abruptly tells believers that they are to consider, or put to death, the members of their earthly bodies to sins. Richard Melick notes that these specific words, “put to death,” or νεκρώσατε, is not found in any other Pauline passage. Melick acknowledges that Paul has previously in the epistle to the Colossians that believers have died with Christ and that their death with him becomes a part of their experience in salvation, yet Paul curiously calls those who are already dead to their sins to consider themselves dead to sin.<sup>37</sup> Readers ought to ask, “Why does Paul address this command to those who are already dead to sin?” Melick answers his own question, coming to the conclusion that Paul places more emphasis on death to sin in order to help his readers understand that even though they have died with Christ, the death of unchristian behavior is not yet an experiential reality.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2008), 246.

<sup>36</sup> Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 206.

<sup>37</sup> Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, NAC, vol. 32 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 287.

<sup>38</sup> Melick, 288.

Remaining sin in the lives of believers is not only a serious issue because believers have died to sin, but it is also a significant issue because Paul describes the sins he lists as idolatry. While Paul does not specifically list every sin possible in verse 5, his point is not to isolate these five sins as the only sins which constitute idolatry. Rather, he uses this list of sins as an example to show how he wants his readers to soberly evaluate their sinful tendencies to see how deep the idolatry in their hearts run. If they can recognize how living in sin results in idolatry, then they will learn how to consciously choose to end their past practices by cultivating a life full of gratitude.<sup>39</sup>

Paul equates these sins that the Colossians had committed prior to salvation as the same type of idolatrous worship that earn the sons of disobedience the wrath of God (v.6–7). In light of their death to sin and their unity in Christ, Paul encourages his readers to put off all of their sins (v.8). Moo explains that the aorist verb Paul uses to describe Paul’s command is a general exhortation simply to do what is commanded. The phrase could refer to putting off the things mentioned previously in addition to a new list, but it likely introduces the new sins Paul wants believers to put off since these behaviors are from a past life.<sup>40</sup>

Since believers have laid aside the old self and have put on the new self who is being renewed according to the image of God, Paul positively exhorts believers to act in a manner which demonstrates the character of God towards one another (v.12–14). F.F. Bruce observes that God called his people in the Old Testament to set themselves apart so they could exhibit his nature to others. This is the same desire God has for his people in the New Testament as Paul calls believers to demonstrate graces that perfectly blend and mirror God’s character and conduct.<sup>41</sup> These actions God’s people are called to

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<sup>39</sup> Todd D. Still, *Colossians*, in vol 12 of *REBC*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 326.

<sup>40</sup> Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 263.

demonstrate are not actions that believers can practice in isolation from others, but by necessity must be actions demonstrated in the church community since the recipient of the actions are fellow believers (v.13). Another way to think of Paul's command to believers is that sanctification's aim is for believers to continually grow in how they reflect God's character to one another and love one another.

Paul also commands believers to let Christ rule in their hearts and to let the word of Christ richly dwell within them. Should Christians obey these commands to have Christ at the core of their being, they will not only act in love towards one another, but they will also minister to fellow believers by wisely teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. To sum up all that Christians are to do in light of their new relationship to Christ, Christians are to do all in the name of the Lord, giving thanks through him to God (v.15–17). Bruce notes that “in all wisdom” is attached to “teach and instruct.” Believers are expected to instruct one another, but the instruction given must be given with wisdom and tact lest the instruction, no matter how well intentioned could provoke the opposite reaction.<sup>42</sup> Though the stated method of teaching in Colossians would be through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, this does not mean that all instruction must take place in these forms since the content, not the music, was most important.<sup>43</sup>

### **Colossians 3 and Biblical Counseling**

Paul clearly demonstrates in Colossian 3 that God expects all Christians to put off their sinful old nature and put on their new nature in Christ. This change in nature requires that Christians demonstrate God's character to one another and help one another

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<sup>41</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984), 153.

<sup>42</sup> Bruce, 158.

<sup>43</sup> Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, 305.

become more like Christ. Whether it be through teaching, the orderly arrangement and effective communication of truth, or through admonishment, the strong and practical encouragement to live in the truth, all believers are expected to love one another and minister to one another by passing on what they have been taught and encouraging others to live out what they have been taught.<sup>44</sup> Christians are not to remain self-focused in their growth in Christlikeness, but must be other's focused, sharing what they have learned. Counseling one another by teaching others what God has revealed in the Scriptures and helping others see how to practically apply what God says is a means by which this teaching and admonishment can occur. Because of the authority of God's Word and its sufficiency to speak on all issues of human life, Christians committed to biblical counseling can find the assurances they need that not only is counseling from the authoritative Word of God warranted, it is also a means by which God causes the entire church to grow to be more like Christ.

### **Consideration for One Another**

Though Christians understand that a natural result of their salvation is Christlikeness personally and interpersonally, some may still wonder how the ministry of the Scriptures towards self translates into ministry of the Scriptures towards others. Romans 15:1–6 helps believers understand one of the ways believers can minister the Scriptures towards one another practically.

### **An Exposition of Romans 15**

Prior to Romans 15, Paul discusses an implication that God's righteousness has in Christian community in Romans 14. The implication he chooses to cover in the chapter is the acceptance of the one who he describes as "weak in the faith" (Rom 14:1). James Dunn notes this description is a nickname given by others, rather than by the individuals

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<sup>44</sup> Melick, 304.



in view. In this case it is a description of those who are defective in faith, those who fail to trust God completely and without qualification. In this particular case, the failure to trust in God completely was manifested in the belief that righteousness was maintained through faith in Christ and the observance of dietary and festival laws.<sup>45</sup> C.E.B. Cranfield provides a slightly different nuance, stating that the weakness was not in the basics of the Christian faith, but on the assurance of what one's faith permitted someone to do.<sup>46</sup> He further explains that the designation of those who disagreed as "weak," which was also used in 1 Corinthians 8, originated with those who disagreed with the persons described as "weak."<sup>47</sup> By referring to the ones who disagreed in his epistle as "weak," Paul demonstrates that he agrees with the assessment of the those who are by contrast stronger in the faith, however, he does not approve of their unwillingness to yield or treat those who are weak as fellow believers. For this reason, he commands those who will not be identified until Romans 15 as "strong" to accept, or receive, the ones who are weak in their company.

Still addressing the strong in Romans 15, Paul tells them that they are to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please themselves so that their neighbors might be edified. Douglas Moo and Robert Mounce observe that Paul numbers himself among the strong, those who are strong or capable in their understanding of faith and practice, and calls upon them to use their strength to serve those who are weaker in the realm of faith and practice so they might grow in their faith (Rom 15:1a).<sup>48</sup> By

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<sup>45</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, WBC, vol. 38B (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1988), 797–98.

<sup>46</sup> C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, ICC, vol.2 (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 2:700.

<sup>47</sup> Cranfield, 2:700

<sup>48</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996), 865; Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, NAC, vol. 27 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 259.

including himself among the strong, Paul reminds fellow believers who are convinced that the gospel does not require the observation of dietary laws or religious festivals that they have no right to trample upon those whose convictions do not match theirs. Nor do they have the right to force those who are weak to adopt their views without question. Instead, these “strong” Christians are to bear the weaknesses of the weak.

The call to “bear the weaknesses of those without strength” is not a mere call for tolerance, but a call to support, sustain, and assist the weak.<sup>49</sup> Those who are strong also serve their weaker neighbors by not pleasing themselves, but pleasing their neighbor for his edification (v.1b–2). This does not mean that Christians are never to do anything they want to do but are to consider the good of others first. The idea of doing what is good towards the weaker brother is further explained as Paul calls the strong to edify, or build up, the weaker one in their faith so they might become more mature Christians.<sup>50</sup> The Christians who are stronger in the faith in the are not to leave those who are weaker in their convictions of right practice in their weakness. Rather they are to teach weaker believers in the Scriptures so that they will be built up into maturity of Christ. The “weak” believers in Romans 14 who believed that the observance of dietary laws and religious festivals were not to be callously led to stumble in their fellowship with other believers in the short term. The strong were to consider how to build up their neighbors in faith, recognizing that temporarily laying aside their rights so as not to stumble other believers is not a compromise, but an act of love that enables edification.

Paul points the strong to the example of Christ as their motivation to love their neighbor citing Psalm 69:9 as an example (15:3). The psalmist wanted to follow after God, but this desire led him to be at odds with those who did not want to obey God. In a

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<sup>49</sup> Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans; Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 497; Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 837.

<sup>50</sup> Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 498; Mounce, *Romans*, 259.

similar way, Jesus chose to do what God wanted, but he bore upon himself the reproach of men though he did not deserve it.<sup>51</sup> Those who are strong should not think that bearing with one another is incompatible with their strength for Jesus did not please himself, but sought to glorify God in his obedience.<sup>52</sup> In verse 4, Paul explains his use of Psalm 69 to help his readers understand the usefulness of Scripture. The phrase, “Everything that was written in the past” refers to what was written in Scripture and emphasizes that all of it was written for our instruction. Leon Morris elaborates, noting that the reference to “our” edification emphasizes that what was written in earlier ages is intended for Christ’s people to have hope in the present as they meditate on what God has done in the past.<sup>53</sup> If the psalmist and Jesus can act in a way that did not please themselves, but continued to follow after God, so can believers who may need to lay down their rights temporarily in order to make time for the edification of the weak.

Following his explanation about the profitability of Scripture for future generations, Paul prays that God would grant his readers unity of mind with one another so that they can glorify God together (15:5–6). Paul’s prayer is known as a prayer wish, which usually employs the optative mood as its major verb to communicate the wish aspect of the prayer. Paul’s prayer wish demonstrates that unity in Christ naturally ought to lead to concern and care for others as new family relationships established by God develop.<sup>54</sup> Paul’s instruction presupposes that tensions existed among those who were weak and strong. Should these believers heed Paul’s instructions and grow in love and unity, God will be glorified as they demonstrate the brotherly love Christ calls his followers to have for one another. Morris elaborates, “*Glorify*, of course, means “ascribe

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<sup>51</sup> Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 499.

<sup>52</sup> Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 868.

<sup>53</sup> Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 499-500.

<sup>54</sup> Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 1014.

glory to” or “praise”; this is the creature taking up the appropriate position over against the Creator.”<sup>55</sup> Christians who learn to serve others, bear with others, please neighbors rather than seeking to please self will have a proper estimation of themselves among the congregation and will glorify God as they remember that he desires his children to love one another.

### **Romans 15 and Biblical Counseling**

Romans 15 challenges believers to show consideration for one another. Those who are stronger in the faith should naturally show consideration for those who are weaker in their convictions by seeking to build up those who are weaker in their faith. This does not mean that those who are weak run the church. It means that those who are stronger in faith seek to carefully consider others in the church as Jesus did so that those who are weak can be edified to maturity in Christ. In the immediate context of the text, the weak are those who were wrestling over the necessity of continuing to observe the dietary laws and festival days even though they have already received righteousness as a result of their faith in Jesus Christ. Paul was asking those who understand the faith better to not only accept the weaker ones in the faith into their company, but to also bear their weaknesses and edify them.

The original context of the text may make it seem like applying it to support biblical counseling would not be a faithful use of the text since biblical counseling is typically not pursued when someone has issues of conscience that is not plaguing their assurance of salvation. Though the situation is not the same, the principles of considering the weakness of others, bearing those weaknesses, and edifying can still apply. While the weak in the original context referred to new converts who believed that salvation required works to maintain faith, the weak in the counseling context are those who seek help

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<sup>55</sup> Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 502.

because their faith is defective in other ways. Perhaps they are genuine believers who were ensnared by the false promises that pornography, drugs, or alcohol gave and they need help. Perhaps they placed all their hope for a good life in their marriage and their marriage is slowly falling in shambles. These believers may know the gospel, they may believe in Jesus Christ, but they may have a difficult time understanding how to connect what they know intellectually with how God desires them to apply his truths to their lives. Those who have stronger faith and understand the righteousness given to them are to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and act to edify them so they can put aside what enslaves them and put on maturity in Christ.

Even if they seek help and are slow in progress, those who are strong are not to quickly discard those who are weak but are to patiently minister to those who have weaker faith, believing wrong things about the power of the gospel to deliver people from their sins. Since the Word of God is entirely useful to minister to those who are weak, whether that application is directly derived from the indicatives found in Scriptures or derived from principles, then what saints need in order to minister to one another can be found in God's Word. God desires and provides the unity of his saints so that they can with one voice glorify him. He uses those who are strong in faith to edify the weak so that the unity that must exist between believers can occur. As a result, Christians can be confident to engage in this personal ministry of edification to one another and should do so with all vigor, knowing that God enables such a work.

### **Speaking the Truth in Love**

Believers who are committed to loving one another will encounter situations where they must edify weaker Christians. As seen in the previous section, this responsibility to edify weaker believers is not optional but is an expected result as believers mature. This responsibility to edify does not give "stronger" believers an excuse to do so carelessly. Ephesians 4:11–16 provides principles to help believers understand

how to edify in a way that truly seeks the good of those needing edification instead of viewing them as a nuisance or problem.

#### **An Exposition of Ephesians 4**

In Ephesians 4:7–10, Paul reflects on how God graciously and sovereignly gives gifts to his people. The gifts God graciously gives according to his purposes are further defined in verse 11 as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Harold Hoehner observes that “the structure of τοὺς μὲν ..., τοὺς δὲ ..., τοὺς δὲ ..., τοὺς δὲ ..., is to mark out distinctly different gifted people without implying a contrast as it would have in earlier Greek.”<sup>56</sup> This observation of the structure helps readers understand that Paul was not establishing a hierarchy of spiritual gifts in his list, but was noting some of the gifts that God has given the church. Hoehner also notes that the article before the gifted people, τοὺς, is a demonstrative pronoun which can be translated “some,” helping readers understand that each gifted person has a particular function among believers and are to operate according to the gift given to them.<sup>57</sup> God did not graciously gift his people with gifts so they could desire gifts that they would rather have instead. He gave them gifts so that each one given a gift will utilize it faithfully.

S.M. Baugh explains that the rendering of the articles as “some” is due to the force of the μὲν ... δέ construction. The result of such a grammatical instruction could allow for a translation of “And He gave some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, etc.”<sup>58</sup> Paul highlights the different grace gifts God gives his people to help believers understand the various kinds of gifts God wants his people to have for the benefit of the entire church. While the different gifts could be elaborated on further, the

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<sup>56</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 538.

<sup>57</sup> Hoehner, 538.

<sup>58</sup> S. M. Baugh, *Ephesians*, *Evangelical Exegetical Commentary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015), 333, Logos Bible Software.

focal point for this section will be how this diversity of gifts leads to ministry amongst the body, not on the gifts themselves.

Paul elaborates on God’s varied gifts explaining that the variance is for the equipping of the saints for the work of service and the building up of the body of Christ (v.12). William Larkin notes that there are three different purposes present in verse 12 indicated by a change of prepositions (πρὸς ... εἰς). This change is important to note because the change in prepositions and the word order suggests that the main purpose is the first purpose and the remaining two purposes are intermediate purposes.<sup>59</sup> God gave gifted men to the church for the equipping of the saints. The equipping of the saints is necessary for the work of service and for the building up of the body of Christ. The need for equipping continues until a certain point (v.13).

The preposition “until”, or μέχρι, may refer to the building up of the body of Christ, but since it is tied to the word “attain,” an aorist subjunctive, it is more probable that the “until” is related to “he gave” in verse 11.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, verse 13 can be understood as saying that God’s gift of gifted men to the church will continue to occur until the church attains unity. Granted, this does not mean that every gifted individual God gave in the past continues to be given presently, which is the case for apostles and prophets, since their gifts were meant to be foundational for the initial building up of the church. Bruce helpfully explains, “The apostles, as an order of ministry in the church, were not perpetuated beyond the apostolic age, but the various functions which they discharged did not lapse with their departure, but continued to be performed by others – notably by the evangelists and the pastors and teachers listed here.”<sup>61</sup> In reference to the prophets, Hoehner writes similarly, “In the present verse the prophet is listed among the

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<sup>59</sup> William J. Larkin, *Ephesians: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 78; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 349.

<sup>60</sup> Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 552.

<sup>61</sup> Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 346–47.

foundational gifted persons who prepare saints for ministry and build up this new body, the church revealed from the mystery. In many ways the prophet and apostle had similar functions for they were both involved in revelation.”<sup>62</sup> While these particular gifts do not continue presently, the gift God gave to the church from these gifted Christians continues to impact the church to this very day. As a result, the church should not fear that the gift of gifted believers to serve the church will run out because the equipping work is not finished. God will continue to give gifted individuals to the church until the church is as it should be. The unity of the faith also leads to a unity of knowledge in the Lord Jesus Christ. When believers are taught well by gifted men and understand the faith and Christ, believers will naturally mature according to the image of Christ, who is himself the standard of Christian maturity.<sup>63</sup>

For this reason, Paul tells the Ephesians that they are no longer to be children tossed here and there by every wind of doctrine, the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming (v.14). Though Paul does not expect Christians to be fully mature immediately, the teaching they have received is sufficient to the point that Paul says they should no longer be like children but be mature. Andrew Lincoln explains, “Through the building up and bring to completion that the gifts effect, immaturity and instability can increasingly be left behind.”<sup>64</sup> Since God provides his church with what they need in order to grow in maturity, immaturity and instability should not be found in the lives of believers. Instead, Paul tells believers they are to speak the truth in love. The phrase “speaking the truth in love” refers to “speaking the truth of the gospel” rather than honest speech.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 542.

<sup>63</sup> Baugh, *Ephesians*, 341.

<sup>64</sup> Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, WBC, vol. 42 (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1990), 257.

<sup>65</sup> Larkin, *Ephesian*, 82.



As the Ephesians are speaking the truth in love, they are to grow up in Christ who is the head. Bruce explains, “This analogy may be helpful up to a point, but the language used here about the interrelation of body and head is conditioned by the relation existing between Christ and his people. They grow up to the measure of his full stature, but at the same time it is from him that they draw the resources necessary for growth.”<sup>66</sup> Hoehner similarly summarizes Paul’s command writing, “. . . it is preferable for a child to develop in all areas of life rather than just in one or two areas, so is the child of God to develop in all areas of spiritual life.”<sup>67</sup> Paul’s desire for believers is that all of them will grow to be like Christ in all areas of their lives. When Christians are growing to be like Christ in all aspects of their life, the church itself, or as a whole, will be built up. Christ is the ultimate source of the growth of the church, but it becomes clear that love is the means by which Christ grows the church as each member speaks the truth in love to one another.<sup>68</sup> Without truth working in conjunction with love, the church will not grow in maturity and it will not accomplish its mission. However, if the church speaks the truth in love, then the Gospel of Jesus Christ will be made known to the world as his disciples do all he commanded them.

#### **Ephesians 4 and Biblical Counseling**

Ephesians 4:15–16 are commonly used in biblical counseling training to remind counselors that truth telling must be done in love so that counselees may receive the truth well. What can be seen through the exposition of verses 11–16 is that the source of speaking the truth in love comes from the faithful exercise of the grace gifts God gave to faithful saints to build up the church. The whole church is expected to be involved in

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<sup>66</sup> Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 352.

<sup>67</sup> Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 567.

<sup>68</sup> Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 264.

works of service and the building up of the body of Christ after they have been received the ministry of the Word. While the title “counselor” does not appear in the list of gifted men God has given the church, biblical counselors are not a special class of Christian. Biblical counselors are numbered among the saints who are serving the church and building up the body of Christ according to their abilities to speak the truth in love to those who are hurting.

It will be through love motivated truth telling that the whole church will grow. It is the responsibility of saints to do this ministry work among themselves, but Christ is the source of that strength. He is the one who enables the church to grow. No Christian who is a part of the body of Christ is exempt from the call to maturity in all aspects of their lives into Christ. No Christian is exempt from doing their part in building up one another in the church. As a result, every Christian can provide hope and help to others through biblical counseling because biblical counseling uses the sufficiency of Scripture to minister specifically to the issues in a man’s life.

### **Conclusion**

God provides the Scriptures to his people so that they might minister to one another through the principles found in the Scriptures. The first two passages studied here in chapter 2 – Psalm 19 and 2 Timothy 3:14–17 – demonstrate that the Word of God testifies that it is the all-sufficient Word of God, capable of ministering to everyone who is exposed to it. Because God’s Word is from God himself, it alone has the authority and power to tell people what they are like and how they can be made in the image of Christ. The last three passages – Colossians 3:1–17, Romans 15:1–6, and Ephesians 4:11–16 – demonstrate that the gospel has life changing power. That life changing power naturally leads to a care for one another so that Christians can help one another become more like their Savior.

The Word of God truly is sufficient to minister to the needs of all people

because it is the revelation of God which provides people the message of forgiveness. Not only does it save people, but it also teaches them how to obey God, observe all his commandments, and become more like Christ. Christians are called to minister this Word to one another, no matter what their vocation or giftedness may be, because this ministry to one another is the means by which God grows his church and makes the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ known to the world. Men and women can and must grow in their knowledge of Christ and speak the truth in love towards one another so that every believer can grow to be like Christ. The Word of God is the foundation for counseling and it is also the means by which God's people learn to be like God.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE THEORETICAL BASIS FOR ESTABLISHING A BIBLICAL COUNSELING MINISTRY

#### **Introduction**

One of the major ways the Scriptures demonstrate that God provides his people with his Word to help others handle life's problems God's way. Those who desire to help others change are therefore committed to faithfully employ the Scriptures as they minister to the people God brings into their lives. In order to maintain fidelity to the Scriptures, those involved in the ministry of biblical counseling must also be committed to an accurate understanding of what the Bible teaches regarding itself, people, and how people change. This chapter will examine how the biblical counselor's understanding of hermeneutics, anthropology, and sanctification have an impact on the way they provide counsel to other people. Since counselors need to understand these critical doctrines before they serve others, counselors need training to provide biblical counseling to others.

#### **The Necessity of Hermeneutics**

By definition, biblical counselors are expected to use the Bible in their counseling. But what is meant by those who say that they want to faithfully use the Scriptures to minister to other people? How can those who desire to be faithful know if they are rightly applying the text to their counselee's lives? Does it even matter if counselors use the right Scriptures so long as their counsel contains biblical principles that can help counselees? The answer to these questions are explored in a brief study of hermeneutics and inerrancy.

## **Hermeneutics and Inerrancy**

The first step in understanding hermeneutics requires a definition of hermeneutics. Anthony Thiselton explains, “Hermeneutics explores how we read, understand, and handle texts, especially those written in another time or in a context of life different from our own. Biblical hermeneutics investigates more specifically how we read, understand, apply, and respond to biblical texts.”<sup>1</sup> As seen in Thiselton’s definition, hermeneutics is not a discipline limited to biblical studies, but generally looks at how the meaning of texts can be found and understood. When applied specifically to biblical studies, the importance of proper hermeneutics intensifies because of the Scriptures’ claim to be the Word of God (Ps 119:33–40; 2 Tim 3:16–17; 2 Pet 1:19–21). For people who believe that the Bible comes from God, the study of hermeneutics has utmost importance as God reveals more of himself and his salvation plan for all of mankind through his revealed Word.

Roy Zuck describes biblical hermeneutics as, “. . . the science and art of interpreting the Bible. Another way to define hermeneutics is this: It is the science (principles) and art (task) by which the meaning of the biblical text is determined.”<sup>2</sup> Put another way, hermeneutics provides biblical interpreters with the rules or guidelines needed to properly study Scripture so that biblical interpreters can skillfully apply the Bible to their lives and the lives of those whom they serve. Though biblical hermeneutics are differentiated from the hermeneutics one might use when reading other works of literature, Christians may still differ when it comes to how they approach Scripture to discover its meaning. For example, within biblical hermeneutics exists a category of feminist hermeneutics. According to Thiselton, feminist hermeneutics advocate for a variety of approaches to the Scriptures with some seeking to elevate the prominence of

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony C. Thiselton, *Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2009), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Roy B. Zuck, *Basic Bible Interpretation* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 1991), 19.

women and their leadership ability in the Bible, some desiring to read the Scriptures outside of the male point of view in which the Scriptures are written, and some even trying to further distinguish themselves from the original feminist hermeneutic since the original hermeneutic primarily relates to women of a particular ethnicity and social class.<sup>3</sup>

If multiple hermeneutical approaches exist within biblical hermeneutics, what are the hermeneutics necessary for biblical counselors to adopt in their own personal study of the Bible and in their counseling? The determining factor for the hermeneutics Christians ought to adopt to rightly handle the Bible is inerrancy. Wayne Grudem writes, “The inerrancy of Scripture means that Scripture in the original manuscripts does not affirm anything contrary to the fact.”<sup>4</sup> In other words, since the Scriptures are from God and are God’s very words, they are true since he is the definition of truth. Since biblical counselors concern themselves with applying God’s truth to the lives of their counselees, the hermeneutical method that will ensure faithfulness to the truth is the method which believes that the Scriptures are inerrant.

Another word people have used in the past to describe the truthfulness of the Bible is the word infallibility. However, John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue explain that while inerrancy and infallibility were once synonymous in their usage, infallibility has been more recently used to advance the idea of limited inerrancy. Limited inerrancy is the belief that Scripture teaches no false or misleading doctrine in regards to faith and practice but does not have to be factually accurate in all its words.<sup>5</sup> The distinction made between inerrancy and infallibility in more recent days provides those who take the limited inerrancy view to maintain a semblance of orthodox faith while also rejecting the

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<sup>3</sup> Thiselton, *Hermeneutics*, 279.

<sup>4</sup> Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 90.

<sup>5</sup> MacArthur and Mayhue, 109.

importance of words. While one could argue that the truth claims of the Scripture in areas of faith and practice are not nullified by the rest of the Bible not being accurate, such a belief is problematic. If only a portion of the Scripture is useful for the church's understanding of God's salvation plan for mankind, who has the authority to determine which texts and teachings are useful for faith and practice and which texts and teachings may not provide Christians with accurate information?

God claims that the Scriptures are his words and that every word that has been given was for the benefit of all believers to be instructed (2 Tim 3:16–17; Rom 15:4; 1 Cor 10:11). Since the Scriptures proceed from God, they reflect his nature and are holy and truthful. This does not only impact a believer's understanding of who God is, but also a believer's understanding of life and need of salvation. Albert Mohler states, "Scripture claims to be totally true and its truthfulness is essential to its other perfections, even as its divine inspiration is essential to its truthfulness. . . . Words such as *infallible* and *inerrant* are meant to affirm precisely what the Bible claims for itself, a rejection of inerrancy entails a rejection of the total truthfulness and trustworthiness of the Bible." Mohler goes on to tell readers that the inerrancy of the Bible is not only true, but also necessary.<sup>6</sup> Any concession that the Bible contains texts which are not fully trustworthy or authoritative would drive the church into confusion as they strive to figure out which texts are trustworthy and authoritative—and to what extent. This confusion will inevitably reach the core of the church—the Gospel itself.<sup>7</sup> God, the divine co-author of Scripture, has revealed who he is and what he has been doing in the course of human history through the Bible through human authors inspired by the Holy Spirit. He alone assigns meaning to the text he has given.

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<sup>6</sup> R. Albert Mohler Jr., "When the Bible Speaks, God Speaks: The Classical Doctrine of Inerrancy," in *Five Views on Biblical Inerrancy*, ed. J. Merrick and Stephen M. Garrett, Counterpoints (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 45, Kindle.

<sup>7</sup> Mohler, 46.

God's role as the divine co-author of Scripture means that the reader or the community of readers reading a text are not allowed to assign meaning to the text. They are meant to discover the meaning of the authors of Scripture as they communicate with the authors in the act of reading. Mortimer Adler and Charles Van Doren liken the act of reading to the interaction between a pitcher and a catcher in baseball with the author functioning as the pitcher and the reader functioning as the catcher. In order for successful communication to occur, the author must write in such a way that the reader may actively "catch" the different pitches the author throws and engage with the information given.<sup>8</sup> As illustrated in the baseball analogy, the reader has not been reduced to a state of meaninglessness. Without the reader, the message of the author would not be received. However, the primary focus necessarily is on the one author who transmits the message to the reader. The intent of the author determines the interpretation of the message rather than how the reader perceives the text to be read.

Since Christians believe that God provides the Bible so that they may know more about his nature and his salvation plan for mankind, then Christians must endeavor to accurately understand what God has revealed. Jeannine Brown confirms, "If we view the Bible as a communicative act and not simply an autonomous text disengaged from its author, we are ethically bound to grant the author the privileges due more routinely to all communicators. This means respecting the author's communication through the text as a voice distinct from our own."<sup>9</sup> Brown's framing of interpreting the Scriptures according to authorial intent as an ethical issue reminds readers that proper Scripture interpretation is an issue of morality. Put another way, proper Scripture interpretation is an issue of readers honoring and obeying God's intentions as expressed in Scripture. Orthodox

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<sup>8</sup> Mortimer J. Adler and Charles Van Doren, *How to Read a Book*, rev. ed (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972), 5–6.

<sup>9</sup> Jeannine K. Brown, *Scripture as Communication* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 127.



doctrine does not occur in a vacuum but results from a methodology that treats the text as God intended the text to be treated.

Norman Geisler and William Roach note, “There is no consistent orthodox theology without an orthodox methodology. There is no orthodox doctrine without an orthodox hermeneutic. And this orthodox method of interpretation is called the historical-grammatical hermeneutic.”<sup>10</sup> <sup>11</sup> Zuck explains the historical-grammatical hermeneutic from the Reformers’ perspective writing, “By ‘historical’ they meant the setting in which the Bible books were written and the circumstances involved in the writing. By ‘grammatical’ they meant determining the meaning of the Bible by studying the words and sentences of Scripture in their normal, plain sense.”<sup>12</sup> The human authors of Scripture worked in conjunction with the divine author of Scripture to deliver God’s revelation to their readers so that the readers could respond to his message. There is no deeper or fuller meaning that must be deciphered in the interpretation process because the authors of Scripture wrote expecting that their words would be understood in their plain sense. The nature of written words being locked into a particular time, culture, and language allows future readers of the text to know what the author intended when he

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<sup>10</sup> Norman L. Geisler and William C. Roach, *Defending Inerrancy* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011), 289.

<sup>11</sup> While this paper advocates for the historical-grammatical hermeneutic approach to Scripture, inerrantists are not all in agreement regarding hermeneutic approaches to Scripture. Other hermeneutical approaches which have been adopted by inerrantists are the “theological interpretation of Scripture” (also known as TIS) and the “canonical” hermeneutic. These other hermeneutical approaches strive to take other considerations into account when understanding the meaning of a text such as the theological presuppositions one brings into the reading of a biblical text or the trajectory of the theology developed by the biblical authors. While these hermeneutical approaches are adopted to account for the perceived weaknesses in the historical-grammatical hermeneutic, the historical-grammatical hermeneutic is still advocated for in this paper because the premise of historical-grammatical hermeneutic underlies the alternative approaches which cannot fully break free from a historical-grammatical approach in their understanding of the theology found in the Scriptures. For further reading regarding TIS, see Daniel J. Treier and Uche Anizor, “Theological Interpretation of Scripture and Evangelical Systematic Theology: Iron Sharpening Iron?”, *SBJT* 14, no. 2 (Summer 2010): 4–17; Gregg R. Allison, “Theological Interpretation of Scripture: An Introduction and Preliminary Evaluation”, *SBJT* 14, no. 2 (Summer 2010): 28–46. For further reading regarding the canonical hermeneutic, see, GC Pereira, “An Evaluation of the Canonical Approach: Is it Adequate for the Task of Old Testament Theology in Christian Hermeneutic Endeavour?”, *Scriptura* 114 (2015): 1–12.

<sup>12</sup> Zuck, *Basic Bible Interpretation*, 77.

wrote to the original audience.

The historical-grammatical methodology allows biblical counselors to have firm guidelines in their interpretation of Scripture so that they do not misrepresent what God says to people. Furthermore, the methodology provides biblical counselors with the confidence they need to apply these Scriptures to their lives and the lives of their counselees properly. If the words found in Scripture can be taken to mean whatever the reader wishes, the Scriptures that a biblical counselor could refer a counselee to study might be interpreted in ways the author of Scripture and the biblical counselor did not intend, leading to a contentious discussion about how a text is relevant to the counselee's lives. Locking the meaning of the text into authorial intent, the historical context, and the grammatical context allows for confidence in how a text ought to be understood.

### **The Impact of Inerrancy on Sufficiency**

The doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture hinges on an inerrant Bible. If the Bible is truly the Word of God, all the words it contains are true. As a result, counselees have the foundation for how they are to respond to their circumstances using God's methods. However, those who do not believe the Bible is inerrant are likely to obtain truth by other means. Doug Bookman explains, "There has been the persuasion . . . that there is *truth* which is at least *profitable* and perhaps even *necessary* to the effort to help by means of counseling, and which is to be discovered *beyond the pages of Scripture* . . . This persuasion lies at the very heart of the integrationist impulse of Christian Psychology."<sup>13</sup>

Though they do not identify themselves fully with Christian Psychology, Mark McMinn and Clark Campbell identify themselves as integrationists explaining, "Integrationists believe that some sort of reciprocal interaction between faith and

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<sup>13</sup> Doug Bookman, "The Word of God and Counseling," in *Sufficiency*, by Heath Lambert et al. (n.p.: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016), 42.

psychology is the best way to gain a comprehensive understanding of personality and counseling. This is not to say that psychology carries the same authority as the Christian faith, but that understanding and wisdom can be discovered in both.”<sup>14</sup> In their conclusion, McMinn and Campbell summarize their proposed approach to counseling writing, “[Integrative psychotherapy] is integrative in two dimensions: theoretical and theological. It brings together various theories in psychology, and it integrates a Christian view of persons with psychological theory and practice. Both dimensions are crucial in understanding the theory and practice of IP.”<sup>15</sup>

By their own admission, McMinn and Campbell do not believe that Scripture, which they broadly refer to as faith, is sufficient to counsel people. Though they recognize that there is truth and authority in the Christian faith, they believe an additional appeal to psychology is necessary to properly care for people. Such an assertion equates the authority derived from the knowledge of man with the authority which comes from the very person of God on the faulty notion that all truth must come from God. For this reason, those who hold to an integrationist perspective of people care will mingle psychological practices with Christian principles to try and help people. Though they may have “success” in their counseling approach, this success is not always success in the ultimate sense because God and his prescribed methods and purposes for change are often ignored. Heath Lambert elaborates, “Their source of authority is their own wisdom, so they can never attain the kind of change that God desires, and which matters for eternity. . . . If we reject biblical authority, our counseling will never ultimately succeed. If we embrace it, we can rely on that authority to correct us and help us improve even

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<sup>14</sup> Mark R. McMinn and Clark D. Campbell, *Integrative Psychotherapy*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), chap. 1, "Christian Foundations," "Integration as Reciprocal Interaction," para. 2, Kindle.

<sup>15</sup> McMinn and Campbell, *Integrative Psychotherapy*, chap. 12, "Concluding Thoughts," "Integrative," para. 1, Kindle.

when we fail by falling short of that authority.”<sup>16</sup>

The application of Scripture to life is most careful and appropriate to a person’s life when Christians understand the authorial intent behind the Scriptures. While it is true that there is only one true interpretation of a text, but many possible applications of a particular text, application still has its limits. Abner Chou writes, ““Good moral lessons’ drawn from the wrong texts may make us feel good or spur us to live godly lives. Nonetheless, if our application does not abide in the intended significance of a text, we actually ignore what God desires us to learn and to live from that passage. We need to be careful that our applications of texts honor the author’s speech-act.”<sup>17</sup> Biblical counselors cannot just apply biblical passages to their counsees lives just because it appears that those passages speak to the issues presented. While the words in particular verses may seem to apply to a counselee’s situation, the application of that verse may be beyond the scope of God’s intended purpose. If the interpretation and application of Scripture is an ethical and moral issue, biblical counselors must be careful to provide good counsel from appropriate texts.

When biblical counselors claim that the Scriptures are sufficient to counsel all matters of life, their practice of counseling should be guided by sound hermeneutics. Hermeneutics practiced correctly will determine the authorial intent of the passage which in turn guides and limits application so that God’s people will apply the Scriptures to their lives as he intended. Without a proper understanding of how to interpret the Bible, biblical counselors will not be able to faithfully apply the Scriptures to counsees’ lives. Even if a counselee is helped, a biblical counselor could find themselves guilty of an improper handling of Scripture just like someone who does not know how to study the

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<sup>16</sup> Heath Lambert, “Counsel the Sufficient Word of God,” in *Sufficiency*, by Heath Lambert et al. (n.p.: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016), 142.

<sup>17</sup> Abner Chou, *The Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2018), 221.

Scripture well. As a result, biblical counselors ought to make it their aim to study the Bible as God intended so that they may honor him in their counseling ministry.

### **The Necessity of Biblical Anthropology**

The previous section emphasized the importance of a faithful hermeneutic in biblical counseling ministry. A faithful hermeneutic does not only shape the methodology of how one might faithfully employ the Bible in their counseling ministry, but also shapes counselors' understanding of the people to whom they minister. If biblical counselors do not properly understand what God has revealed about the nature of mankind in the Scriptures, they may adopt a wrong view of man which will negatively impact the methods they may use to help those who are hurting. Therefore, a biblical view of man's nature must be established, followed by a subsequent strategy to minister to people in light of a biblical anthropology.

### **The Nature of Man**

What is man and what is the nature of the problems of man? It may seem odd to ask such questions, but the reason why such questions must be asked is due to competing ideologies in the world. For those who have a more naturalistic mindset, man is an evolved being who evolved from lower life forms. The approach to caring for people therefore is based entirely on the sciences. As those who understand what the Bible has said about mankind, Christians understand that man is not merely a biological lifeform but is also a unique being made in the image of God. As a result, a physiological approach to care is not sufficient to properly care for man. The image of God each person bears must be accounted for as well.

Lambert states, "Being made in God's image does not mean that we are identical to God. It means that we are like him and portray his nature to the world."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 185.

Grudem elaborates, “The more we know about God and man the more similarities we will recognize, and the more fully we will understand what Scripture means when it says that man is in the image of God. The expression refers to every way in which man is like God.”<sup>19</sup> This is particularly helpful for biblical counselors to consider when they minister to those who need help because it emphasizes the uniqueness and dignity that each person bears, no matter how sinful they are. Because each person has been made in the image of God, each person has inherent worth and value before God. Therefore, mankind is not to be viewed solely as the biological sum of their parts because God created men and women to be more than the rest of the animals on the earth. He created them in his image. He created them with a soul.

That mankind possesses a physical body is a reality that those with a naturalistic view and those with a biblical view can agree. As a result of the physical state of the human body, humans can interact with one another and the physical world around them. However, the physical state of the body also means that physical harm can happen to the body as well. Physical deterioration over time naturally occurs in every person, but physical harm from others is also possible. While the physical nature of human beings is without question, the immaterial aspect of man is where questions exist among some non-Christians. Since biblical counselors are concerned with being faithful to what the Scriptures teach, they know that the Bible speaks of mankind having a spiritual nature. Mankind’s spiritual nature is also known as man’s soul. In Psalm 6:3–4 David proclaims that his soul is greatly dismayed and asks God to rescue his soul. Another example is found in Matthew 10:28 when Jesus warns his disciples not to fear those who can kill the body because they are unable to kill the soul. Rather they were to fear God who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

The understanding of man being made up of body and soul is called

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<sup>19</sup> Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 443.

“dichotomism.” Though some may make a distinction between the soul and the spirit and argue that man is therefore composed of three parts, this distinction ignores the fact that the Scriptures can at times use different words to describe the same thing. MacArthur and Mayhew write, “‘Soul’ and ‘spirit’ are used interchangeably in Scripture, and both terms indicate similar functions in relating with God, other people, and nature. So it is difficult to argue that they are distinct parts of a person.”<sup>20</sup> Man’s singular composition of both body and soul is critical to a discussion on the nature of man because it clearly indicates that there is a spiritual dimension to man as well as a physical dimension to man. Just like with the physical body, the spiritual aspect of the body can experience both good and bad. The foundational spiritual problem every person faces is sin since sin, and its consequence, death, spread to the whole world through Adam (Rom 5:12).

This sin problem that is in the nature of man is described as total depravity. Paul Tautges describes total depravity saying, “And when we say that [man] is *totally depraved*, we mean that sin has negatively affected every aspect of man’s being: intellect, emotions, and will, leaving him profoundly sinful at the very core of his being from the moment of conception.”<sup>21</sup> Sin is not just an internal spiritual problem for mankind. As seen in Tautges’ definition of total depravity, many of the attributes of man that are affected by sin are attributes that can affect an individual’s whole body. When a person’s intellect, emotions, and will are challenged or frustrated, the reactions do not stay within the realm of the soul but may elicit a total body response to what is felt internally. For example, when a person feels sinful anger, the anger felt is usually due to a perceived injustice or the denial of something that a person had wanted. The feelings of anger may affect the intellect and emotions, but it can also affect the body as heat rises in the face and the body tenses up in anticipation of a fight. While this description of anger does not

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<sup>20</sup> MacArthur and Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 423.

<sup>21</sup> Paul Tautges, *Counseling One Another* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 2015), 45.

describe how people always respond to the feelings of sinful anger, the example demonstrates how total depravity affects the whole person, body and soul.

An understanding of the inherent sin nature of mankind is critical for counselors to understand in a time when many believe that human beings are essentially good. While mankind is not as evil as they can possibly be, every individual in human history except Jesus Christ was born with a sin nature and has sinned. Total depravity demonstrates that this sin which every person has does not come from outside of a person, but from within. Since the problem with sin is a spiritual issue, there are no physical solutions that can solve man's problem with sin. The Bible clearly teaches that this sin cannot be removed by human effort but requires God's gracious gift of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ to make those who were spiritually dead, spiritually alive in Christ (Eph 2:4–6). The good news for Christians is that God's grace to save does not stop with the mere fact of salvation but continues to help those who desire to live righteously to please God. As a result, any methodology which truly desires to help people with their problems must consider what the Bible teaches about man. Because God made mankind a physical and spiritual whole, the help offered to counselees should pay attention to the physical and spiritual factors that may be at work to properly care for individuals.

### **Biblical Anthropology and Biblical Counseling**

The Scripture's teaching on mankind has a profound impact on the methodology that should be used to minister to hurting people. In a science driven world, most people tend to look for a scientific explanation for what ails them. It would not be uncommon for biblical counselors to hear that their counselees researched their symptoms on a search engine to determine what they might have and what kind of treatments are available for their condition. However, such an approach focuses solely on the physical aspect of mankind. For some physical problems, this method of seeking care



may not be a bad idea for an individual, but when the problems are more complex or severe, when it involves the soul and the soul's response to physical problems, a counselee ought to consider seeking care for both the physiological and spiritual parts of their problem. This is not to say that every physical problem has a spiritual problem underneath, but that physical problems may lead to spiritual problems.

It must be noted that a biblical counseling methodology and a belief in the sufficiency of Scripture does not discount the importance of medical science. Biblical counselors are not medical professionals; they are practitioners of the Scriptures who study the Scriptures so that they may apply the truths and principles they study to their lives and to the lives of those whom they serve. Unless a biblical counselor is also a physician, most biblical counselors should not be giving medical advice to their counsees. Instead, biblical counselors ought to encourage comprehensive medical care from medical professionals especially when they are unsure if their counselee's issues may have a physiological source. Lambert testifies,

My personal creed in counseling is: 'When in doubt, check it out.' When I am counseling someone who is experiencing a problem that is extreme, new, bizarre, or out of the ordinary in any way, I encourage that person to see a physician for a full medical exam. The information produced by such an exam greatly benefits counseling. It helps me to see all the potential problems in the counselee, both in the body and soul.<sup>22</sup>

Lambert's example demonstrates the humility biblical counselors ought to have in ministering to their counsees. Biblical counselors may not always have all the right answers when it comes to determining the root causes of their counselee's issues. Even if biblical counselors feel like they understand the case that their counselee has brought up to them because they have seen similar cases throughout their years of counseling, they cannot take the role of medical doctor upon themselves. Instead, they ought to work in partnership with the counselee and the counselee's physician to make

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<sup>22</sup> Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 202.

sure that the physiological needs of the counselee are met while the biblical counselors tend to spiritual needs. Encouraging a counselee to seek a medical examination from a physician does not mean that a biblical counselor has forfeited their role to minister to their counselee since the counselor remains involved with the overall care of the counselee.

Because of their belief in the sufficiency of Scripture to counsel life's issues, biblical counselors have at times been unfairly characterized as completely anti-medication when their counsees have been prescribed with medication for clinician-diagnosed mental illnesses. While it is true that some biblical counselors may adopt an anti-medication view in certain situations, biblical counselors have to be wise and cautious in how they approach the topic of medication, since they are not medical professionals. There are times in which psychotropic medication is helpful in addressing physiological problems so that the counselor and counselee can work more effectively on the spiritual problems, but this is not a question that the biblical counselor answers for the counselee. This is an issue that the counselee and their physician must discuss thoroughly.

Sam Williams reminds biblical counselors, "Biblical counselors realize that their role is to seek wisdom and provide guidance, and to consult with competent and caring physicians. It is not to prescribe or discontinue medicine. There are many mysteries and variables that surround the medication question, so it is important to be careful with our personal opinions about psychotropic medication"<sup>23</sup> Ultimately, whether counsees choose to take medication or not, biblical counselors want to make sure that their counsees are trying to make the wisest decision as possible with the information they have been given. Biblical counselors must help counsees understand that

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<sup>23</sup> Sam Williams, "What About The Body?," in *Scripture and Counseling*, ed. Bob Kellemen and Jeff Forrey (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 157.

medication will not solve their problems because at best, it only deals with the physical component of their struggles. While medication can be helpful, the Scriptures alone can help counselees know how to honor God in their circumstances, even if they have their struggles.

Ministering the Scriptures to people in light of a biblical anthropology is important not only in the case of medication, but also in light of the description of addiction as a disease. The American Psychiatric Association (APA) defines addiction as “a complex condition, a brain disease that is manifested by compulsive substance use despite harmful consequence. People with addiction (severe substance use disorder) have an intense focus on using a certain substance(s), such as alcohol or drugs, to the point that it takes over their life.”<sup>24</sup> Such an explanation of addiction accounts for what may possibly occur physiologically in the brain in cases of addiction, but physiological explanations do not fully account for a biblical anthropology. As a result, the understanding of the problem and the solutions offered to address addiction will never reach the heart of the counselee. The thoughts and the behaviors may change, but the counselee is still lost in their sins.

Despite the APA’s definition of addiction as a disease, their description of addiction has its challenges. Using drunkenness as an example, Ed Welch explains the problem of likening addictions to a disease writing, “The cravings and desires at the core of the addictive experience are not quite the same as an invading virus. If you catch a virus, you have no choice. You don’t want it, and you would be glad to be rid of it. Heavy drinking, however, doesn’t just happen to us. Instead, the drinker feels there are payoffs—however temporary—to drunkenness.”<sup>25</sup> While the APA is determined to

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<sup>24</sup> “What Is Addiction?”, American Psychiatric Association, accessed September 30, 2020, <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/addiction/what-is-addiction>.

<sup>25</sup> Edward T. Welch, *Addictions* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2001), 26.

understand addiction from the standpoint of the physiological, Welch makes it clear that comparing addiction to disease is difficult even if there may be activity in the brain when people partake in addictive substances or activities since a cognitive choice is being made, no matter how unwilling it may seem. The underlying problem in addiction is not disease, but enslavement to sinful choices. Though some may feel despair hearing that addiction is fundamentally enslavement to sinful choices, the solution to this enslavement is found in the Gospel. In Romans 6:16–18, Paul reminds believers that a result of their faith in Jesus Christ is that they are no longer slaves to sin but have now been freed from their sins to be slaves of righteousness. Similarly, Paul reminds believers in 1 Corinthians 6:9–11 that though they were prohibited from inheriting the kingdom of God due to their sin, the forgiveness they received in Christ now grants them that inheritance. The battle against sin may be difficult, but enslavement to sin can be overcome through the life-changing power of the Gospel.

Some well-intentioned Christians have tried to understand addictions according to the Scriptures and have come to a hybrid explanation that addictions begin as sinful choices which then become a disease. Welch counters, “A more precise way to think about the progression of addiction is that it begins as the sin of the naïve and develops into the sin of one who is hardened and trapped. It starts was a sin with a few consequences and develops into a sin with painful consequences.”<sup>26</sup> Though there may be a physiological component to addiction, a biblical anthropology helps biblical counselors understand that any care they provide must also address the idolatrous lusts which reside in the heart of the one struggling with addiction.

While certain methodologies may appear effective in dealing with problem behavior, biblical counselors are not to pragmatically adopt these approaches to their ministries simply because it has proven to be effective elsewhere. A biblical

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<sup>26</sup> Welch, 38.

anthropology recognizes that man is a complex unity of body and soul and that both of those components must be addressed and cared for to address the sin nature which each person inherits from Adam. In light of what Scripture teaches about man, biblical counselors must employ a biblical methodology of care for their counselees if they are to provide help and hope that lasts.

### **The Necessity of Sanctification**

All forms of counseling are focused on helping people change even if the basis for helping people change may not be the same. Whether the issue is cognitive or behavioral, biblical counselors and those like them agree that something is broken and must be fixed. A change must occur. But what is the direction of this change? For many non-biblical counselors, the direction of change is towards what the scientific community deems to be healthy and normative behaviors. As a result, the methodologies to help people often changes as more information is revealed. Biblical counselors on the other hand desire to help their counselees change so that they can become more like Jesus Christ. But how does this change into Christlikeness happen? If biblical counselors are going to help their counselees become more like Christ, they must have a proper understanding of sanctification that will help their counselees implement Christ-honoring changes in their lives.

### **Defining Biblical Sanctification**

While sanctification can be succinctly described as becoming more like Christ, this simple definition has not exempted the doctrine of sanctification from controversy. At the core of this controversy is the question, “Does man bear any responsibility in the process of sanctification or is it wholly a work of God?” The answer to this question has particular significance for biblical counselors who are working with counselees who desperately desire to change but feel that they are helpless to change even though they have prayed to God for help many times.

The debate surrounding sanctification naturally begins with the doctrine of justification. Wayne Grudem describes justification as “the instantaneous legal act of God in which he (1) thinks of our sins as forgiven and Christ’s righteousness belongs to us, and (2) declares us to be righteous in his sight.”<sup>27</sup> People who come to faith in Jesus Christ are saved as God graciously grants faith to sinners and through that same grace counts that faith as righteousness to those who believe. Paul affirms this in Ephesians 2:8–9 as he reminds believers that even the act of faith is a product of God’s grace so that no one may boast that they saved themselves in their ability to believe in God. God does all the work to justify sinners, but the work does not stop there. God continues to work in the life of believers as he works to sanctify them. John Frame remarks, “Everyone united to Christ by faith is justified, adopted, and sanctified. So there is nobody who is justified but not adopted, or adopted but not sanctified. Justification is not the same thing as sanctification. But justification without sanctification is unthinkable.”<sup>28</sup> Every believer God justified will also be sanctified. As a result, sanctification is expected for all who believe, not for a select few. But is sanctification like justification in that God does all the work to sanctify believers or do believers have some part in sanctification?

Countering the teaching that believers play a part in their own sanctification, James Cumming comments, “A third misapprehension about sanctification is that it is to be gained by our personal efforts—by *working for it*. . . . Growth is not the product of effort, but of life. Neither a tree nor a man grows by effort. ‘Taking thought’ and spending anxiety about it is not the way to grow.”<sup>29</sup> Andrew Naselli summarizes Cumming’s view writing, “The believer’s own strength is not only insufficient for

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<sup>27</sup> Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 722.

<sup>28</sup> John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013), 971.

<sup>29</sup> James Elder Cumming, *Through the Eternal Spirit* (Chicago: Revell, 1896), 157, Internet Archive.

sanctification; depending on that strength offends God.”<sup>30</sup> Those who contend against the view that believers have any part in their own sanctification view sanctification wholly as the work of God and that man has no part in it except to pray to God for help and wait for God to do the work of sanctification. Any call for participation in sanctification would be therefore understood as a call to rely upon one’s own ability to maintain righteousness.

While God certainly has a part in the sanctification of believers, there is an aspect of sanctification that God enables mankind to engage in. John Frame helpfully distinguishes between these two aspects of sanctification writing, “The instantaneous beginning of sanctification is called *definitive sanctification*, contrasted with the ongoing process of *progressive sanctification*. The first is a single act of God that happens at a single point in time. The second is a continuing work of God which he calls us to cooperate.”<sup>31</sup> Frame helps Christians see that the question regarding who bears responsibility in sanctification is not an issue of mutual exclusivity, but mutual inclusivity. The believer’s participation in sanctification does not nullify God’s gracious action since the believer’s participation is enabled by the Holy Spirit. Naselli confirms, “God’s grace through the power of his Spirit ensures that the same faith that justifies a Christian also sanctifies a Christian.”<sup>32</sup> Encouraging believers to be sanctified is not a call for believers to forget the grace that saved them and embrace a form of works-based righteousness. It is a call for believers to God’s call to be like Christ through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit whom he grants to all who have been justified.

While Cumming’s view seeks to honor God by recognizing God’s great power to change lives, his view that believers simply grow over time with no effort on their own is incorrect. In Philippians 2:12–13, Paul commands believers to work out their salvation

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<sup>30</sup> Andrew David Naselli, *No Quick Fix* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017), 34.

<sup>31</sup> Frame, *Systematic Theology*, 986.

<sup>32</sup> Naselli, *No Quick Fix*, 51.

in fear and trembling for God is at work in them. In this command, Paul emphasizes both the believer's responsibility to grow while at the same time teaching that God is the one who is at work in their lives enabling growth. Taking up a similar example to Cummings, Riccardi concedes that farmers cannot make the land produce fruit and vegetables simply by waving their hands over the land, but this does not remove their responsibility to care for the plants and provide an environment suitable for the plants to grow. Riccardi proceeds to write, "In the same way, we cannot change our own hearts to make ourselves more holy; sanctification is a supernatural, sovereign work of the Spirit of God. But God has ordained that the Spirit accomplish this glorious work through means."<sup>33</sup>

A few of the means by which the Spirit accomplishes the work of sanctification in believers' lives are preaching, Bible reading, meditation on Scripture, prayer, and fellowship with fellow believers. While there are certainly other means by which the Spirit grows believers, these primary means of growth highlight human responsibility for growth. Christians cannot expect to just sit back and suddenly become like Christ. They have a part to play as well. Simply praying that God will produce change or will remove sinful desires without also partaking in the means by which God conforms people to the image of his son will not cause people to grow in godliness.

### **Helping Others in Sanctification**

Biblical counselors are tasked with the ministry of helping people understand what God has to say about their problems in the Bible. This understanding does not remain in the intellectual realm but is an understanding that also produces real life change as those who learn the Scriptures apply the Scriptures to their lives. In order to engage in this life changing work, biblical counselors must help their counselees understand biblical sanctification. Many Christians who are stuck in their sins want to change and grow in

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<sup>33</sup> Michael Riccardi, *Sanctification* (n.p.: Grace Books, 2015), 17–18.



holiness, but do not know how to grow and change. This section will generally discuss the growth and change process that biblical counselors must help their counselees understand in biblical counseling.

Biblical counselors will initially have to help counselees understand that their sanctification is a process predicated upon their justification and initial sanctification. Since God declares believers righteous and provides his Holy Spirit to grow them into Christlikeness, Christians can have hope that change is possible. Unlike the instantaneous results of salvation when a believer repents of their sins and places their faith in Jesus Christ, sanctification is a process that will take place over time. Timothy Lane and Paul Tripp state, “Life is seldom simple. Growth in God’s grace is a process and not an event. Tough things are not going to turn around overnight because you have entrusted them to the Lord. . . . The Bible describes the Christian life as a journey that often takes us through the wilderness.”<sup>34</sup> Even though life will have its trials and its unknowns, Christians can find encouragement in Paul’s confidence that God is presently working in the lives of believers and will continue to perfect them until Christ returns or believers go to heaven (Phil 1:6).

The idea of Christlikeness may seem daunting to counselees since the standard is exceedingly higher compared to how they currently live. As a result, counselees may feel resigned to continue living in their current state, resorting to temporary solutions to their problems as they wait for Christ to return and transform them into his likeness in an instant. However, God’s desire for every believer to be like Christ is not something that believers passively obtain. Donald Whitney explains, “Although God will grant Christlikeness to us when Jesus returns, until then He intends for us to grow toward it. We aren’t merely to wait for holiness; we’re to pursue it. ‘Strive for peace with

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<sup>34</sup> Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp, *How People Change*, 2nd ed. (Greensboro, N.C.: New Growth Press, 2008), 36.

everyone,’ we’re commanded in Hebrews 12:14, ‘and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.’”<sup>35</sup> If God has commanded that Christians ought to grow, he will certainly provide the means necessary for Christians to obey his command. He does not command believers to do something that he himself will not help them to do.

While sanctification is at times difficult and challenging, the reality that God provides Christians with everything they need to be like Christ is a source of hope to believers who may feel like they are lagging. Hope springs not only from God’s empowerment to be like Christ, but also from God’s work in salvation. Since God grants believers with the righteousness of Christ, they can be assured that they will be like him despite the difficulty. Whitney confirms, “In much the same way, Christians are called to make themselves, by the Spirit’s power, do what they would not naturally do—practice the Spiritual Disciplines—in order to experience what the Spirit gives them a desire to be, that is to be with Christ and like Christ.”<sup>36</sup> As Christians gain more understanding regarding God’s intention for them in sanctification, the tangible hope they have that they can and will grow through God’s empowerment encourages them to press on towards Christlikeness in all circumstances.

As Christians understand that sanctification is a process of change and may not always be easy, Christians must also see how and where that change must take place. Sin is a spiritual problem that stems from the heart. Believers who are dedicated to grow in godliness must begin with understanding the thoughts and desires of their hearts. Jeremy Pierre helpfully explains, “God designed the heart’s function for worship: he wants people to respond to him with the complex beauty that reflects his own. Dynamic hearts worship God in daily life—in the way they think, the things they want, the choices they

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<sup>35</sup> Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, Revised ed. (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2014), 2.

<sup>36</sup> Whitney, 13.

make. When people use those aspects of their heart in a way that reflects God’s character, they are worshipping.”<sup>37</sup> As Pierre notes, people whose hearts that are thinking, feeling, and choosing what God desires them to pursue engage in the act of worship of God. However, when people are thinking, feeling, and choosing things contrary to what God desires people to pursue, it follows that people are still in the act of worship, they are just not worshipping what God desires them to worship. This is what Christians understand as idolatry.

Paul Tripp reminds Christians, “The objects of most of our desires are not evil. The problem is the way they tend to *grow*, and the control they come to exercise over our hearts. Desires are a part of human existence, but they must be held with an open hand. All human desire must be held in submission to a greater purpose, the desires of God for his kingdom.”<sup>38</sup> Tripp’s insight helps believers understand that there are some things that they may want which may not be bad in and of themselves. However, when people’s desires morph from good desires to ruling desires, they are no longer good, but idolatrous.

In the process of growth and change, it is the biblical counselor’s job to help uncover and expose these sinful beliefs, thoughts, and desires to the counselee. Once a counselee understands the sins that are ruling their hearts, then they will be able to compare the way that they are living their lives with what the Bible has to say about what they are going through. The biblical counselor can help the counselee study the Scriptures to help them turn away from sin and put on the appropriate, responses God wants his people to have the circumstances of their lives (Eph 4:22–24; Col 3:9–10). Throughout this whole process, the biblical counselor holds out the hope of the Gospel to their

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<sup>37</sup> Jeremy Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2016), 22.

<sup>38</sup> Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2002), 85.

counselee. Because Christ died so that those who believe in him may be freed from sin and the curse of sin, there is no sin that is too large for God to forgive. Though believers may have their moments of struggles with sins at times, the God who saves believers is the same God who is at work in them to make them like Jesus Christ.

### **The Necessity of Biblical Counseling Training**

In one sense, the ministry of biblical counseling is straightforward. Biblical counselors study the Scriptures and apply them to their own lives. When people seek biblical counseling, biblical counselors seek to help counselees understand their problems in light of what the Bible says, hold out the hope of the Gospel, and encourage them to apply the biblical principles they learn to their lives so that they might honor God. In another sense, biblical counseling ministry is difficult to navigate. Sin complicates biblical counseling to individuals because of the complexity of the human heart. As a result, biblical counselors may find themselves tasked with the job to help a counselee think deeply about their sin in a way that they have never done previously. Factor in the medical issues and those who may have initially interested in learning more about biblical counseling might be intimidated by the enormity of what stands before them. Since biblical counseling is indeed simple, yet complex, those who wish to be faithful and effective stewards of the biblical counseling ministry ought to be trained to counsel others biblically.

### **Equipping Biblical Counselors in the Scriptures**

Biblical counselors are identified as such because of their commitment to using the Scriptures in their counseling. As a result, any person desiring to be active in this type of ministry must know their Bibles well. They must be committed to learn how to study the Scriptures correctly and to study the Scriptures themselves. If biblical counselors are going to minister the Scriptures to others, a matter of foundational importance is the use

of a good Bible translation. John Street writes, “If you desire to be true to the original meaning of Scripture, then it is vital that you choose a translation that most closely communicates the original meaning intended by the biblical author.”<sup>39</sup> Since the words of the Scriptures matter greatly, the translation philosophy of a translation matters. Is the grammar faithfully preserved? Are words thoughtfully translated to preserve the meaning and theology of the text as intended by God and the human author? Since grammatical structure and particular words can have an effect on counseling, biblical counselors should make sure that they possess a faithfully translated copy of the Bible and that they encourage any counselee they minister to in the future to do the same.

While it may seem unnecessary to insist that both counselor and counselee use a good translation of the Scriptures in their personal study, the importance of authorial intent resurfaces. If the human biblical author who was inspired by the Holy Spirit in his writings phrased something in a particular way using particular words, there is meaning and significance in his choices. If Christians are to be faithful students of the Scripture, they want to make sure that their translations do not engage in the act of interpretation in the process of translation. This is often what happens in translations which essentially paraphrase another translation. Street again provides insight explaining, “In a paraphrase, the effect of adding man’s ideas and words to the original text significantly alters the original thought or intent of the text. . . . The biblical counselor who desires to communicate God’s actual thoughts to a counselee must use a faithful translation of the Bible that is true to the original words of God.”<sup>40</sup> By staying as close to original words of God as they possibly can, biblical counselors ensure that the study that they do with their counsees will faithfully preserve what God intended them to learn.

In addition to faithful study of Scripture, biblical counselors who will be

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<sup>39</sup> John D. Street, *Men Counseling Men* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2013), 44.

<sup>40</sup> Street, 47.

trained to use the Scriptures must also strive to understand theology. When studying the Bible, all Christians are engaging in a form of theology. The texts that Christians study inform their understanding about God, the world he created, the nature of mankind, God's salvation plan, and God's future plans. As a result, biblical counselors should strive to read and study theology to inform them on how to minister to people in this life. In an examination of Paul's prayers for the Colossians in Colossians 1, Bob Kellemen identifies three areas of theology that allows Christians to translate God's truth into wisdom for relation living: (1) academic theology, (2) spiritual theology, and (3) practical/pastoral theology. Academic theology helps believers understand who and what has the answers to life's questions. Spiritual theology helps believers understand how the truths found in impact life. Practical/pastoral theology relates those life impacting truths to the everyday moments of a person's life.<sup>41</sup> These three broad categories of theology are all inherently practical for a biblical counselor to be versed in for it provides the grid for a how a biblical counselor will interpret the information given them when they meet with their counselees and hear about the problems that their counselees face. Those who wish to serve others through biblical counseling must know their Bibles well if they are truly going to provide helpful counsel to others using appropriate texts.

### **Equipping Biblical Counselors in Ministry**

Biblical counselors not only need to know how to study the Bible and apply it to their lives, but also need to know how to minister to other people. When the core goal of biblical counseling is examined, biblical counseling can essentially be understood as a specific form of discipleship. It is the interpersonal ministry of the Scriptures between the biblical counselor and the counselee to address the issues a counselee presents to their

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<sup>41</sup> Bob Kellemen, "The Rich Relevance of God's Word," in *Scripture and Counseling*, ed. Bob Kellemen and Jeff Forrey (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 203–4.

counselor. David Powlison notes that the ministry of the Scriptures described in the Bible is not always one-way communication (for example, preaching and teaching). There are other instances in which the ministry of the Scriptures is portrayed in two-way conversations. This is ultimately seen in the example of Jesus who, though he certainly spoke to large crowds, also took the time to minister privately to individuals.<sup>42</sup> Since the Bible clearly has a place for both the public and private ministry of the Scriptures to others, both ministries are essential forms of ministry in the church.

Private ministry of the Word of God to other people is not a skill that comes naturally to most believers. As a result, Christians who wish to minister to others in biblical counseling ministry need training. Addressing the topic of biblical counseling training, William Goode compares the need for biblical counseling training in the church to the need for evangelism training in the church. The local church is ultimately responsible to train biblical counselors in its doors. Goode goes on to say that though the pastor's training of individuals in biblical counseling skill could occur in counseling classes, the emphasis on ministering the Scriptures to one another suggests that counselor training takes place more in the context of church life and focuses more on the biblical responsibilities of pastoring and less on the specific skill of counseling.<sup>43</sup> Though Goode mentions an emphasis on the biblical responsibilities of pastoring, he is not advocating that those who can be involved with counseling are only those who have gone to seminary. Rather, the point is that biblical counseling training is not primarily about the creation of a new ministry position in the church, but about learning how to lovingly minister the Scriptures to people where they are at in life. The emphasis on learning to have a pastoral care for others helps biblical counselors understand that they are engaging

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<sup>42</sup> David Powlison, *Speaking Truth in Love* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2005), 103–5.

<sup>43</sup> William W. Goode, “Biblical Counseling and the Local Church,” in *Counseling*, ed. John MacArthur (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 229.

in a sacred work as they love one another. They are engaging in soul care and should therefore make sure that they qualify for this work according to God's standards.

Though formal training in biblical counseling is necessary for those who desire to be more equipped in the ministry, training for biblical counseling begins informally in the life of the church through the teaching and ministry life of the church. Garrett Higbee recognizes that there is a place for formal biblical counseling training in the church, but formal training should not be done at the expense of informal training for the whole church. Since there are often more people who need to be ministered to in the church than there are trained biblical counselors, a church committed to biblical counseling must recognize the need for both highly trained formal counselors and individuals who are practicing informal biblical counseling when they are living out the Christian life in community.<sup>44</sup> Though biblical counseling can at times act as if it is another specialized ministry within the church, it is by no means a ministry that is restricted to a certain population of gifted individuals. Biblical counseling is part of the one another life of the church that every believer is responsible to practice in the church. In other words, caring for one another is what God expects people to do in his church. As a result, every member of the church should strive to learn how to effectively minister the Bible to others since this is part of God's desire for his people to be disciple makers.

### **Conclusion**

A belief in the sufficiency of the Scriptures to minister to the needs of people requires a faithful commitment to the teachings of Scriptures by biblical counselors. In order to ensure that biblical counselors are truly faithful to the Bible, biblical counselors must have a proper understanding of hermeneutics. If biblical counselors understand the guidelines for proper study, interpretation, and application of the text, they will ensure

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<sup>44</sup> Garrett Higbee, "Biblical Counseling and Soul Care in the Church," in *Biblical Counseling and the Church*, ed. Bob Kelleman and Kevin Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 70.



that any instruction they give is indeed faithful to God's intended purpose for the Scriptures. Faithfulness to the study of the Scriptures in turn leads to a faithfulness of biblical counseling ministry methodology. If there is no faithfulness to the Scriptures, other accepted forms of truth may influence the way that biblical counselors minister to counselees.

However, an understanding of the inerrancy of Scripture helps biblical counselors determine both the methodology of care they will use to minister to counselees and what they are calling their counselees to respond to in the Word of God. The complexity and the sacredness of the task of teaching one another what the Bible says necessitates training Christians to do the work of biblical counseling in both the formal and informal sense. When churches teach their people the importance of the private ministry of the Word of God and encourage its practice, they help their people fulfill their role as disciple makers.

CHAPTER 4  
DETAILS AND DESCRIPTION OF THE MINISTRY  
PROJECT

**Introduction**

Following an examination of the biblical and theoretical basis for biblical counseling, the aim of this project was to create a curriculum to introduce members of San Francisco Bible Church to biblical counseling principles. The purpose of this chapter is to summarize how the introduction to biblical counseling curriculum was implemented in the church. This chapter will describe the preparation of the class, the implementation of the curriculum, and the post-class follow-up for this project.

**The Preparation of the Class**

**Pre-Class Surveys**

Before curriculum preparation began, I sent a few surveys out to the congregation. The first survey that I sent out was in an email that contained a sign-up survey to the members of SFBC to determine which members would be interested in taking an introductory course in biblical counseling and what days and times would generally be acceptable for class. Included in the email was a brief explanation of the class along with the expectations that would accompany the class. Only the members who were interested in learning more about biblical counseling were encouraged to fill out the initial sign-up survey. The email made clear that those who signed up to take the class agreed to committing themselves to attend the class live or watch a recording of the class at a later time on the same week.

As a result of the sign-up survey email, it was determined that classes would

take place on Monday evenings. The class was told that classes would begin on February 1, 2021. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions in California, the only permissible format of the class was through an online video conferencing platform. I decided to use the conferencing platform's native recording features to record the classes that I would distribute to the class for people to either rewatch sessions or to catch up with sessions they were unable to attend live.

After I received the results of the first survey and communicated when the class would take place, I sent out a second survey to those who committed to attending the class. This survey was the Biblical Counseling Knowledge Assessment (BCKA) survey which provided the pre-class assessment data for this project.<sup>1</sup> The number of members who signed up to take the class was thirty-three. Of those 33 members who signed up to take the class, 27 of them filled out the BCKA. I encouraged those who had not taken the survey to complete the BCKA survey when I noticed that there were still some people who were attending class that did not yet complete the survey after we began classes through a general announcement at the beginning of multiple classes, but ultimately the surveys were not completed. Some of the people who filled out the BCKA told me at a later date that they were watching the recordings with their spouses, but since their spouses did not fill out the BCKA, I do not know how many other people were also attending the class when it was offered. Despite the uncertainty of how many people actually took the class, the only data that I included to evaluate the significance of my project were the results from those who successfully completed the pre-class and post-class survey.

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix 1.

## Curriculum Preparation

The preparation process of the curriculum was not difficult for me, but the timeframe for the curriculum process which I had outlined in my project proposal was overly optimistic. Elements of the material that I had written in chapters 2 and 3 were incorporated into the curriculum to help establish the foundation for why biblical counseling ministry and training are vital for the future ministry of SFBC. The broad outline of what would be covered in the twelve-week course and the titles for each session was finalized in December 2020. The title of the curriculum, “Introduction to Biblical Counseling,” was also finalized in December.<sup>2</sup> After consulting with my adviser, I decided that the best course of action in creating and compiling the curriculum manuscript would be to prepare on a week-to-week basis since project implementation was projected to begin in January 2021. I eventually decided to begin classes in February since I had not finalized what I wanted to cover in the class until January 15, 2021.

Session 1, “The Definition and Biblical Foundation of Biblical Counseling,” clarified what the pastors and elders of SFBC mean when we say that we believe in the importance of biblical counseling. This session also demonstrated from proof texts found in the Old and New Testaments that the type of instruction that is provided in biblical counseling is biblically warranted.

Session 2, “The Theological Foundation of Biblical Counseling,” explored the key doctrines that support biblical counseling as an extension of discipleship. Since biblical counseling is the specific application of the Scriptures in the lives of God’s people who are struggling with issues in life, an exploration of the doctrinal foundation of counseling further demonstrated that biblical counseling is a valid form of ministry.

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<sup>2</sup> Appendix 3 contains a sample of the curriculum. The title of the curriculum was meant to emphasize to those taking this class that the completion of this class does not mean that more training in biblical counseling is unnecessary. While many topics were covered in the introductory materials, more in-depth study and training would be required if one were interested in serving in the church’s biblical counseling ministry.

Session 3, “The Differences Between Biblical Counseling and Other Counseling Models,” examined the two additional types of counseling methodology that exist aside from biblical counseling, noted their strengths, and spoke about their comparative weaknesses to biblical counseling. The session then demonstrated how biblical counseling and the sufficiency of Scripture is applicable to all of life.

Session 4, “Biblical Counseling and the Counselor,” helped students understand who ought to counsel, the qualifications of counselors and how those involved in counseling ministry may continue to grow in both their faith and their abilities as counselors.

Session 5, “The Process of Biblical Change, Part 1,” outlined the process of biblical change and how counselors can help counselees grow through God’s means of change. As Christians repent of their sins, put off the old self, put on the new self, and renew their minds, Christians can be conformed to the image of Christ.

Session 6, “The Process of Biblical Change, Part 2,” built upon the process of biblical change outlined in session 5 and emphasized understanding the heart in a person’s circumstances. This was done through the introduction of David Powlison’s six-box model as a tool for understanding. Following the introduction of the six-box model, the class ran through a simulated case with a made-up case study.

Sessions 7 through 10 began a four-week exploration of the eight I’s of biblical counseling, which were influenced by Stuart Scott’s modified explanation of Wayne Mack’s “Eight I’s of Discipleship/Counseling.”<sup>3</sup> Session 7, “Biblical Counseling Applied: Involvement and Inspiration,” the class focused on the importance in being involved with the counselee’s life and to provide hope for them in their circumstances.

In session 8, “Biblical Counseling Applied: Inventory and Interpretation,” the

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<sup>3</sup> Stuart Scott, “The Eight I’s of Discipleship/Counseling,” 80552 Methodology of Biblical Counseling (class lecture, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, January 16, 2020).

curriculum explored the importance of data gathering. In addition to demonstrating the importance of data gathering and how to gather data, this session taught prospective counselees how they might begin to interpret the data that they have received.

Session 9, “Biblical Counseling Applied: Instruction and Inducement,” focused on the main task of the counselor in counseling which is the instruction of the heart with biblical truths. After the counselee has been instructed through the Scriptures, it is the job of the counselor to then encourage the counselee to resolve to commit their lives to glorifying God, even if the desire to pursue Christlikeness is difficult.

In session 10, “Biblical Counseling Applied: Implementation and Integration,” the final session covering the eight I’s of biblical counseling, the class learned about the importance of homework in biblical counseling. Additionally, the curriculum helped prospective counselors understand that biblical counseling is not just about helping a counselee deal with their own problems, but also about having love and concern for the rest of the church body. Finally, the curriculum reviewed how a counselor might know when a counselee is ready to graduate from biblical counseling.

Session 11, “Biblical Counseling Applied: Overview of Common Issues, Part 1,” aimed to help prospective counselors understand how the principles and general methods of biblical counseling that they have learned can apply to selected common issues that the staff at San Francisco Bible Church has historically provided counsel on. In particular, the common topics that counselors from our church have provided counsel on are worry, anxiety, and fear and depression. This session was not a comprehensive examination of these topics, but provided definitions, the general biblical teaching on the subject, and the ministry agenda counselors ought to have when ministering to people who are presenting with these issues.

Similarly in session 12, “Biblical Counseling Applied: Overview of Common Issues, Part 2,” the focus of the week was to help prospective counselors understand how to minister to counseling issues that may be common life issues they may personally face

or someone they know may face. These issues were anger, grief, and loss. Just like in session 11, the topics were defined, the general biblical teaching was brought out, and the general ministry agenda to minister to those struggling in these areas of life was presented.

Since I prepared my class materials for each session on the week leading up to the class, I was unable to receive feedback on my curriculum prior to teaching my class. However, I was able to procure feedback from a panel of experts after the class concluded. Obtaining feedback from an expert panel prior to implementing the curriculum was this project's third goal, so the goal was only partially met as the feedback came at a different stage of the project. The expert panel's feedback will be discussed in the section of this chapter addressing the follow up to the project.

### **The Implementation of the Curriculum**

The twelve-week class began on February 1 and ended on April 19. As stated earlier, the class began on February 1 since the outline for the class was not finalized until January 15. The initial sign-up survey indicated that weeknights would work best for most people and that Monday nights would work best. I chose to begin class at 8:00pm since the majority of SFBC's weeknight ministries meet at the time. In order to provide myself with ample time to teach the class, allow for discussion and interaction, and respect the commitment that my church members gave me to attend a class on a work night, I aimed to finish the class at 9:30pm every week.

In preparation for the class, I created a cloud-based file sharing folder through SFBC's Google Drive so that those who took the class could have access to handouts, PowerPoint slides, video recordings, and audio recordings. The folder was subdivided into twelve subfolders, one subfolder for each week of instruction. Prior to each week of class, I uploaded my handouts and PowerPoint presentation slides to the corresponding subfolder so that the class would have them available to use during class.

In response to California's COVID-19 restrictions, SFBC paid for a subscription for an online video conferencing program, Zoom, which I used to not only schedule the class, but also record the class. Zoom made it easy for me to schedule a recurring meeting with my members so that they could join the class every evening at 8:00pm. A particularly beneficial feature of Zoom for my class was their quick processing time of class recordings. Once I ended my class for the evening, I was able to upload both the video and audio recordings of the class for those who missed class to download and use at their convenience.

Live weekly attendance averaged anywhere from 16 to 18. The rest of the class had made prior arrangements with me to watch the classes at their earliest convenience. Those who had to unexpectedly miss class on Mondays emailed me to let me know that they would not be in attendance. While I did not request that people inform me of when they may need to miss class, their emails were an appreciated gesture. I did not implement a system in which I tracked who watched the recordings consistently but based on the numbers of complete surveys I received at the end of the class, 5 out of the 19 completed surveys were from people who attended class exclusively through the recordings.

The online classroom through Zoom was an unexpected benefit for many in the church who wished to learn more about biblical counseling since many of the people who were able to attend the class live would likely not have been able to come to the class if the class was meeting under normal circumstances, due to family obligations or ability to get to the church building in a timely manner due to traffic. Some of the attendees of the class kept their cameras on so I could see their faces while I taught, but there were no requests that attendees should have their cameras on. The majority of the class chose to leave their cameras off during instruction.

When it came to microphone use, I requested that attendees mute their microphones unless they were participating or asking questions. Attendees were



encouraged to participate, ask questions, and engage with the material at any point during the class. Discussion and interaction in the class was rare, but the discussion and interaction that did occur was helpful and allowed for me to provide further points of clarification or to discuss aspects of biblical counseling that I had not included in the curriculum.

A particularly helpful discussion was a planned exercise in session six. After teaching on the foundations of biblical counseling, the distinctives of biblical counseling, demonstrating how biblical counseling ought to affect counselors themselves, and going through the process of biblical change, I presented my class with a fictitious case study to analyze using the six-box model. The interaction was lively and encouraging as the class came up with other possible bad roots and fruits that contributed to the presenting issue than I had intended when I wrote the case study. Outside of this particularly helpful conversation, there was not much interaction in the sessions.

## **The Post-Class Follow Up**

### **Expert Panel Feedback**

Because I decided to write my curriculum on a weekly basis, I was unable to have my expert panel review my curriculum before I taught my class. Though this was a missed opportunity to glean from the wisdom of my expert panel and refine my curriculum before I taught my class, I was grateful for the feedback that I received from my panel. My expert panel consisted of two pastors from my church, an elder from my church, an ACBC certified biblical counselor from my church, and an ACBC certified counselor who was responsible for launching his church's biblical counseling ministry.

The first person on my expert was my senior pastor who has been my pastor at SFBC since I was in middle school. It has been a privilege to sit under his ministry for all of these years and to now serve alongside him as a peer. His approval of the curriculum and support throughout the project was encouraging because of his continual pastoral

influence in my life.

The second person on my expert panel was my co-pastor. He and I journeyed through seminary together and have been co-pastoring the college and young career fellowship group for almost the entirety of our ministry together at SFBC. I was glad to have his input and feedback on this project since we have already been collaborating and sharpening one another's ministry to our sheep.

The third person on my expert panel was an elder from SFBC. He has been a mentor to me since I was a part of the career fellowship group. In addition to continuing to serve as a mentor to career-aged adults, this elder also oversees our children's ministry which allows him to have a larger perspective on how biblical counseling can have an impact on the entire church.

The fourth person on my expert panel was one of my church's certified ACBC counselors. She and her family were vital in bringing biblical counseling to SFBC's attention after they discovered it. In addition to serving SFBC as a biblical counselor, she also serves as an advisor to the young family fellowship group.

The fifth person on my expert panel was a certified ACBC counselor who had been responsible for establishing his church's biblical counseling ministry in Walnut Creek, California. His church's local training conferences have brought attention to biblical counseling at SFBC and were a significant factor in my elders' decision to pursue building a biblical counseling ministry at SFBC. His experience, questions, and encouragement were

The members of the expert panel rated the curriculum highly and provided valuable insight that I will use to further build the biblical counseling ministry at SFBC.<sup>4</sup> Their input reminded me that certain areas of the curriculum needed to have more

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<sup>4</sup> See appendix 2. Each member of the panel evaluated the curriculum at least as sufficient when reviewing the material.

Scripture and made me aware of sections that needed editing. A particularly helpful comment from an evaluator reminded me that the sessions which covered the eight I's of biblical counseling can also be covered in a course for people who are committed to learning biblical counseling.

While I was told that having a section on methodology in an introductory course on biblical counseling was good, it might be more appropriate in a future class that focuses on biblical counseling methodology. Instead of discussing methodology at length in my introductory material, the reviewer suggested that I include more material that covers common issues in biblical counseling so that those in the introductory course can see the practicality and applicability of biblical counseling in life. This was valuable feedback that will certainly reshape how people are introduced to biblical counseling and how they are then trained to do biblical counseling.

### **Post-Class Surveys**

On the ninth session of the class, March 29, 2021, I reminded the class that I would be conducting a post-class survey following the conclusion of our classes. I reminded them that the survey was the same survey that they took before the class and that the completion of their surveys would allow for me to compare the results of the survey and evaluate whether my project was significant in growing their knowledge of biblical counseling. Prior to the conclusion of the final class on April 19, 2021, I emailed the class the survey and instructed them to fill the survey out by the end of the week.

There were a few people who failed to complete one or both of the surveys. In some of these cases I was notified by individuals that they had to drop out of the class even though they committed to attend due to life circumstances which were outside of their control. For those whom I had not heard back from for a while, I emailed them final reminders to complete the survey on June 11, 2021 and June 26, 2021. When I closed the window for accepting survey responses on July 3, 2021, I only received 19 out of 27

surveys that I could use for data analysis.

Following the collection of the data, I assigned each person who successfully took both surveys a random number. I then compared the numbers from the pre-class and post-class surveys and entered both sets of data corresponding to each respondent into a table so I could run a t-test for dependent samples which allowed me to compare the two different samples and determine whether my training was significant in growing counseling competency among the members of SFBC. The results of the t-test, which will be discussed in the following chapter, demonstrated that biblical counseling knowledge increased following the completion of the class and that my training had significance in the increased knowledge.<sup>5</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Biblical counseling ministry is an extension of the discipleship ministry of the church which helps believers see how the Scriptures can have an impact on our lives. Therefore, it is vital that the church know and understand the distinctives of biblical counseling so that they too may see that biblical counseling is not simply a ministry of the church but is in fact a part of their own personal life and ministry. This project aimed to teach members of SFBC the basics of biblical counseling so that SFBC will be able to establish a biblical counseling ministry in the future.

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<sup>5</sup> See chapter 5 for the results and analysis of the t-test for dependent samples.

## CHAPTER 5

### EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

#### **Introduction**

The final chapter of this work features my evaluation of this ministry project. This chapter will evaluate the project's purpose, goals, strengths, and weaknesses. It will also discuss what I would do differently and my theological and personal reflections on the project.

#### **Evaluation of the Project Purpose**

In the first chapter of this work, I stated that the purpose of this project was to train members in biblical counseling principles at San Francisco Bible Church in San Francisco, California. This project's purpose finds its rationale in the doctrine of the authority and sufficiency of the Scriptures. Since the Bible contains God's very words for believers to live by, Christians must strive to not merely hear the Bible, but also to live by the teaching found in the Bible (2 Tim 3:16–17; 2 Pet 1:3). A biblical counseling ministry at SFBC will help the church understand that the authority and sufficiency of Scripture is not relegated to the preaching of the Bible, but also extends individually and personally to the lives of those who profess faith in Christ.

In addition to emphasizing the authority and sufficiency of the Scriptures, the establishment of a biblical counseling ministry will help SFBC partially fulfill its goal of making disciples to the glory of Jesus Christ. Since biblical counseling can be thought of as intensive discipleship that teaches believers what God says about their sin or their circumstances and how to live in light of what God says, biblical counseling can be thought of as a different form of discipleship.

Since the establishment of a biblical counseling ministry reinforces a commitment to the sufficiency and authority of the Scriptures in the lives of Christians, the purpose of this project is valid. Additionally, the emphasis that biblical counseling has on growing disciples of Jesus Christ through intensive discipleship further demonstrates the validity and practicality of establishing a biblical counseling ministry.

### **Evaluation of the Project Goals**

The goals of the project were chosen specifically to take meaningful steps towards accomplishing the overall purpose of the project. In order to accomplish the stated purpose to establish a biblical counseling ministry at SFBC, the project focused on accomplishing the following four goals: (1) recruit a group of participants to be trained in the principles of biblical counseling, (2) assess the counseling competency among select members of SFBC, (3) develop a twelve-session introduction to biblical counseling course, and (4) increase counseling competency among participants by teaching the biblical counseling course.

#### **Goal 1**

The first goal was to recruit a group of participants to be trained in the principles of biblical counseling. The people who were eligible for recruitment for the course were all members of SFBC who filled out a preliminary interest Google Form that determined who might be interested in biblical counseling training and what day and time would be most ideal for a class to take place. After determining that the most people would be available on Monday evenings, I sent a follow up email to those who had expressed interest in taking the course to inform them of when the class would occur, the planned duration of each session, and when the twelve weeks would begin and end. I then invited those who were willing to agree to commit to the class, either live or by watching the class recordings weekly with the live class, to take the BCKA. This goal was met when more than 15 people committed to attending the class. Though the goal was met, it

is worth noting that there were some participants who had to drop out of the class due to extenuating circumstances. Though a number of people were unable to keep their commitment to the class, the number of people who completed the class was still over the stated goal of 15 people.

## **Goal 2**

The second goal of the project focused on assessing the competency of the class in their understanding of biblical counseling. The assessment of biblical counseling competency at SFBC occurred through a pre-class assessment which I called, the Biblical Counseling Knowledge Assessment.<sup>1</sup> This assessment was sent electronically through a Google Forms email link to 33 members of SFBC who indicated that they were committed to taking an introduction to biblical counseling course offered through the church. Due to the pandemic lockdown, no paper forms were available for the congregation to fill out since California had ordered that everyone shelter-in-place in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Though I made it clear numerous times through email and announcements that I needed those who were taking the class to complete the BCKA for the sake of evaluating the project following the completion of the class, only 27 people completed the BCKA.

Those who completed the BCKA provided a baseline understanding of what the members of the class already knew about biblical counseling prior to taking the course. As I reviewed the results of the BCKA, I was pleased to note that many of the responses indicated that the participants understood biblical teaching and how that teaching ought to affect the lives of those who profess to be Christians. As I examined the responses, I noticed that the questions which dealt more generally with theological issues were answered well, but those questions which dealt specifically with biblical counseling

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix 1.

issues had a wider range of understanding. Though the class did not reach full participation in the BCKA at any point during the course, this goal was successful since I was able to assess the biblical counseling competency of more than 15 members of SFBC.

### **Goal 3**

The third project goal concerned the development of a twelve-week introduction to biblical counseling course to increase the competency of members of SFBC in biblical counseling. The COVID-19 pandemic changed the format of the classroom setting since instruction could only take place through video conferencing software, but the overall nature of how sessions were taught remained largely the same as there was time for instruction and interaction with the course materials. As I thought about how I would want to introduce biblical counseling to my congregation, I wanted to make sure that I spent sufficient time discussing the foundation of biblical counseling and the distinctives of biblical counseling. As a result, I spent the first six weeks of the class teaching about biblical counseling and why it is appropriate for the church to engage in biblical counseling.

The latter six weeks were designed to provide a preview of what is involved in the practice of biblical counseling methodology. The outline and content of these portions of the class were significantly influenced by Stuart Scott's modified explanation of Wayne Mack's "Eight I's of Discipleship/Counseling" in which the biblical counseling process was explained by its component parts and suggested progression of sessions.<sup>2</sup> Following the descriptions of what biblical counseling sessions may look like in action, I closed the final two sessions of class by examining how everything that was taught about biblical counseling ties together to address common issues in biblical counseling as well as specific issues I thought would be helpful for my congregation.

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<sup>2</sup> Stuart Scott, "The Eight I's of Discipleship/Counseling," 80552 Methodology of Biblical Counseling (class lecture, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, January 16, 2020).



Chapter 1 stated that the third goal would be considered successful when a minimum of ninety percent of the evaluation criterion for the curriculum meet or exceed the sufficient level on the rubric for the revised version of the curriculum.<sup>3</sup> Since I submitted my curriculum to my expert panel for review following the compilation and teaching of all sessions instead of submitting my curriculum for review prior to the course I did not successfully meet my project goal as stated in the description of research methodology. However, I was able to successfully meet my third project goal in the sense that more than ninety percent of the reviewed curriculum received evaluations that either met or exceeded a sufficient rating. Suggestions for how to improve this course from reviewers will certainly be applied in future iterations of the class so that the time spent discussing biblical methodology will not take up the bulk of the class and so that more practical examples of biblical counseling's effectiveness can be given.

#### **Goal 4**

The fourth goal was to increase biblical counseling competency among participants through teaching the biblical counseling course. In order to determine whether counseling competency had increased, the BCKA was readministered to those who had committed to taking the course. I had difficulty in securing responses to the second administration of the BCKA and had to send reminders to the class to fill out the BCKA. I closed the window for responses on July 3, 2021 and was left with 19 useable surveys that I could use for data analysis.<sup>4</sup> Once I had useable data sets, I ran a t-test for dependent samples which allowed me to see if the t-test demonstrated a statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-assessment results.

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<sup>3</sup> See appendix 2.

<sup>4</sup> Though 33 people committed to take the course, only 27 people filled out the BCKA. Of those 27 people who filled out the BCKA prior to the beginning of the course, only 19 people filled out the BCKA a second time. As a result, I had to exclude the data I collected which did not have a second survey response. There were no survey responses from people who did not fill out the BCKA the first time.

Since the BCKA contained questions that desired a negative response, I inverted the responses given by participants to run statistical analysis on the data collected.<sup>5</sup> After I ran the data analysis, I saw that the mean score increased by a little over five points.<sup>6</sup> While this was encouraging on its own, the data analysis confirmed that my introduction to biblical counseling course was helpful in increasing biblical counseling competency (see table 1). We can determine that this goal was met when a t-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive, statistically significant difference between pre- and post-assessment results:  $t_{(19)} = -2.03730191, p < .05$ .

As the data indicates, most of the responses to the BCKA increased slightly. However, I noticed that there were a few questions where the results decreased rather than increased. The majority of the decreased results were minimal, but there were two questions which showed significant change. In the first question that showed significant change, one respondent went from disagreeing that man was basically good to agreeing that man was basically good. The reason for this change is unknown, but a look at the differences between this participant's pre-class and post-class data results show decreases in areas where there should have been stronger agreement following the training. It may be that this individual may disagree with what was taught.

The second significant question which saw a decrease in results was a question that asked participants to consider whether it is good practice to refer the counselee to a psychologist. There was one individual whose response went from strongly agreeing that it was not good practice to refer counselees to psychologists to simply agreeing. However, the remaining few whose scores decreased only decreased their scores by one.

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<sup>5</sup> Whenever survey questions in the BCKA desired a negative response, I inverted the responses on the Excel spreadsheet so that the desired response would match with the appropriate number on the Likert scale. For example, if the survey question desires a participant to reject a given statement and this strong disagreement was marked as a 1, that mark of 1 was marked as a 6 since I wanted people to respond negatively to a question. The questions which had answers inverted were questions numbers 5–6, 8–12, 15, and 18–28.

<sup>6</sup> See appendix 5 for pre-class and post-class BCKA data.

It is unknown why these scores decreased, but it is likely that it can be traced to disagreement with what was taught.

Table 1. T-test paired two sample for means

	<i>PRE-CLASS TOTAL</i>	<i>POST-CLASS TOTAL</i>
Mean	150.3157895	155.7894737
Variance	165.8947368	82.1754386
Observations	19	19
Pearson Correlation	0.474990823	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	18	
t Stat	-2.03730191	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.028298627	
t Critical one-tail	1.734063607	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.056597253	
t Critical two-tail	2.10092204	

### **Evaluation of Project Strengths**

One of this project's strengths was the effort to have a full manuscript of the lessons that would be taught in course. One expert panel reviewer noted that one of the benefits of teaching from a full manuscript was that I will be able to easily train other people at SFBC to teach the introductory course in my place while I develop or teach advanced biblical counseling courses to those who wish to pursue biblical counseling more seriously. In addition to being able to pass a manuscript down to future teachers to teach from, the existence of a full manuscript allows for future teachers to know exactly what I had taught and my intentions behind what I taught. This is beneficial not only for the preservation of the helpful content, but also beneficial for others to identify areas where their contributions might improve the content. Even though it took a little longer to compile the manuscript for all twelve sessions, I am grateful to have a complete record of

what was done so that future versions of the course and advanced tracks of the course can more easily be made.

Another strength of this project were the practical examples of how biblical counseling principles work in life. While biblical counseling instruction is inherently practical for learners, the class was particularly enthused when they had an opportunity to apply the principles they had learned in the case study exercise. As they understood that the target of counseling is the heart, it made it easier for them to think critically about the details of the case study and consider all the different ways that sin can deceive. This made for a fruitful conversation and great meditative thoughts on how we could use God's provisions to address the sinful tendencies of the heart. The practical discussions that were given in the last two sessions of the class were also interactive as the class was eager to see how the Scriptures apply to common problems that are encountered in life.

A final strength that I will highlight for this project was the thoroughness of the curriculum. Many of the reviewers noted that the curriculum content was very thorough and that it was very helpful for them as they read what I had taught. I was grateful that the instruction I received from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and the required reading in my courses provided a solid foundation which I could in turn pass on to others. While some of the material will be incorporated into future advanced tracks of biblical counseling instruction at SFBC, I was thankful that the thought and intentionality behind teaching certain aspects of biblical counseling during the twelve weeks of instruction were appreciated and were useful.

### **Evaluation of Project Weaknesses**

The first weakness of this project is related to the previous strength highlighted, the thoroughness of the project. While it is good to be thorough in my instruction, there were times when some participants would approach me to thank me for teaching, but to also let me know that the amount of information was overwhelming at

times. The reminder from one of my reviewers that some of the material would be more appropriate for a class about the methodology of biblical counseling reminded me that though it may be helpful to reveal elements of more advanced concepts, there is a delicate balance between giving previews of more advanced topics to come and delving too deeply into those topics. Additionally, the time spent on more advanced topics could have been better spent specifically addressing more biblical principles like forgiveness or confrontation-restoration as it relates to counseling issues.

The second weakness of this project was related to the target demographic for the training. While the possibility of having someone participating in the class with no previous exposure to biblical counseling would have been extremely difficult at SFBC since we regularly encourage people to attend a local biblical counseling conference, the inclusion of people who were more familiar with biblical counseling likely affected some of the responses to the BCKA. While I was certainly excited to see that people who already had exposure to biblical counseling were interested in learning more about biblical counseling at SFBC, I also understand that the presence of more advanced participants in an introduction to biblical counseling course may have affected the data that was collected and analyzed.

The third weakness of this project concerns the format of the class and the circumstances in which the class was taught. While I was grateful that COVID-19 made it easier for certain people who normally would not have been able to attend the class to be a part of an equipping ministry in the church, it also had drawbacks. Though people were largely forced to stay home, thus making attendance easier, the circumstances surrounding the pandemic also made it easier for people to fail to follow through with taking the class. I was not discouraged when only 27 of the 33 participants filled out the BCKA because the response rate was still acceptable. As I was trying to encourage participants who had not yet filled out the BCKA the second time to respond to the survey in a timely manner, I learned that some of them had been behind on classes for a

while and had given up on trying to keep up with the class. Since the class was taught through video conferencing software and was easily recordable for others who had previous commitments on Monday, I was willing to take people at their word and allow people them to watch that week's class later in the week. However, I failed to account for the fact that various circumstances could disrupt attendance and participation drastically as evidenced by the 19 survey responses I received ever after I had extended the deadline to respond by nearly a month. Upon examining the results of those who successfully completed both surveys, only 5 of the 19 surveys were completed by those who exclusively watched the recordings of the classes.

The fourth weakness of the project that I wanted to address was the absence of homework for the class. One expert panel reviewer commented that while the content of the class was good, it would be difficult to determine whether people were truly understanding the principles they were being taught without homework assignments that required for class participants to read biblical counseling books or write responses to what they had been learning. Undoubtedly the presence of homework in the class would have changed many aspects of the class, but it likely would have allowed for the sessions to cover less content and encourage more participation and discussion.

### **What I Would Do Differently**

As I think about the weaknesses present in the project, one of the first things that I would want to do is have a bigger picture perspective on the roadmap of how to build up a team of volunteer and ACBC certified biblical counselors. Since I had a narrow focus on what I wanted to include in an introductory course, I failed to see the long view. This led to densely packed sessions that could have covered less material initially so participants who were less familiar with biblical counseling could have an easier time understanding what biblical counseling. When I revisit the project to consider how I want to build a biblical counseling team at SFBC, I will create a multiple year

roadmap to provide a clearer picture of how those interested in biblical counseling can progress from simply being educated about biblical counseling to being trained to be a biblical counselor. A clearer picture on the training process of becoming a biblical counselor would allow for me to properly pace the discussion of class and determine which aspects of biblical counseling training are fundamental building blocks and which aspects can be explored in greater depth at a later time.

The second change I would want to make is related to the curriculum. Specifically, I would want to spend less time discussing the methodology of biblical counseling and add a few more sessions that discuss common issues in biblical counseling. Though I was able to spend two sessions covering common issues in biblical counseling, I was limited in my ability to satisfactorily demonstrate how the Scriptures can be applied to life issues that many people might believe are outside the authority of the Scriptures. While the inclusion of more common issues may not necessarily sway prospective biblical counselors to pursue more training in biblical counseling following the introductory course, I would want to help demonstrate how the sufficiency of Scriptures truly can make a difference in a person's life. Even though some of these issues may be difficult to cover, perhaps the presentation of a broader range of common issues addressed through the Scriptures will help prospective biblical counselors have a greater respect and affection towards the work done in biblical counseling.

A third change I would want to make is the inclusion of an introductory section of the course that examines the dynamic nature of the human heart. Since God has made the human heart more complex than computers, it is vital that those who wish to learn more about biblical counseling or practice biblical counseling understand how different facets of the human heart can influence the way that we are all inclined to respond to our circumstances. Should we have a greater understanding on what may be occurring on the heart level of a person, biblical counselors may be more successful in identifying the root issue behind the issues presented by the counselee.

The fourth change that I would implement would be the inclusion of weekly homework assignments for the class. While the presence of homework may be a deterrent for some and would require more administration on my part, the benefits of including homework in the training would allow more time for planned and unplanned class interactions during weekly sessions. The presence of homework related to what was taught during the weekly lesson can also facilitate greater ownership, reflection, and retention on what was taught in class which may in turn produce counselors who are even better equipped to minister to others.

While I understand that a pandemic is not a regular occurrence that I must account for in future iterations of this class, the final change I would want to make would be to either reduce or eliminate the number of exceptions on how people can take the class. I know that there will likely be extenuating circumstances that may cause some people to drop out of the class regardless of if I reduced or eliminated exceptions on how people can take the class, but this would be a necessary move to help people wisely weigh their decision on if they wish to commit to the class. While I was trying to be as accommodating as possible to people due to the pandemic, my project seemed to indicate that those who were not required to keep up with the class on a weekly basis were more likely to fall behind on classes and not follow through with their commitment. I did not personally follow up with every single person who signed up for the class but did not complete the course so I cannot definitively say that the accommodating nature of watching a recording was the reason behind why some people ultimately did not finish the course. However, I did have a few conversations with individuals who did not complete the course once our church reopened for in-person worship services and they indicated that the reason they were not able to complete the course was due to falling behind and struggling to get on pace with the class again.



## **Theological Reflections**

The time spent in preparing an introduction to biblical counseling course has certainly cemented my conviction that the Bible truly is sufficient and authoritative to deal with all aspects of life. Even though there are certainly daunting counseling issues that may require the assistance of medical expertise to provide holistic care for individuals, this project has reminded me that God does not ask those committed to serving others through biblical counseling to also be their medical doctors. God simply desires for those involved with biblical counseling to faithfully care for the souls of the individuals he has entrusted to our care. While this sentiment may sound overly simplistic when one considers how the Bible speaks to these more difficult issues, I was reminded that biblical counselors, like pastors, are only authoritative when they speak and teach the words which God has given. The only authority a biblical counselor has in their care for people is an authority that is borrowed from God himself.

As a result, those involved with biblical counseling are most effective in their care for others when they help others see what the Scriptures say about how they ought to understand and react to the circumstances God has allowed for them to experience in this life. This shift in perspective provides biblical counselors with the confidence that they truly can help anyone who wants to understand how to live using the provisions that God graciously provides us through the Scriptures and through the community of believers he provides for us as family. While biblical counselors should certainly exercise caution and humility when addressing complex issues, they should also not shrink from ministering the Scriptures to those who are hurting.

Another reflection I have been able to meditate upon during the course of designing and implementing this project is the importance of a comprehensive understanding of how God has made mankind. While I am by no means an expert on all aspects of biblical anthropology, what I have found is that a biblical understanding of anthropology will allow biblical counselors to better understand how they might be more

effective in their care of others. Often times the counsel Christians give their fellow Christians about their problems are overly simplistic, addressing the presenting issues of a person without ever reaching the root issues that exist in the heart. Since there is a failure to understand the complexity of the human heart, the solutions that we provide one another can often fail to provide lasting change and hope to those who are desperately hurting.

While I affirm the role that the Holy Spirit must necessarily have in the hearts of those desiring change and hope, my reflections have helped me see that our failures to provide comfort, motivation, joy, and hope are often a result of our own failures to fully consider the heart themes that may be present in the counselee's heart. As a result, even those who are committed to biblical counseling may potentially miss the true issues that lie at the root of a counselee's problems. The solutions we may offer through the Bible can still have effect on the life of the counselee by God's grace, but if we do not help the counselee understand the sins, the unbiblical thinking, the resident unbelief, and lustful motivations which lurk within the heart, then the help we provide will still fall short.

The final theological reflection I was able to make during this project was the importance of remembering the sovereignty of God and the role of the Holy Spirit in biblical counseling. While many Christians will affirm their belief in the sovereignty of God, we do not always live as if we believe in the sovereignty of God. For biblical counselors who genuinely love the people they care for, it may be easy for us to forget the sovereignty of God in our counseling because we desperately want what we know is the best for our counselees. Even if we were to follow biblical counseling methodology to the letter this does not guarantee that the lives of our counselees will be definitely changed. If the Holy Spirit is not working in the hearts of our counselees, any change that we might be able to get a counselee to commit to will remain in the realm of behavior modification rather than Spirit-empowered heart change fueled by the authority and sufficiency of the Scriptures.

## **Personal Reflections**

As I have worked on this project, I have dealt with fear and feelings of inadequacy as I strived to grow more in my understanding of biblical counseling. These feelings increased even more as I was developing the curriculum I wanted to teach to members of SFBC. During some of the sessions where I was delving deeper into biblical counseling methodology, I saw how I failed to practice what I was taught in my active counseling cases. This led me to fear that any training I provided would cause those involved with biblical counseling at SFBC to be similarly inadequate.

However, my wrestling with these fears and thoughts of inadequacy reminded me that the training that I received in biblical counseling was not supposed to make me an infallible expert on biblical counseling to everyone I encounter. The depths of the riches that are found in the Scriptures are inexhaustible so the proper response I ought to have to the private ministry of the Word of God towards fellow Christians is humility and compassion. As I talked to the most experienced expert panel member about the lessons that he learned during his time overseeing the biblical counseling ministry at his church, he reminded me that the most important thing to consider in our ministry to others is whether we have loved them well in our ministry to them. This particular thought was a comfort to me because it reminded me that faithfulness to ministering the Scriptures to those in need requires the truth of the Bible, but it also requires a real love for the counselee. Since the work of heart change belongs to the Holy Spirit, I was reminded that it is not up to me to change the heart of those whom I counsel. Whether or not the biblical counseling ministry is successful as I continue to develop the ministry is not a responsibility that God places squarely on my shoulders because it is ultimately God's ministry, not mine.

While I certainly want the ministry of biblical counseling to grow and have a great impact on my church and my community, this project has reminded me that God will take care of the breadth of my ministry. As long as I am faithful to apply the

Scriptures to my own life, God will be glorified. As long as I am faithful to help others learn to similarly search the Scriptures and apply it to their lives, God will be glorified. God does not need me to defend the authority and sufficiency of the Scriptures nor does he need me to be the one who specifically defends his glory before those who do not share my convictions on God's ability to provide us with everything pertaining to life and godliness (2 Pet 1:3). As I have reflected on these thoughts during this project, I have been reminded that I need to grow not only in my understanding of the Bible, but also in my humility as I seek to care for others using the Scriptures.

### **Conclusion**

Though the goals stated at the outset of the project have been met, only God knows whether my project has lasting impact for his kingdom. It would certainly be encouraging if many of the members who were trained in biblical counseling principles went on to pursue more training, but all that matters is that God causes his people to realize their need to grow more in Christlikeness. I do not know whether San Francisco Bible Church will ultimately be able to establish a biblical counseling ministry that will be effective in ministering to its own members and the members of our community, but I pray that God will use this project to at the very least to help those who have been impacted by it know how to and desire to please God in the way that we live our lives here on this earth.

APPENDIX 1  
BIBLICAL COUNSELING KNOWLEDGE  
ASSESSMENT

The following instrument is the Biblical Counseling Knowledge Assessment (BCKA). The assessment will have general questions followed by a survey with a six-point Likert scale. The instrument will be used to assess each member's present level of general Scripture knowledge, biblical counseling principles, and how to apply biblical counseling principles in counseling.

## BIBLICAL COUNSELING KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT

### **Agreement to Participate**

San Francisco Bible Church is committed to be a disciple making church. One of the ways that discipleship manifests itself within the church body is through the ministry of biblical counseling. In biblical counseling, believers are called to minister to those who are hurting. Since San Francisco Bible Church believes that the Word of God is sufficient to provide comfort, care, and hope for all areas of life, biblical counseling is a ministry that the church wants to establish.

Pastor Roger Jeong is conducting research for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. Participation is voluntary and should be limited to if you wish to commit to learning in an introduction to biblical counseling course. By completing this survey, you are indicating your interest in learning about biblical counseling as well as providing informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

For the purpose of reaching out to you to inform you when the class will be offered, we ask that you provide your name below. Your name will not be included in the reporting of the data because the only things relevant to reporting are your responses.

### **General Questions:**

1. How many years have you professed Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many years have you been a member at San Francisco Bible Church? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Are you currently serving as a ministry leader, teacher, or discipler of other believers at SFBC? (Y/N) \_\_\_\_\_
4. How much time do you spend in your Bible for devotions during any given week?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you currently practice Scripture memorization? (Y/N)
6. How much time do you spend in prayer during any given week? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Briefly define biblical counseling:

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8. Have you had any exposure to biblical counseling, or any other forms of counseling, in the past? If yes, please briefly describe.

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**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 Word of God is inspired by God and helps us know what God wants us to understand about himself.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
2. The Word of God is inerrant, meaning that it is accurate in all that it teaches.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
3. The proper way to study the Bible is to read it and then seek to understand it from its literal, grammatical, and historical sense.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
4. Even though the Bible does not specifically mention certain medical conditions, the Bible is still able to help care for people's problems.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
5. Man is basically good.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
6. Man's environment is the cause for people's sin.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
7. Sin is the ultimate source of people's problems.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
8. Jesus' death on the cross delivered us from sin so that true Christians no longer deal with sin in their lives.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
9. Since Jesus defeated sin through his death on the cross, Christians no longer sin. Any thing that they do wrong after they are saved is merely a mistake.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
10. Because Jesus' death on the cross freed us from the penalty of sin, Christians no longer need to repent of their sin since they are already forgiven by God.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA



11. God does not want us to experience unhappiness or guilt in life because he over everything else he wants us to know that we are loved by him.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
12. The Holy Spirit removes all temptations for sin. If we feel tempted to sin, it is ok for us to sin because God did not remove the temptation from us.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
13. God does not want for his children to suffer.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
14. Because of salvation, everyone who places their faith in Christ is a new creation.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
15. The main goal of counseling is addressing a person's incorrect behavior so that they can live a life of righteousness.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
16. The main goal of counseling is addressing a person's heart so that sin can be addressed at the deepest level.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
17. I can clearly articulate the gospel and lead someone to salvation.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
18. If I encounter difficult counseling scenarios that the Bible does not speak specifically on, it is good practice to refer the counselee to the psychologist.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
19. It is never ok to send someone to the doctor in a counseling case. The Bible is sufficient.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
20. It is unacceptable for a person to be on medications.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
21. Counselors are not required to show compassion to those in need. Speaking truth into their life is far more important.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
22. Counselors should disregard a person's past when providing counsel. All that matters is what is happening presently.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
23. When a counselee is struggling with bitterness towards another person, the counselor should encourage the	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

counselee to forgive the other person as God has forgiven us.						
24. If someone does not feel like forgiving someone who has asked them for forgiveness, they do not need to forgive until they feel like it.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
25. Forgiving people for the wrongs they have committed against us can help us relieve our guilt.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
26. If someone hurts me, I need to confront them immediately for their sin.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
27. Biblical counseling can only be done if I receive ACBC certification.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
28. Only the professionals or highly trained people can minister the Scriptures to those who are struggling.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
29. San Francisco Bible Church encourages members to be like Christ and practice the one-another's with each other.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
30. The community would be receptive to coming to San Francisco Bible Church if biblical counseling was offered as a free service.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

## APPENDIX 2

### INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL COUNSELING CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

The following evaluation was sent to an advisory panel will consist of the two staff pastors of SFBC, an elder on the elder board of SFBC, one ACBC member, and an outside ACBC certified fellow. The panel evaluated the course material to ensure that the material is acceptable in its biblical faithfulness, depth of content, and applicability of the curriculum to train individuals in the basics of biblical counseling.

<b>Name of Evaluator:</b> _____					<b>Date:</b> _____
<b>Biblical Counseling Curriculum Evaluation</b>					
<b>1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary</b>					
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Biblical Faithfulness</b>					
The content of the curriculum is hermeneutically sound. Scripture is properly interpreted and applied.					
The content of the curriculum is theologically sound.					
<b>Depth</b>					
The content of the curriculum covers the basics of biblical counseling.					
The content of the curriculum sufficiently covers the basics of biblical counseling.					
<b>Applicability</b>					
The curriculum provides sufficient homework and practice for participants to learn biblical counseling.					
The curriculum's content will allow participants to counsel others biblically.					

APPENDIX 3  
INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL COUNSELING CURRICULUM  
OUTLINE

12 Week Overview of Introduction to Biblical Counseling

Week One – The Definition and Biblical Foundation of Biblical Counseling

Week Two – The Theological Foundation of Biblical Counseling

Week Three – The Differences Between Biblical Counseling and Other Counseling Models

Week Four – Biblical Counseling and the Counselor

Week Five – The Process of Biblical Change, Part 1

Week Six – The Process of Biblical Change, Part 2

Week Seven – Biblical Counseling Applied: Involvement and Inspiration

Week Eight – Biblical Counseling Applied: Inventory and Interpretation

Week Nine – Biblical Counseling Applied: Instruction and Inducement

Week Ten – Biblical Counseling Applied: Implementation and Integration

Week Eleven – Biblical Counseling Applied: Overview of Common Issues, Part 1

Week Twelve – Biblical Counseling Applied: Overview of Common Issues, Part 2

## APPENDIX 4

### INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL COUNSELING CURRICULUM SAMPLE LESSON

The following lesson is a sample lesson taken from the Introduction to Biblical Counseling manuscript that was implemented in training select members of SFBC in biblical counseling principles. This sample is a full manuscript of the fifth lesson taught, “The Process of Biblical Change, Part 1.”

## Week Five – The Process of Biblical Change, Part 1

Goal: To understand the process of biblical change and how counselors help counselees grow through God's means of change.

### **Introduction**

Good evening, everyone! I hope that you had a good weekend and that you are all doing well. Last week we had a chance to take a look at the relationship between biblical counseling and the biblical counselor. Everyone in the church is called by God to minister to one another. We are all responsible to care for one another and help each other become more like Jesus Christ. But what we saw last week is that before we can begin to counsel others, we must first make sure that we are walking closely with our Lord first. This of course does not mean that we have to be perfect before we can minister to other people, but it does mean that we have to make sure that we are walking closely with God, relying on the power of the Holy Spirit, to ensure that we are in the process of becoming more like our Savior. We cannot teach people to grow in Christlikeness if we ourselves do not know how to become like Christ.

This leads us to our topic for the next two weeks. Last week we saw that a big part of this change to become more like Christ begins with our own commitment to discipline ourselves towards godliness through our intake of the Word, through a commitment to prayer, and a commitment to worship God. While a greater knowledge of the Word and what it says can be helpful as we seek to bear one another's burdens and minister to one another, we know from our own Christian lives that Bible knowledge, prayer, and worship do not always seem to help us deal with every problem that we personally encounter in our lives. If this is not the end all solution for us, it certainly will not be the final solution for the people we may want to minister to in the future.

If you want to think of it this way, the regular disciplines that we prescribe for growth in the Christian life are the necessary exercises that we need to continue to be healthy and strong in this life. Biblical counseling provides specific and targeted exercises in our lives when we are hurting or have become weak so that we might return strength and function to the member which

was injured or weak. Since biblical counseling helps us understand how we can specifically grow in trouble areas of our walk with the Lord, we are going to take our time examining this process so that we get a good grasp of how it works for ourselves and how we can help others.

### **The Components of Biblical Change**

In some our previous classes we have already touched on how God expects us to change in the process of sanctification. We never were meant to stay as we were in our sins because Romans 6:5–7 has made it abundantly clear that we have become united with Christ not only in the likeness of His death, but also in the likeness of His resurrection. As a result, we who have died to sin are no longer slaves to sin, but we are dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. As you will remember, every system that is out there acknowledges that those who seek help for their lives' problems need change. What we want to establish in our own hearts and minds, which will lead to what we help establish in others, is what biblical change looks like, so we do not miss anything. We will do so by reminding ourselves of five components, five different parts, of biblical change. Our main text that we will use to examine these truths will be Ephesians 4, but we are also going to be folding in other Scriptures as well. The first component of biblical change is that we are a New Creation.

#### **New Creation**

In addition to what we referenced in Romans 6, Paul speaks about the difference salvation makes in 2 Corinthians 5 as he compares that which is temporary and that which is eternal. Let us specifically take a look at verse 17 [READ 2 Cor 5:17] Put a different way, Paul reminds people that if they claim to be saved, they are a new creature because the old creature has passed away. The idea that any person who has been saved would not change in at all in their conduct would have been unthinkable to Paul and to the early church. The salvation Jesus Christ gives is not merely forgiveness of sins. Please do not get me wrong, forgiveness is a huge part, a vital part, of salvation, but we also have to remember what we are told in Ephesians 2. We were once dead in our sins, but because of God's rich mercy towards us made us alive together with Christ and raised us up with Him (Eph 2:4–5). This new life we have is new creation.



It is because we are a new creation that Romans 12:2 makes it clear that we are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. As we look at this verse what are we transformed out from? Our call to transformation follows a command not to be conformed to world. In all of our lives before Christ, our thoughts, emotions, and our wills were influenced by the world around us. Our values, our sense of right and wrong, and our sense of truth has been informed by what we have been taught growing up. Now that we have been saved by God's grace through faith, we are new creatures who no longer operate according to our former manner of life, but we operate according to our new manner of life that has been given to us since from Christ.

Therefore, as a new creation we must be committed to the change that God has accomplished for us in Christ. Ephesians 2:10 reminds us that this new life that we have been given is a result of the God's workmanship in our lives through Christ. God Himself prepared us and changed us so that we can do good works in our lives. He Himself equips us to do the very task that He calls us to do so that we can fulfill His purposes on earth with a right heart and right motivations. This is something that is so important for us to realize when it comes to the change that God calls us to and the change that we call others to. God has not left us alone to figure this out on our own. We are not like those whose religions call them to try and figure out righteous living on our own strength. God enables the work that He calls us to do in our lives.

Yes, change can be incredibly difficult. Many of us know what it is like trying to deal with stubborn sins in our lives that we cannot seem to shake but take heart. There is hope that we will be able to deal with the sin God calls us to lay aside because God is in the process of changing us. It was never meant to be immediate, but it takes time. In Philippians 1:6, Paul reminds the Philippians that he prays for them often with joy because he is confident that God will complete the good work He began in their lives. Notice that God did this work at some point in their past and He will, future tense, perfect this good work until it is all finished the day that Christ returns. Later in Philippians 2:12–13, Paul reminds his readers that they too have a responsibility to grow in their salvation, to work it out, in fear and trembling, because God is working in their lives to will and to work for His good pleasure.

Even if it is hard work to change stubborn sins, we have to remember that God is not just calling us to change on our own strength and will. He works with us to accomplish this change. It would be pretty unfair for God to essentially tell us to just be better when He knows that we cannot do it. That is why He helps us. Jesus reminds us in John 14:16–17 that God the Father has given us the Holy Spirit to help us make these changes. This is why Paul is able to so confidently say to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 6:9–11 that the sins the Corinthians were previously practiced no longer are accurate descriptors of them. Because of the salvation that they have in Christ, they are made righteous and are in the process of continuing to be like Christ.

So, we ought not to be discouraged when change is hard, nor should we allow for those we are trying to help continue to be discouraged. The change that God calls us to is radical. It is difficult. But this change that God calls us to as a new creation is completely empowered by God. Therefore, we can have hope that we will change because it is God's will for us to change. As new creations we are no longer what we once were. This leads us to the second component of biblical change which is that we are created in the image of Jesus.

### **Created in the Image of Jesus**

There will be a little bit of overlap as we look at the components of change, but it is because it is difficult to talk about the different components of change without referring to the other parts. As new creations, we are not blank slates, but we are created to be just like Jesus. While it is true that everyone is made in the image of God, sin broke our ability to be like Him in the fullest sense. It is for this reason that Christ had to come to this earth and be made like us in order for us to receive salvation. In Romans 5:18–19 we are reminded that the one sin of Adam spread to all of mankind. We are all broken as a result of the sin nature we inherited from Adam. However, the obedience of the perfect man Jesus Christ made it possible for all who believe in Him to be made righteous. God made us new creations in Jesus Christ because without becoming a new creation, we would all still be broken by sin.

In the first account of the creation of mankind, we see in Genesis 2:7 that God breathed the breath of life into man to create us. As we saw earlier in Ephesians 2, the effect of sin on our

lives made it so that though we are physically alive, we are spiritually dead. In Acts 2:2, we get the idea of new creation language as the same Greek word that describes God's breath in Genesis is used here to describe the wind which fills the apostles with the Holy Spirit. God signals that there is a new creation with the gift of the Holy Spirit to His people and it is spiritual life that makes us like Jesus.

Romans 8:28–29 affirms this for us as we are reminded that God causes all things to work together for good for those who are called according to God's purpose. Why is verse 28 true? Because those whom God foreknew were also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son. As God works in our lives, He is working for our ultimate good. Everything that He allows into our lives is absolutely intentional. It is done so that we might become more like Jesus in every aspect of our lives. It is for this reason that Paul's philosophy of ministry in Colossians 1:28 is to proclaim Christ, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom so that he and his team could present every man complete in Christ.

God knows that in order to change us so that we will be like His Son that He must change us. In Ezekiel 36:26–27, He promises His people that He will be the One who changes us. He will give us a new heart and a new spirit so that will be able to obey Him where we once were completely unable to do so. To be like Christ on our own strength is absolutely impossible. But God makes us like Christ as He saves us which is why there is no such thing as a genuine Christian who is not in some part of their lives becoming more like Jesus. In order for us to fulfill our part of the process of being more like Jesus, we must live out the third component of biblical change by putting off the old self.

### **Put Off Old Self**

In Ephesians 4:22 Paul takes a look back to our former manner of life, the life that we lived which was in complete slavery to sin and tells us to lay aside the old self. The old self, or the old man, refers to everything that used to characterize our lives as unbelievers. This is not limited to sinful practices or behaviors, but also includes the beliefs and truths that we used to live by when we were unsaved. The deceit of sin appeals to our lusts, our strong desires for

things in this life. Our lusts can be for material things like money, cars, technology, etc., but it can also include status, comfort, or any other thing we might want. These lusts, these desires, are the things which drive and motivate our behavior. This is why a call to lay aside the old self is not just about dealing with behavior, but also the motivation that drives the behavior.

The command that we observe, “lay aside” reminds us that we are personally responsibly to do this action. Of course, we rely on the Holy Spirit’s to do the action, but we must use the power He gives to lay aside the former manner of life. If we are not doing anything with the power the Lord provides to deal with the sin that is in our lives, we are not living in obedience and not being a faithful steward of the Holy Spirit He gives us so we might put sin off in our lives. As we are hinting at, laying aside or putting off the old self is not all that we do as we battle sin in our lives, but we also must replace the sinful thoughts, beliefs, motivations, and actions with righteous ones. This brings us to the fourth component of biblical change is that we are to put on the new self.

### **Put On New Self**

We will continue on in Ephesians 4:23–24. In contrast to the command to lay aside the old self, here we see two commands, (1) to be renewed in the spirit of your mind and (2) to put on the new self. We are going to skip talking about the first command for right now and look at the second command since it provides a nice contrast with the command to lay aside the old self. The command to put on the new self is a reminder that we have responsibility here. It does not completely depend upon us, but we definitely play a part in our growth. It plays a part in how we change. 1 Timothy 4:7 backs this up as Paul tells Timothy to have nothing to do with worldly fables, but to on the other hand, discipline himself for the purpose of godliness. Godliness is not something that just happens to you. There must a deliberate pursuit of godliness. One way I heard by a preacher recently is that you can read all the books you want about diet and exercise, but unless you discipline yourself to be good about your diet and exercising more regularly, you should not be surprised if you cannot lose weight. Your good intentions and stated desires are not

good enough. You must put those intentions and desires into action if you are going to see any results.

As you can see, the Bible never assigns full responsibility for our growth in Christlikeness to God alone. Anyone who claims that advocating for personal responsibility to grow and change is legalism or a failure to rely upon the grace of God ought to look at these texts where growth and change are commanded and try to reconcile what they believe with what God says in these texts. God makes it pretty clear that we have a role to play as well. As we put on the new self, we are striving to specifically and intentionally identify areas of our lives that are not like Christ so that we may become more like Him in those areas. We do this by identifying what God's Word has to say about these specific issues and then trying to apply them to apply them to our lives.

This desire to change and apply God's Word to our lives has a direct relationship to the love that we say have for God. As we work on ourselves and as we eventually help others, the key to obedience is love for God. Anyone can obey out of duty. Soldiers are trained to obey their commanding officers, but they do not obey out of love for their commanding officers. They do so out of fear of discipline, reprimand, or worse. Christians on the other hand ought to obey God because they love Him. In John 14:15, Jesus makes it clear that if we love Him, we will keep His commandments. There should be a healthy fear and respect for God's correction and discipline, but ultimately what ought to drive us to obey God is love for God.

In 2 Corinthians 5, Paul makes it clear that it is better for us to be at home with the Lord, however, he acknowledges in verse 9 that since we are still here on earth, we make out ambition, whether we are here on earth or with the Lord in heaven to be pleasing to Him. Part of the desire to make it our ambition, or life's goal, to be pleasing to God is because we know, verse 10, that we all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ and will receive from God what we deserve for our deeds. While that still may seem like it is rewards motivated, which by the Bible does not say is bad, the ultimate reason why we want to be mindful of how we conduct ourselves in this life is due to the fact that we want to please the Lord we love out of gratefulness to Him.

We can only experience the full joy of our Master if we make it our ambition to please Him. If we are truly saved, but are tripped up continually in our sins, then we ought not be surprised if instead of His joy we experience His correction and discipline. However, if we are doing the best that we can through the strength of the Holy Spirit to be obedient to God in love, then we will please our Lord. This leads us to our fifth component of biblical change which is the renewal of our minds.

### **Renew Our Minds**

Now we go back to Ephesians 4:23. As we look at this command to be renewed in the spirit of our minds, what I want us to observe first is that this verb is “be renewed” is passive. Being renewed in our minds is something that we allow God to do to us. We must place ourselves in the way of the Word so that our minds can be renewed, but God is the One who ultimately renews our minds. The emphasis on renewing our minds as we grow in godliness is something that many of us might miss. But think back to some common passages that call us to be transformed – Romans 12:2, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind . . .”, Colossians 3:1–2, “Therefore, if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on the earth.”, and now Ephesians 4. Renewing our mind is a crucial part of how we grow and change.

As our minds are being retrained and re-instructed with the truth of the Word of God, then we will be able to truly change our actions. Notice that in the verses which follow, Paul then goes on to specifically address the sins that should no longer be a part of our lives. The effect of truth on our minds will lead to changed lives. While we are talking about changed lives, the renewal of the mind can also be thought of as the renewal of the heart. The word “heart” has also been used throughout Scripture to refer to the center of our being that thinks, feels, and wills. For example, Proverbs 3:1–3. Solomon instructs his son and tells him not to forget his teaching but to let his heart keep his commandments. Solomon then goes tell his son to let kindness and truth be written on the tablet of his heart. Proverbs 4:23 also commands that Solomon’s son is to watch

over his heart with all diligence for from it flow the springs of life. In Matthew 15:18–20, Jesus makes it very clear that a person is not made unclean from the things outside of themselves but is made unclean from the evil that is within the heart.

If we were talking about a physical organ, this would not make much sense. However, what we see throughout the Scriptures is that the word “heart” is often used just like we would use the word “mind.” So, when we see Paul telling us that we are to be renewed in the spirit of our minds, we understand that we are not looking for both heart change and mind change when we counsel as if the heart and mind are separate. We are talking about the same thing. Targeting the heart of a person in counseling is targeting their mind. The very core of who someone is. That way, whenever we are trying to help someone fight sin in their lives, we are not focusing merely on the outward behavior but are dealing with the issues that are at the core of a person’s being which leads to the outward behavior.

The reasons why someone might get caught up in particular sins can vary. It is not always the same for every person. While there may be similarities to why certain groups of people might be more prone to getting ensnared by certain sins, there can be different reasons why people choose to allow themselves to be ensnared by these sins. As a result, it is our job as we first counsel ourselves, to understand the thinking, the feelings, and the choices that we take into account when we choose to respond in sinful ways to the world around us or to the temptations around us. We are not trying to psychoanalyze ourselves per se, but we are trying to understand our motivations. What did we want in the moment? What did we believe to be true at the time? Why did we want what we wanted? Why did we think we would be justified in getting what we wanted? These are just some of the questions that we ought to be asking ourselves, but as you can see, the action of sin might seem immediate in the moment, but there are many microtransactions, micro-decisions, that we have made before we sinned. This is the way that it is with us and this is the way that it will be like with those whom we counsel. It is for this reason we are not merely trying to remodel our minds with the truth, temporarily making parts of our minds new so that we do not sin for a time. We are trying to completely renovate our minds with

the truth so that which was broken is completely removed and replaced by something new. We are getting rid of the old man so that we can put on the new man which has been made in the likeness of Christ.

Biblical change is change that is rooted in the reality that those who have genuinely placed their faith in Jesus Christ are no longer those who continue to be dead in their sins. Instead, we are new creations in Jesus Christ who are able not only to act righteously, but to pursue righteous living. God Himself will be the one who will transform us into the image of His Son Jesus Christ, but we also have a part to play. We are to put off sin, put on righteousness, and renew our minds. Biblical change might seem simple and in a sense it is. But there is a lot of work that is required for us to do through the power of the Holy Spirit if we are going to truly be the people that Christ saved us to be. Though it is hard work that we are trying to do in our lives and hard work that we are trying to call others to join us in, we know that our Lord will be pleased as we make it our ambition to be pleasing to Him in our lives.

### **The Effect of Applying Biblical Change**

I did not use this language earlier to describe what happens in biblical change, but to use more familiar language with you, what we are trying to do in biblical change is recognize where we are sinning and repent of that sin. What happens in repentance is the putting on of the new self and leaving behind the sinful lifestyle which used to characterize us. If we are truly going to change in a way that honors the Lord, genuine repentance must occur first. Without genuine repentance, the change that we implement in our lives will last only as long as our wills enable them to last. There will be more for us to explore together next week, but what I wanted to do with you all for the rest of our time together tonight is to show you what happens when we are able to apply biblical change in our lives.

As I just mentioned, growth and change in our Christian lives are essentially repentance. In those cases where sin happens to others, the counsel that we give can to those who are victims teaches them of God's truth and love and helps them learn how to move from responses that stem from a lack of trust in God or sinful anger, to responses that look to the Lord for justice



with great patience. This follows the example Christ left for as Peter reminds us in 1 Peter 2:21–23. Christ endured great sin at the hands of others, but when He was reviled, He did not revile in return. When He was suffering, He did not utter threats, but kept entrusting Himself to God. In those cases when we are responsible for sin, our response to sin is definitely repentance and a striving to live righteously. Change must happen whether our hurt is causing us to respond in a sinful way or if our own sin is causing us to hurt.

As we change, as we put off the old self, what we are doing is replacing the standard for truth and righteousness that we formally had with the truth of the Word of God so that the word of God can be our standard of truth and righteousness. Let me show you a graphical understanding of what happens in the process of biblical change.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Randy Patten, “How to Grow and Change” (presented at the NorthCreek Counseling Training, Walnut Creek, CA, August 23, 2019).

Old Self	New Self
Source of Truth – The Wisdom of the World (Feelings)	Source of Truth – The Wisdom of God (Scripture)
Motivated by Lusts – lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and the boastful pride of life (1 John 2:2)	Motivated by Love – Love for God, love to please God, love for others to please God

VS

Figure A1. Old self versus new self

Hopefully what the chart helps us see is that the process of biblical change ought to lead to complete change in our lives. It is not always as perfect as the chart makes it out to be since we do have remaining sin in our lives, but this change that we are called to is certainly not slapping a band-aid onto our problems. We are not merely looking for temporary relief or fixes to deal with the sin in our lives but are trying to get to the root causes. [IF TIME, SHARE MASSAGE THERAPY VS PHYSICAL THERAPY LESSON]. As we grow more like Christ in our innermost being, our responses to what we encounter in life will be more in line with who we are as new creations in Christ.

## **Conclusion**

Hopefully this evening has been helpful as we broke down all that happens in the process of biblical change. I am excited to explore more of how we can help ourselves and others change next week as we look at part two.

## APPENDIX 5

### PRE-CLASS AND POST-CLASS BCKA RESULTS

The following chart contains the 19 paired results of those who successfully completed the BCKA before and after the curriculum was taught. Each respondent was given a randomly generated code to give them anonymity. The results in the chart below were the numbers used to run the t-test and determine whether the curriculum was able to make a difference in the amount of knowledge of biblical counseling principles in the participants who took the class.

To the right of the post-class total category are indicators of which participants did poorly, the same, or better compared to when they first took the test. The differences were visually noted by a negative sign, a zero, and a positive sign respectively. Beneath the post-class BCKA results were the sums of the scores of each question. If the scores on a particular question demonstrated no change, the box was not highlighted. If the scores on a question reflected negative change or positive change, this was indicated visually through a red and yellow highlight respectively.

Table A1. Paired BCKA results

PRE-CLASS RESULTS																																
PARTICIPANT	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27	Q28	Q29	Q30	PRE-CLASS TOTAL	
37	6	6	6	6	6	4	6	2	5	6	5	6	6	5	3	5	5	6	5	5	6	4	1	6	6	4	6	6	5	3	151	
67	6	6	5	5	4	6	1	3	4	5	2	6	1	6	5	5	6	5	4	5	5	5	2	5	2	3	6	5	5	3	131	
98	6	6	6	6	4	1	4	4	6	6	4	6	4	6	6	1	1	6	6	5	6	4	2	3	3	4	6	4	6	2	134	
39	6	6	6	6	6	4	6	6	6	6	6	6	1	6	2	5	6	6	1	1	1	1	2	1	3	1	1	1	6	5	120	
29	6	6	6	6	6	5	6	6	6	6	5	6	1	6	3	5	5	6	6	5	6	6	3	6	3	5	5	6	6	5	158	
61	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	1	6	6	1	5	1	6	5	6	6	6	1	1	6	6	1	5	2	1	6	6	6	6	138	
31	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	2	6	5	5	5	2	4	5	4	5	5	5	4	4	6	6	6	5	154	
77	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	6	6	5	6	4	6	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	5	6	5	5	6	6	5	158	
15	6	6	5	5	6	5	6	5	5	6	6	6	4	5	5	6	6	5	5	4	6	5	3	5	4	4	6	6	5	5	156	
19	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	1	6	4	6	4	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	2	5	6	6	6	5	163	
49	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	3	6	6	6	6	6	6	4	6	6	5	6	6	5	6	6	6	1	168	
27	6	6	4	5	6	6	5	6	6	6	4	6	5	6	5	5	4	5	4	4	5	5	3	6	3	5	5	5	5	4	150	
97	6	6	6	6	6	1	6	6	6	5	4	6	6	6	1	6	4	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	3	3	4	4	4	4	151	
52	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	2	6	4	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	3	5	5	4	6	6	6	5	163		
23	6	6	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	3	6	4	6	5	4	4	6	5	5	5	5	4	5	3	4	6	6	5	4	154	
79	5	5	5	4	6	5	5	6	4	6	2	6	4	6	3	4	4	4	5	4	5	4	2	5	3	6	6	5	6	2	137	
99	6	6	6	6	6	4	5	1	5	6	4	6	2	6	5	6	6	5	5	4	5	4	3	4	3	5	6	6	6	5	147	
84	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	3	6	6	4	6	1	6	5	6	5	5	6	6	6	6	5	6	1	5	6	6	6	4	158	
43	6	6	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	6	3	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	5	2	5	6	6	5	6	165	
113	113	107	109	110	94	103	90	107	112	85	113	57	112	79	95	91	99	92	87	101	95	65	94	64	78	104	102	106	79	2856		
POST-CLASS RESULTS																																
PARTICIPANT	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27	Q28	Q29	Q30	POST-CLASS TOTAL	
37	6	6	6	6	1	6	6	3	6	6	1	5	6	6	2	5	6	6	2	6	6	5	5	6	6	5	6	5	5	4	150	-
67	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	2	5	5	1	6	4	6	2	6	6	5	5	5	4	4	2	5	2	2	4	5	6	6	140	+
98	6	6	6	6	4	4	3	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	4	1	6	6	4	4	5	3	5	6	4	5	3	6	2	147	+	
39	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	1	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	6	1	6	6	6	5	168	+	
29	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	4	6	1	6	5	6	6	4	6	6	6	6	5	6	1	5	6	6	6	5	162	+
61	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	1	6	6	1	6	1	6	6	6	6	6	4	4	6	6	1	6	1	1	6	6	6	6	146	+
31	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	6	6	6	6	6	1	6	5	5	6	3	6	5	5	6	6	6	6	4	6	6	6	4	163	+
77	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	6	5	6	3	6	5	5	4	5	5	4	4	5	5	6	5	6	6	6	4	159	+	
15	6	6	5	6	6	5	6	5	6	6	6	6	2	6	3	6	6	6	5	3	5	5	3	5	5	3	6	5	6	5	154	-
19	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	1	6	4	6	5	5	6	6	6	6	2	6	4	5	6	6	6	5	163	0
49	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	6	3	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	6	6	6	4	6	6	6	1	168	0
27	6	6	5	5	6	4	5	6	6	6	3	6	3	6	4	6	5	3	4	4	5	5	4	6	3	4	5	6	6	4	147	-
97	6	6	6	6	6	4	6	6	6	6	6	6	3	5	2	5	4	5	6	6	6	6	4	6	3	3	4	5	6	4	153	+
52	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	1	6	6	6	6	4	6	6	6	6	6	6	1	6	6	6	6	4	166	+
23	6	6	6	5	6	5	5	6	6	6	5	6	4	6	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	6	5	5	2	4	6	6	4	2	152	-
79	5	5	5	5	6	4	6	5	4	6	2	6	3	5	3	4	4	3	5	6	6	6	5	4	2	6	5	5	6	5	142	+
99	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	1	6	6	5	6	5	6	5	5	6	3	5	5	5	6	3	6	3	4	5	6	6	5	155	+
84	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	6	5	6	6	6	5	5	6	6	6	6	5	6	1	6	6	6	6	5	169	-
43	6	6	3	6	6	5	6	5	6	6	5	5	5	6	4	5	6	5	5	5	6	6	5	5	2	5	5	5	6	5	156	-
113	113	108	111	107	103	108	93	110	113	84	112	58	112	85	103	98	91	99	98	103	106	80	107	60	83	105	105	111	81	2960	+	

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## ABSTRACT

### TEACHING BIBLICAL COUNSELING PRINCIPLES AT SAN FRANCISCO BIBLE CHURCH, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

Roger Jeong, DMin  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2021  
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Matthew D. Haste

This project taught biblical counseling principles to members of San Francisco Bible Church in San Francisco, California. Chapter 1 presented the history and ministry context of San Francisco Bible Church and the goals of this project. Chapter 2 provided exegesis of five passages of Scripture (Ps 19; 2 Tim 3:14-17; Col 3:1-17; Rom 15:1-13; Eph 4:7-16) to show that God has provided every Christian with all that they need to care for one another through his Word. Chapter 3 explored the theoretical and practical foundations for biblical counseling. Chapter 4 described the project and the timeframe in which the project was executed. Chapter 5 evaluated the project based on the completion of the specified goals. This project sought to instruct and equip Christians in biblical counseling principles so they might take part in God's call for all believers to provide counseling care for one another, spurring one another onto greater Christlikeness.

## VITA

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Pastoral Intern, San Francisco Bible Church, San Francisco, California, 2007-2013

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