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EQUIPPING PASTORS OF THE RUSSELL CREEK BAPTIST
ASSOCIATION IN GREENSBURG, KENTUCKY,
TO COUNSEL BIBLICALLY

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

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

by
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December 2023

APPROVAL SHEET

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Defense Date: September 12, 2023

For the glory of God

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PREFACE

As I reflect on my doctoral journey over the past few years, there are many people I would like to thank. First of all, I give thanks and praise to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for providing strength, endurance, and the peace of God that surpasses all understanding. I would like to thank my wife, Karen, for your encouragement, love, and sacrifice throughout this journey. When I first mentioned that I felt God was calling me to pursue this journey, you immediately offered your support and have prayed for me throughout the journey. I would like to thank my children, Eli, Isaac, and Kali, and my daughter-in-law, Faith, for your love, support, and understanding throughout this journey—especially when we went on vacation and I was only present with you during breakfast and at dinner each day due to writing continually. To Bro. Blake, thank you for your encouragement during this journey, and thank you for your continual prayers. To my parents, my sister, and Terry, thank you for all of the prayers and encouragement along this journey. To Greensburg Baptist Church, thank you so much for the opportunity to grow through academic study, and thank you for the opportunity to equip others. To Dr. Matthew Haste, my doctoral supervisor, simply saying “thank you” seems inadequate. You have been so gracious and kind to me throughout this process. Thank you for stretching, counseling, loving, and encouraging me. To Dr. Torey Teer, thank you for your excellent work as editor. To God be the glory!

Eric Todd Young

Greensburg, Kentucky

December 2023

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

When I was called into the gospel ministry, I had no formal theological training. I had spent the past twenty-eight years working in the corporate world. I immediately enrolled in seminary and earned a Master of Divinity. However, after beginning to serve as a pastor, it became apparent that pastors receive many requests to perform counseling. As I began to observe the pastors in the Russell Creek Baptist Association (RCBA), I noticed that the vast majority of the association's pastors have little, if any, formal biblical counseling training. Therefore, I felt compelled to provide a resource to the association that will equip the pastors to counsel biblically.

Context

The RCBA is headquartered in Greensburg, Kentucky, and consists of thirty churches that are located in Green, Taylor, and Adair counties. Although each of these thirty churches are members of the association, each church is autonomous in regard to church government. Each church has a pastor, deacons, and a leadership team.

The association was founded over forty years ago and is led by an associational mission strategist (AMS). The association is blessed by the fact that the current AMS has been serving in this role since 1993 and by the fact that the AMS is respected among each of the churches. The AMS works with pastors and church leaders in the association to strengthen and equip the pastors, church leaders, and ultimately the congregations of each church.

Throughout the year, various meetings are led by the AMS. These meetings occur at least six times each year. During these meetings, the pastor and church leaders

from each church come together and meet in a central location. In general, the majority of these meetings function much like a business meeting for the association. However, the meetings also serve as an excellent opportunity for the AMS to communicate with the pastors and church leaders in a face-to-face environment and as a wonderful opportunity for pastors and church leaders to network.

The AMS uses some of these meetings as an opportunity to perform training. In addition, the AMS also uses some of these meetings as an opportunity to make the pastors aware of additional external training opportunities. However, the vast majority of training that is provided by the association, or promoted via external providers is in the form of evangelistic training. To this point, no type of formal biblical counseling training has been provided at the association level.

The vast majority of pastors who serve in this association serve in a bi-vocational capacity. In fact, only two of the thirty churches in the association have full-time pastors. In addition, several pastors in the association have little, if any, formal theological training. As a result, there was a pressing need for the pastors in this association to be trained in sound biblical counseling principles.

Many times existing external biblical counseling training opportunities occur during the daytime. As one considers this particular association and the fact that the majority of pastors in the association maintain another full-time job in addition to serving as a pastor, it brings attention to the fact that the association should provide biblical counseling training opportunities. In addition, these training opportunities should be held during the evening hours to enable the pastors to have the opportunity to attend.

Rationale

Given the fact that the majority of the pastors in the association have little, if any formal biblical counseling training coupled with the fact that the vast majority of the pastors in the association serve in a bi-vocational capacity and are extremely busy, there

was a vital need for the pastors in the association to be trained in sound biblical counseling principles. In fact, no type of biblical counseling training existed within the association, nor had it been historically provided. This was an area that warranted improvement within the association. Whether or not the counselee had verbally requested biblical counseling, the very fact that they consulted with a pastor implies that biblical counseling was desired.

Most churches in the association are small in nature. This allows the pastor to personally know the congregation. When a pastor in this association receives a request to provide counseling, most of the time the counseling situation arises from within the church. The situation could be a wife whose husband has suddenly announced that he no longer loves her and wants a divorce, or the situation could be that a child of parents within the congregation has made a horrible decision. The list goes on and on. However, the common denominator is that the pastor loves the people involved in each of the situations. In that moment, the pastor finds himself being almost as shocked as the individual that he is counseling. As a result, a pastor who does not have formal counseling training finds himself tempted to counsel from feelings of emotion, instead of providing true biblical counseling. This presents a dangerous situation, as the counselee is looking to the pastor to provide biblical counseling, but is not likely to receive it due to the pastor not being trained in biblical counseling principles.

I have a heart for the pastors in the association, and I provided through this project a resource to make biblical counseling easier and provided an opportunity for pastors to network. This project provided a four-week biblical counseling program at the associational level and focused on equipping the pastors to counsel biblically. During this four-week timeframe, pastors of the association were invited to come together to receive formal biblical counseling training. At the end of the training, the pastors walked away from the training program with a manual to keep that can be used as a resource whenever he is asked to provide counseling for any area that is covered in the manual. Through the

implementation of this project, the pastor will be comfortable in using this manual much like a “Biblical Counseling 101” manual.

As mentioned above, this project provided a network of pastors for biblical counseling issues. This provided an opportunity to discuss complex counseling issues with another pastor. Hopefully, with two pastors working together, the issues can be appropriately identified and proper counsel given. Also, assuming that both pastors are taking time to assess the situation, this helps to confirm that the pastor has provided correct biblical counsel.

Part of the training focused on teaching pastors how to listen objectively. So many times, pastors hear a category such as “homosexuality,” “transgender,” “addiction,” “divorce,” and instantly respond from the mindset of what they think, instead of listening to the counselee to try to determine why the counselee has these feelings. Most areas that pastors provide counsel are the result of some type of sin. This sin will either have been committed by the counselee, or the sin will have been committed against the counselee or someone they love. Sometimes pastors are quickly able to identify the sin, but struggle to provide adequate biblical counsel for the actual issue that the counselee is experiencing.

Finally, I identified the current approach to counseling among the pastors in the group. My initial observation was that the majority of these pastors are not functioning out of a committed method of counseling that could be labeled as integrative or secular. Instead, they had not thought much about counseling until the moment that someone is sitting in the office. At that moment, that pastor somehow tried to apply the Bible to the situation that was presented. However, I desired to strengthen biblical counseling within the association and provided a sound basis for this to occur. I realized that the situation was a marathon and not a sprint.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip pastors in the Russell Creek Baptist Association in Greensburg, Kentucky, to counsel biblically.

Goals

The following four goals were established to determine the implementation and the completion of this project. The first three goals focused on the implementation of the project. The fourth goal focused on assessing the ongoing effectiveness of the resource material provided in the training sessions.

1. The first goal was to assess the pastors in the Russell Creek Baptist Association regarding the current level of biblical counseling competency and to seek input from the pastors on which counseling areas are considered to be the most pressing in their local church setting.
2. The second goal was to develop a four-session Biblical Counseling 101 training curriculum and accompanying manual.
3. The third goal was to teach the four-session Biblical Counseling 101 training course so as to equip pastors in the RCBA of Greensburg, Kentucky, to counsel biblically.
4. The fourth goal was to develop and implement a plan for ongoing communication among the pastors of the RCBA in order to share resources and provide mutual advice in biblical counseling cases while maintaining confidentiality.

Specific research methodology measured when these four goals were completed successfully.¹ This methodology and the procedures used to measure the completion of each goal are described in the following section.

Research Methodology

Successful completion of this project depended upon the completion of these four goals. The first goal was to assess the pastors in the RCBA regarding the current level of biblical counseling competency and to seek input from the pastors on which counseling areas are considered to be the most pressing in their local church setting. Prior

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

to the first session, a Basics of Counseling Assessment (BCA) was administered to the pastors of the association.² This pre-seminar assessment served to gauge each pastor's level of biblical counseling knowledge and also sought input from the pastors as to the counseling areas that were felt to be the most important in the local church. This goal would be considered successfully met when 40 percent of the pastors from the member churches of the association complete and return the BCA and the results have been compiled and a determination of the counseling competency has been made and the most pressing counseling areas were identified.

The second goal was to develop a four-session Biblical Counseling 101 training curriculum and accompanying manual. The course was conducted synchronously via Zoom and began with an introduction to biblical counseling. Each session was approximately one and one-half hours in length and included teaching and time for classroom discussion. The course primarily focused on providing competency in the area of biblical counseling. This goal was measured by an expert panel consisting of the Associational Mission Strategist, one biblical counselor, and two pastors from the association who have a minimum of a Master of Divinity degree. A curriculum evaluation tool was prepared for the expert panel to utilize in order to evaluate the course materials to ensure that all course materials were faithful to the Scriptures, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the curriculum.³ In order for this goal to be successfully met, 90 percent of the evaluation criteria had to meet or exceed the sufficient level. In the event that the initial feedback should yield less than 90 percent, the curriculum would be revised in accordance with the panel's evaluation until such time that the criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level.

² See appendix 1.

³ See appendix 2.

The third goal was to teach the four-session Biblical Counseling 101 training course so as to equip pastors in the RCBA of Greensburg, Kentucky, to counsel biblically. This occurred synchronously via Zoom. All pastors who serve in the RCBA were invited to attend. The content portion of this goal was measured by re-administering the BCA within two weeks after participants finished the course⁴ and would be considered successfully met when a t-test for dependent samples demonstrates a positive statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-seminar results. In order to measure the participants' satisfaction with the course, an end-of-course ministry plan evaluation was given to each participant. The evaluation allowed participants to evaluate the course for its content, presentation, and applicability.⁵ The satisfaction aspect of this goal would be considered to be successfully met when 90 percent of the participants have completed the course evaluation.

The fourth goal was to develop and implement a plan for ongoing communication among the pastors of the RCBA in order to share resources and provide mutual advice in biblical counseling cases while maintaining confidentiality. As part of the BCA, the pastors were asked about communication preferences on an ongoing basis regarding the ongoing effectiveness of the resource material. This goal was measured by evaluating the responses to the applicable area of the survey and by setting up the preferred communication venue. This goal would be considered successfully met when the means of communication has been established and a plan is in place for future meetings.

⁴ Only participants who have attended all sessions will be considered as having finished the course. Any participant who is not able to attend a particular session may arrange for a make-up session or may complete that particular session via a video recording of the session.

⁵ See appendix 3.

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

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

Biblical counseling. Biblical counseling is a form of discipleship that is focused on the care of souls. Robert W. Kellemen describes that “Gospel-centered counseling promotes personal change centered on the Person of Christ through the personal ministry of the Word.”⁶ John Piper uses this definition: “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.”⁷

According to David Powlison, there are three priorities of biblical counseling:

“(1) articulating biblical truth and developing our systematic theology of care for the soul, (2) exposing, debunking, and reinterpreting alternative models, (3) learning what we can from other models.”⁸ Finally, Kellemen states,

We believe that wise counseling centers on Jesus Christ—His sinless life, death on the cross, burial, resurrection, present reign, and promised return. Through the Gospel, God reveals the depths of sin, the scope of suffering, and the breadth, length, height, and depth of grace. Wise counseling gets to the heart of personal and interpersonal problems by bringing to bear the truth, mercy, and power of Christ’s grace. There is no true restoration of the soul and there are no truly God-honoring relationships without understanding the desperate condition we are in without Christ and apart from experiencing the joy of progressive deliverance from that condition through God’s mercies. We point people to a person, Jesus our Redeemer, and not to a program, theory, or experience.⁹

Sufficiency of Scripture. Timothy Ward explains that sufficiency “serves fundamentally as an assertion about authority in theology and in the life of the church. It

⁶ Robert W. Kellemen, *Gospel-Centered Counseling: How Christ Changes Lives*, Equipping Biblical Counselors (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 16.

⁷ James MacDonald, Robert W. Kellemen, and Stephen Viars, *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2013), 24.

⁸ David Powlison, *The Biblical Counseling Movement: History and Context* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2010), 278.

⁹ Kellemen, *Gospel-Centered Counseling*, 16.

asserts Scripture as the means by which God speaks and acts authoritatively with regard to the church and the world by the Holy Spirit.”¹⁰ John M. Frame explains,

Since Scripture conveys God’s whole will for us, it covers all areas of our lives (1 Cor. 10:31). Scripture certainly does have a focus—the message of salvation. But that focus does not limit Scripture’s message to some single area of man’s life. The message of salvation is of salvation for all of life, for history, philosophy, aesthetics, psychology. Scripture corrects our ideas in all these areas, both the naïve and the theoretical.¹¹

Sufficiency of Scripture makes biblical counseling different from every other form of counseling, as Scripture is the basis for counseling. As Frame describes, “Scripture does not, of course, tell us everything we need to know about everything. We must look outside Scripture if we want specific directions on how to fix a sink or repair a car. But Scripture tells us everything that God wants us to know ‘concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man’s salvation, faith and life.’”¹²

Two delimitations will apply to this project. Participants will be limited to men who serve as pastors in the RCBA. By serving as a pastor in the RCBA, these men have affirmed the Baptist Faith and Message 2000. Another delimitation of this project is that the course is offered in a condensed basis, over four sessions. During these four weeks, the basic principles of biblical counseling will be taught, but the participants may need other forms of additional training prior to applying these principles to their personal ministries.

Conclusion

Through the Bible, God has provided the resource that pastors need to provide sound, biblical counsel. The following chapters will support how the Bible can give the

¹⁰ Timothy Ward, *Word and Supplement: Speech Acts, Biblical Texts, and the Sufficiency of Scripture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 21.

¹¹ John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Word of God, A Theology of Lordship 4* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2010), 410.

¹² Frame, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, 612.

pastor confidence and also the competency that is needed to provide biblical counsel. Chapter 2 will focus on the sufficiency of Scripture as support for the biblical philosophy of counseling. Chapter 3 will focus on the importance of the counselor having a character that is Christ-like, using the resources that are available, and the importance of a sound theological foundation. Chapter 4 will focus on the details and the description of the project. Chapter 5 will give a detailed evaluation of the project.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR THE PROJECT

The thesis for this chapter is that three specific passages from the New Testament affirm that God has provided pastors with proper spiritual resources to use as the basis for counseling. In addition, God has charged pastors with the care of souls. From reviewing Hebrews 13:17, it is evident that the pastor will give an account for the souls under his care. Therefore, the pastor must understand that he has a spiritual responsibility to minister the word for the sake of spiritual growth. A review of 2 Timothy 3:10-17 will prove that the foundation that God has provided through His Word is sufficient for counseling. Finally, Galatians 5:16-25 will help to provide a framework that a counselor can employ to help Christians address sin.

Hebrews 13:17

Overview

At the beginning of this verse, the reader finds the phrase “obey your leaders and submit to them.”¹ The importance of the congregation obeying and submitting to the leaders will be examined in detail later. However, this verse explains that the leaders are to keep watch over souls and will give an account for those souls. Therefore, the pastor has a spiritual responsibility to counsel those under his care in the flock. This spiritual responsibility is to be exercised with joy.

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations come from the *English Standard Version*.

Who Are the Leaders, and What Authority Do They Have?

In order to understand the proper context of this verse, it is crucial to understand which leaders are being referred to in this verse. Earlier in chapter 13, the instruction was given to “remember your leaders” (v. 7). Although it is uncertain who authored the book of Hebrews, it becomes clear that the author had great confidence in the church’s leaders.² The author seems to have confidence in both the prior leaders of the church as well as the current leadership of the church.³

Although the mind might immediately focus on current leaders, one should not overlook the prior leaders. Prior leaders have a role that continues.⁴ At some point, current leaders will be prior leaders. If leaders faithfully represent Christ, seeds are planted that Christ can allow to grow, develop and mature at the proper time.

Church leaders have authority, and that authority should not be abused. In addition to giving an account for the souls in their care, church leaders will also give a personal account, as the individual church leader is under authority and must give an account of themselves.⁵ Luke Timothy Johnson states that “the realization that leaders must render an account not only for their own lives but for the care they have shown for the lives of those under their authority should be a powerful check against the natural tendency toward arrogance among those placed in such positions.”⁶ However, one must understand that the authority of a church leader rests on their function, not on their title.⁷

² F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, rev. ed., New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 385.

³ Bruce, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 385.

⁴ James W. Thompson, *Hebrews*, Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 284.

⁵ Luke Timothy Johnson, *Hebrews: A Commentary*, New Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 350.

⁶ Johnson, *Hebrews*, 350.

⁷ Thompson, *Hebrews*, 284.

The function that the authority of a church leader rests on is the care of souls, and is identified by the author in this verse. In this verse, the writer is describing people as he uses the word for souls (*psychai*).⁸ As the author writes in this way, he uses a more vivid approach than if he had simply used the word “you.”⁹ James Thompson states,

The author mentions neither a liturgical role for them nor their place as guardians of orthodox teaching but focuses on their pastoral role. In using a term that is used nowhere else for the role of leaders (*agrypnousin*) but is used elsewhere in warnings to “be on guard” in the presence of eschatological peril (BDAG, 16; cf. Mark 13:33; Luke 21:36), he indicates the seriousness of their task: they ensure that the pilgrim people continue to endure in response to the saving work of Christ and will ultimately “give an account” (*logon apodōsontes*) like a steward entrusted with the management of the account of his master (cf. Luke 16:2).¹⁰

What Is the Significance of Obeying and Submitting to the Leaders?

As mentioned previously, God has charged pastors with the care of souls.

Verse 17 is a crucial verse to consider to understand the great responsibility that pastors are charged with in caring for the souls of the flock. As one reads this particular verse, he must not forget what has happened in the previous verses. As William L. Lane explained,

Former leaders had carried out the preaching of the word of God, which was foundational for the community (v 7). That word, crystallized in the confessional formulation of v 8, was distorted by the “various strange teachings” (v 9), which threatened to move the community from its foundation. The current leadership now exercises a ministry of vigilance for the community, so that they do not forget the word of God or exchange it for mere human tradition.¹¹

The responsibility of pastors to care for souls is a serious responsibility.

Therefore, the writer of Hebrews emphasizes the importance of having the proper attitude

⁸ Donald Guthrie, *Hebrews: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries 15 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1983), 277.

⁹ Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 277.

¹⁰ Thompson, *Hebrews*, 284.

¹¹ William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 47B (Dallas: Word, 1991), 553.

toward church leaders.¹² When the author instructs the reader to obey the leaders and submit to them, the assumption is that the leaders are speaking God’s Word and leading biblically.¹³ Donald Guthrie explains that “the writer is concerned only about attributes and mentions two which are complementary to each other—*obey* (*peithesthe*) and *submit* (*hypeikete*), the latter word occurring only here in the New Testament.”¹⁴

Under the assumption that the leaders are speaking God’s Word and are leading biblically, the church members are admonished to submission to the authority of the church leaders and to obedience to obey the leaders.¹⁵ The vocabulary used by the writer is instructive.¹⁶ Usually when the verb ὑποτάσσεσθαι, “to obey” or “to subject oneself,” is used throughout the New Testament, it “is used to call Christians to the acknowledgment of constituted ordinances and authorities.”¹⁷ Lane explains that the writer “defines the obligatory conduct of his audience with the verb πείθεσθαι, ‘to be persuaded,’ ‘to obey.’”¹⁸ Writing in this manner does not simply suggest obedience; instead it demands obedience.

Certain tension likely existed within this church that arose due to the teaching by certain visitors that taught new doctrines and were perceived as more attractive or exciting than the typical leaders who faithfully proclaimed God’s Word.¹⁹ However, the obedience and submission that this text intends is to the leaders who are truly endeavoring to watch over the souls of the congregation. F. F. Bruce explains,

¹² Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 277.

¹³ Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible, vol. 36 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 578.

¹⁴ Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 277.

¹⁵ Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 554.

¹⁶ Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 554.

¹⁷ Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 554.

¹⁸ Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 554.

¹⁹ Bruce, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 386.

Nevertheless it was those local leaders, and not the purveyors of strange teaching, who had a real concern for the welfare of the church and a sense of their accountability to God in this respect. If the discharge of their responsibility and the ultimate rendering of their account were made a burden to them, the resultant disadvantage would fall on those who were led as well as on the leaders.²⁰

Unless the church members obey the leaders and submit to their authority, it will not be possible to care for the members' souls adequately. An overseer must constantly watch over those who are under his care. This task is one in which a good pastor or overseer will lose sleep. When the church member obeys the leaders and submits to them, caring for souls is a constant and challenging task. However, the task becomes even more difficult in situations where a member of the congregation strays beyond the pastor's control. Nevertheless, an account will still be given.²¹

How Should the Leader Perform His Task?

As the author writes, he advises the reader to obey and submit to the leaders. The intended result of submitting and obeying the leaders is so the leaders can perform their obligations joyfully (*meta charas*) and not with groaning or complaining (*mē stenazontes*). The term “joy” is always used as a positive quality in the Bible, and this verse “recalls the attitude with which the hearers accepted the expropriation of their property (Heb 10:34), the reason for which Jesus despised the shame of the cross (12:2), and what is not experienced during discipline but only afterward (12:11).”²²

Leaders are to lead joyfully and not in an overbearing manner.²³ Guthrie states, “This is expressed negatively as *not sadly*, or more literally ‘not with groaning’ (*mēstenazontes*).”²⁴ Paul uses this same word in 2 Corinthians 5:2 to describe the

²⁰ Bruce, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 386.

²¹ Bruce, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 386.

²² Johnson, *Hebrews*, 351.

²³ Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 278.

²⁴ Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 278.

groaning of the Christian that is the result of desiring to put on the heavenly dwelling.²⁵ The writer's desire is for leaders to experience an obedient and submissive response from the congregation they serve.²⁶

The verse ends with ἀλυσιτελὲς γὰρ ὑμῖν τοῦτο, which translates “for this would be unprofitable to you.” Lane explains, “The term ἀλυσιτελὲς, which is found only here in biblical literature, appears to be derived from the language of commerce, carrying forward the metaphor of accounting in v 17b.”²⁷ This indicates that the community's welfare corresponds to how they respond to their leaders.²⁸ Therefore, the leaders and the church should work to resolve any tension that exists.

Craig R. Koester explains that “watching over souls involves tending the hope that anchors the soul to heaven and fostering the perseverance that leads to salvation.”²⁹ For the pastor's work to be joyful in the area of the care of souls, trust and cooperation must be present from the church members.³⁰ When trust and cooperation are on display in the church member's life, the member is likely to obey the leader and submit to his leadership. If the community endures to the end, it must obey its leaders and submit to them.³¹

Summary

Hebrews 13:17 helps to support the thesis that God has provided pastors with proper spiritual resources to use as the basis for counseling. In order for the pastor to be

²⁵ Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 278.

²⁶ Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 556.

²⁷ Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 556.

²⁸ Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 556.

²⁹ Koester, *Hebrews*, 578.

³⁰ Johnson, *Hebrews*, 351.

³¹ Thompson, *Hebrews*, 284.

influential in biblical counseling, those under his care must realize the significance of obeying and submitting to the leaders. As the pastor realizes that he is responsible for caring for souls, the vast importance of performing biblical counseling becomes clear, and his task can be performed with joy.

2 Timothy 3:10-17

Overview

The pastor can look to the Bible to see God’s foundation for counseling. The foundation that God has provided through His Word is sufficient. In order to provide sound biblical counsel, the pastor must rely on the sufficiency of Scripture. In this section, 2 Timothy 3:10-17 will be examined. After examining this passage, one will see that the pastor can confidently rely on Scripture throughout the biblical counseling process, as God’s Word is sufficient.

What Does It Mean to Follow?

In verses 10- 11, Paul seems to be reminding Timothy that he has followed the example that Paul set. By doing this, Timothy has observed that Paul has remained faithful to the gospel that he has proclaimed. The verb that is used in verse 10 is based on *akolouthein*.³² This verb means to follow but could also indicate following a disciple.³³ The verb can also be used to indicate to follow with the mind or to pay attention.³⁴ Some of the sufferings that are mentioned in the text that Timothy followed occurred prior to Timothy joining Paul. Therefore, Philip Towner states that the meaning “must fall into

³² Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible, vol. 35A (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 416.

³³ Johnson, *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 416.

³⁴ Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 569.

the cognitive semantic range: knowledge of; perception and even affirmation.”³⁵ Paul’s ministry endured both persecutions and sufferings. Nevertheless, Paul remained faithful. This set an excellent example.

Nine Specific Qualities That Timothy Followed from Paul

In verse 10, Paul lists nine things that Timothy followed: teaching, conduct, aim in life, faith, patience, love, steadfastness, persecutions, and sufferings. Paul uses μου to preface the list. Paul has a joint reason for prefacing the list in this manner: (1) to state that it governs all that follows and (2) for emphasis.³⁶ At the beginning of Paul’s list is teaching. Paul battled false teachers at various times throughout his ministry. No doubt, this caused many frustrations for Paul. Paul wanted to contrast his teaching with the teaching of false teachers.³⁷

Paul mentions his conduct and aim in life as the next two virtues in the list. The teaching that Paul provided was godly. Teaching is not simply for the benefit of the listener. Instead, godly teaching always makes a change in the teacher’s life. Paul’s conduct and his aim in life were two ways that his life was changed as a result of his teaching.

Paul mentions that faith, patience, love, and steadfastness are the next virtues. These virtues are crucial when teaching, especially when teaching in difficult situations. πίστει is used here to indicate a complete dependence on God, while μακροθυμία most likely indicates patience or forbearance toward others.³⁸ Love was a virtue that Paul and Timothy needed and was on display in their lives. However, love was not present in the

³⁵ Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 569.

³⁶ George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 439.

³⁷ Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 439.

³⁸ Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 439.

lives of their opponents.³⁹ Steadfastness can be defined as the ability to endure or to persevere.⁴⁰ Steadfastness is highly significant when considering the last two items in Paul's list: persecutions and sufferings.⁴¹ Persecutions and sufferings are not virtues. Instead, these persecutions and sufferings are events and the consequences of those events that impacted Paul's life that Timothy was aware of.⁴²

What Is the Significance of Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra?

In verse 11, Paul mentions that the persecutions and sufferings occurred while he was in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra. Antioch was a Roman colony and an influential city. During Paul's first missionary journey, Antioch was one of the stops. After Paul preached here, the Jews successfully turned people against Paul and Barnabas. Persecution began that forced both Paul and Barnabas to leave.⁴³

Iconium was located on a crossroads that connected Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia with the capital of Rome. Iconium was known to be a prosperous city. Paul and Barnabas initially enjoyed success in Iconium with both Gentiles and Jews. However, a division began among the people by some of the Jews. This division eventually grew into the threat of potential harm to Paul and Barnabas, including the threat of stoning. Paul and Barnabas left and went to Lystra.⁴⁴

Lystra was a Roman military colony. While in Lystra, the Jews continued to cause problems for Paul. According to Acts 14:19, while Paul was at Lystra, he was

³⁹ William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46 (Dallas: Word, 2000), 557.

⁴⁰ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 557.

⁴¹ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 557.

⁴² Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 557.

⁴³ Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 573.

⁴⁴ Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 573.

stoned, dragged out of the city, and left for dead. Timothy was familiar with Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra, as these towns were near the area where Timothy was from.⁴⁵ Paul's use of these three towns in this verse is intentional, as Paul "wants to remind Timothy of his commitment to the apostle and his ministry from the very beginning. Paul reminds Timothy that from the very beginning, ministry has involved persecutions."⁴⁶

Persecutions and Sufferings Are Part of Living a Godly Life in Jesus Christ

Verse 12 tells the reader that all who desire to live a godly life in Jesus Christ will be persecuted. Christianity focuses on holiness, not necessarily happiness as much of the world defines it. Paul's sufferings and persecutions were not intended to be isolated to Paul. The key word in verse 12 is εὐσεβῶς, which translates "in a godly manner," and the key word in verse 13 is πονηροί, which translates "wicked." These two words are in sharp contrast to each other. William Mounce explains,

Timothy is suffering because he is pursuing godliness, which stands in contrast to the sinful world, specifically Ephesus. The opponents are not being persecuted because they are pursuing evil. V 12 hammers the final nail into the coffin of any aberrant gospel that preaches an abundant life devoid of persecutions. Jesus also made it clear that his followers would experience the same suffering as their master and would be blessed for it. Paul understood this well in both his experience and teaching.⁴⁷

In verse 13, Paul uses contrast to explain what will happen to the evil people and the imposters. The verse states that these evil people will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. The evil people are in sharp contrast to those who desire to be godly. While those who desire to be godly are persecuted, the evil people continually worsen. Paul continues to emphasize how evil will increase in the last days and views his opponents as one example of evil. These evil people are avoiding persecution due to

⁴⁵ Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 440.

⁴⁶ Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 440.

⁴⁷ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 559-60.

belonging to the world.⁴⁸ Although the evil people and imposters will go from bad to worse, George Knight explains how Paul looks at the progress of these people from different perspectives:

The statements that the false teachers “will progress to worse” and that “they will not make further progress” (v. 9) show that Paul can look at their progress from two entirely different perspectives. This verse recognizes that evil becomes intensively worse as time goes on. The other recognizes that the teaching of evil does not necessarily capture a wider audience as it becomes more intense and therefore does not become more extensive as it becomes more intensive.⁴⁹

The Importance of Obeying the Instructions

Verse 14 begins with the phrase “but as for you.” Paul again uses contrast in his writing to get Timothy’s attention and point Timothy in a different direction. These instructions continue through verse 17. Towner explains that Paul’s instructions are carefully constructed:

The basic instruction (v. 14a); (2) two causes, motives or reasons for obeying the instructions, followed by a statement of the Scriptures’ salvific power that validates the motives (vv. 14-b-15ab); (3) supporting argument for the power of the Scriptures, based on their nature and function (v. 16); (4) final statement of the purpose or result of the stated uses of the Scriptures that circles back to Timothy in his situation of ministry and opposition.⁵⁰

In verses 14-15, Timothy is reminded of a significant fact. Timothy had been taught. Now he is to remember and practice what he has been taught. Thomas Lea and Hayne Griffin Jr. elaborate that “Timothy’s need was not to search out new novelties on which he might squander his energies but to remain in the truths he had learned.”⁵¹

Timothy can feel confident that he has been taught correctly. Timothy was very familiar

⁴⁸ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 560.

⁴⁹ Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 442.

⁵⁰ Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 580.

⁵¹ Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, New American Commentary, vol. 34 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 233.

with the integrity of those from whom he had been taught. These teachers included Paul, as well as Timothy's mother and grandmother. Lea and Griffin explain,

An incentive for remaining in these truths was the personal impact of his teachers upon him. The reference to the "whom" who had instructed Timothy is a plural pronoun in the Greek. Paul was thinking of the moral impact made on Timothy's life by his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois (1:5) as well as by Paul himself. Perhaps the term also included a reference to other godly Christian instructors, such as some of the "many witnesses" of 2 Tim 2:2. As White observes, "the truths for which St. Paul is contending were commended to Timothy by the sanction of the best and noblest personalities whom he had ever known or heard of. That fact alone should have led Timothy to continue to stand fast in the truths of the Gospel."⁵²

The Sufficiency and Uses of Scripture

In order for the pastor to look to the Scriptures as the foundation for counseling, he must be able to rely on the sufficiency of Scripture. Verse 16 is crucial as one thinks of the sufficiency of Scripture. This verse makes it clear that all Scripture is breathed out by God, or comes from God. Because all Scripture is God-breathed, it is inspired. This is critical. For example, if God had breathed out only a portion of Scripture, Scripture would not be sufficient. Because Scripture comes from God, it is profitable for Timothy in his current task and to use in ministry.⁵³ As Paul writes this particular verse, he not only states that God breathes out all Scripture, but Paul also lists three separate ways that Scripture is useful: teaching, reproof and correction, and for training in righteousness.

Paul first identifies that Scripture is useful for teaching. By teaching the truth of Scripture, false teaching can be exposed. Simply by its contents, Scripture instructs.⁵⁴ The pastor can rely on Scripture as the basis for biblical counseling. Scripture is the foundation of Christian instruction, and the prime function of Scripture within the community is about teaching.⁵⁵

⁵² Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 233.

⁵³ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 570.

⁵⁴ Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 449.

⁵⁵ Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 590.

Paul identifies that Scripture is useful for reproof and correction. As the pastor relies on the Scripture for biblical counseling, he can confidently know that Scripture is the pattern of truth and the standard of truth.⁵⁶ The Scriptures are to be guarded and used to correct error. Towner explains,

More specific is the activity described variously in the translations as “rebuking,” “convicting of sin,” “censure” or “reproof.” The term covers a range of activities all related to the process of making someone aware of sin, which begins with the educative act designed to produce self-awareness of sin and proceeds to the more immediately disciplinary stage of calling one up short for some specific misbehavior, and finally reaches the point at which “rebuke” is so harsh it becomes punitive. The difference is a matter of degree, the purpose of the activity being to make one conscious of sin in order that a change in behavior might be implemented (Titus 1:13).⁵⁷

Sometimes people view the reproof process as being negative. However, this process is not meant to be negative, as the intent is recovery or restoration. One cannot effectively be trained in righteousness if sinful activities are willfully present in their life. Scripture provides the guidelines for conduct and the content of belief, and is useful to train someone in righteousness.⁵⁸

Verse 17 reveals the goal of the instruction, training, and discipline. This verse plainly states that the goal of the instruction, training, and discipline is that the man of God may be competent and equipped for every good work. When the phrase “man of God” is used in this verse, it is a description that can apply to Timothy, to any Christian leader, or any Christian.⁵⁹ Regarding being competent, Knight states, “The sense of the passage is that scripture is given to enable any ‘person of God’ to meet the demands that God places on that person and in particular to equip Timothy the Christian leader for the

⁵⁶ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 570.

⁵⁷ Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 590-91.

⁵⁸ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 570.

⁵⁹ Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 450.

particular demands made on him.”⁶⁰ Being competent or capable is closely related to being equipped. Finally, Towner describes “every good work” as follows:

In the diction of these letters to Timothy, “good works” draws on Hellenistic ethical categories (already adapted by the church) to characterize the visible dimension of Christian existence in terms of service. It is a general characterization that can be concretized with any number of activities. Here the work of ministry is categorized as a “good work” (1 Tim 3:1), and the specific details of “every good work” may be filled in from the context.⁶¹

Summary

Second Timothy 3:10-17 helps support the thesis that God has provided pastors with proper spiritual resources to use as the basis for counseling by proving that the foundation that God has provided through His Word is sufficient. As the pastor understands that the goal of instruction, training, and discipline is that the man of God may be competent and equipped for every good work, persecutions become easier to process. The pastor will understand that he and those whom he counsels will be persecuted by all who desire to live a godly life in Jesus Christ.

Galatians 5:16-25

Overview

The counselor should look to the Holy Spirit to provide the power needed for counseling. This passage exhorts the Christian to be led by the Spirit instead of being led by desires of the flesh. The passage helps to provide a framework that a counselor can employ to help Christians address sin, which is often the basis of desiring counseling. Earlier in the book of Galatians, the Christians had been reminded that they received the Holy Spirit when they believed the gospel (Gal 3:2-5). Now the reader sees that the work

⁶⁰ Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 450.

⁶¹ Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 594.

of the Holy Spirit should be evident in the daily lives of Christians.⁶² This framework is most relevant for counseling a person through a sin issue.

The Conflict between Walking by the Spirit and the Desires of the Flesh

In verse 16, Paul instructs the Galatians to walk by the Spirit. By walking in the Spirit, Paul tells these people that the desires of the flesh will not be gratified. As the term “desires of the flesh” is used in this passage, it refers to “the human individual in his or her sin and depravity apart from the redeeming grace of God and the sanctifying work of the Spirit.”⁶³ As one thinks of the importance of walking in the Spirit, one must consider how compelling the desires of the flesh are. By itself, the human body is neutral, it is not necessarily sinful.⁶⁴ Warren Wiersbe explains, “If the Holy Spirit controls the body, then we walk in the Spirit; but if the flesh controls the body, then we walk in the lusts (desires) of the flesh. The Spirit and the flesh have different appetites, and this is what creates the conflict.”⁶⁵

The conflict between walking by the Spirit and the desires of the flesh confronts every Christian.⁶⁶ Earlier in this chapter of Galatians, in verse 13, Paul reminded these people that they have been called to be free.⁶⁷ Although the word “freedom” is not mentioned again specifically in this chapter, it is essential to note that

⁶² F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 243.

⁶³ Ronald Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 244.

⁶⁴ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary: New Testament*, vol. 1, *Matthew-Galatians* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 718.

⁶⁵ Wiersbe, *Matthew-Galatians*, 718.

⁶⁶ Timothy George, *Galatians*, New American Commentary, vol. 30 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 385.

⁶⁷ George, *Galatians*, 385.

Paul has not left the concept of freedom behind.⁶⁸ The way of the Spirit is both the way to freedom and the way of love.⁶⁹ In order to be compelled to love one's neighbor as oneself, the love must be generated by the Spirit.⁷⁰ Christians must realize that the freedom that Paul spoke about is constantly under attack by the enemy.⁷¹ Timothy George explains, "But the freedom to which we have been called in Christ is always under attack. It can be subverted by legalism or dissipated through antinomianism. True Christian liberty avoids these dangerous extremes by expressing itself in loving service to the neighbor and joyful fulfillment of the law of God."⁷²

As the term "false teachers" is mentioned throughout this document, the reference is to a person whose teaching contradicts the Bible. At the time of Paul's writing, false teachers were teaching the importance of keeping all of the various laws and rituals. These false teachers insisted that salvation was based on faith in Jesus Christ plus adherence to the various laws and rituals. However, Paul knew that Christians could not use the law to overcome the desires of the flesh.⁷³ Paul knew that the law had no power in this particular area.⁷⁴ Only through the work of the Holy Spirit can a believer successfully battle the desires of the flesh.⁷⁵ Paul proclaims that the power of the gospel

⁶⁸ George, *Galatians*, 385.

⁶⁹ Bruce, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 243.

⁷⁰ Bruce, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 243.

⁷¹ George, *Galatians*, 385.

⁷² George, *Galatians*, 385-86.

⁷³ Max Anders, *Galatians-Colossians*, Holman New Testament Commentary, vol. 8 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 64.

⁷⁴ Anders, *Galatians-Colossians*, 64.

⁷⁵ Anders, *Galatians-Colossians*, 64.

is that “life in the Spirit negates life controlled by the flesh.”⁷⁶ This is why Paul instructs these people to walk by the Spirit.

The Battle between the Desires of the Flesh and the Desires of the Spirit

In verse 17, Paul explains the battle that is present between the desires of the flesh and the desires of the Spirit. Paul describes with complete clarity that the flesh and the Spirit are opposed to each other diametrically.⁷⁷ Ronald Fung explains, “It is this opposition which explains why walking by the Spirit will inevitably result in the desires of the flesh not being carried out.”⁷⁸ The word “for” at the beginning of this verse seems to give a basis “for the promise that people who walk by the Spirit will not be enslaved to sinful passion.”⁷⁹ Douglas Moo explains that it is difficult to know precisely how to interpret this verse, particularly as it contains four clauses.⁸⁰ Moo explains, “The first two are parallel coordinate clauses affirming that ‘desires’ of the flesh are antithetical to desires of the Spirit. The third summarizes this conflict, while the fourth is either a final (purpose) clause or a result clause that refers to the frustration of human wishing.”⁸¹

Timothy George concludes that it seems best to interpret the conflict that Paul writes about here similarly to Romans 7:7-25.⁸² The reader does not know exactly what the desires were that Paul was referring to. For example, was Paul describing lusts of the flesh at war with the Spirit, or was Paul describing the holy yearning for God in conflict

⁷⁶ Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 41 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 245.

⁷⁷ Fung, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 249.

⁷⁸ Fung, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 249.

⁷⁹ Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 353-54.

⁸⁰ Moo, *Galatians*, 354.

⁸¹ Moo, *Galatians*, 354.

⁸² George, *Galatians*, 387.

with fleshly desires?⁸³ Paul seems to be pointing out in this verse that believers are not free to do what they want to do.⁸⁴ Instead, believers are called to live a holy and pleasing lifestyle to God.

Paul's instruction in verse 18 surely was welcomed by the people to whom he was writing. As mentioned earlier, false teaching was occurring, informing people that believers must believe in Jesus and keep the laws and rituals. Paul does not view the believer as a helpless spectator in the battle between flesh and the Spirit.⁸⁵ The assumption is made that when the Christian sides with the Spirit, the flesh can be overcome.⁸⁶ Paul makes it apparent in this verse that people whom the Spirit leads are not under the law. Bruce explains that if the Galatians were to step away from the concept of grace through Christ and once again turn back to the law, the outcome would be to willingly exchange the freedom that comes through the Spirit for bondage to the law.⁸⁷ Wiersbe sums this verse up by stating,

The solution is not to pit our will against the flesh, but to surrender our will to the Holy Spirit. This verse literally means, "but if you are willingly led by the Spirit, then you are not under the Law." The Holy Spirit writes God's Law on our hearts (Heb. 10:14-17) so that we desire to obey Him in love. Being "led of the Spirit" and "walking in the Spirit" are the opposites of yielding to the desires of the flesh.⁸⁸

When assessing the false teaching occurring at this time by the Judaizers, it is likely that the Judaizers also referred to the Spirit.⁸⁹ However, the Judaizers probably explained to their hearers that the Spirit was some type of auxiliary to the God-given law

⁸³ George, *Galatians*, 387.

⁸⁴ George, *Galatians*, 387.

⁸⁵ Fung, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 251.

⁸⁶ Fung, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 251.

⁸⁷ Bruce, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 245.

⁸⁸ Wiersbe, *Matthew-Galatians*, 718.

⁸⁹ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 247.

that would be of some benefit to followers in the area of obedience.⁹⁰ Richard

Longenecker explains that Paul taught that

the Spirit not only brings the believer into a new realm of spiritual existence but also (1) sensitizes the believer to what is contrary to God's will, (2) gives to the believer an intrinsic standard of values, and (3) enables the believer to do what is good, with expressions of that goodness being for the benefit of others. The Spirit alone is able to overcome the flesh by imparting the new life opened up by the work of Christ. And where the new life in Christ by the Spirit is present, no law is required to command it.⁹¹

Verses 19-24 are critical verses in this passage. At this point in the text, Paul begins to elaborate on works of the flesh. However, Paul presents his case by the literary tool of contrast as he contrasts the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit.⁹² Moo explains, "To some extent these contrasting lists elaborate verse 17 a-b; here are specifics about what the 'flesh desires' and what 'the Spirit desires.' But more generally Paul simply provides specifics about the contrast between flesh and Spirit that dominates this paragraph."⁹³

As Paul writes in verse 19 regarding specific works of the flesh, Paul uses the word "works" instead of the word "work." Paul defines the works of the flesh as being plural in number.⁹⁴ However, when Paul contrasts the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit, he does not use plurality.⁹⁵ George explains,

There is one fruit of the Spirit that manifests itself in nine Christian graces nicely grouped into three well-balanced triplets: (1) love, joy, peace; (2) patience, kindness, goodness; (3) faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. By contrast, the works of the flesh roll topsy-turvy from Paul's stylus, a seemingly random assortment of terms with no inherent consistency or logical sequence. As Bets has noted, "The seemingly chaotic arrangement of these terms is reflective of the chaotic nature of

⁹⁰ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 247.

⁹¹ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 247-48.

⁹² Moo, *Galatians*, 357.

⁹³ Moo, *Galatians*, 358.

⁹⁴ George, *Galatians*, 391.

⁹⁵ George, *Galatians*, 391.

evil; this chaos is to be contrasted with the oneness of the ‘fruit of the Spirit’ and its orderly arrangement (vv. 22-23).”⁹⁶

Bruce explains, “Paul considers that what constitutes proper behavior is self-evident—even the pagans having an innate awareness of it.”⁹⁷ When proper behavior is violated, the specific behavior shows itself for what it is.⁹⁸ At the end of Paul’s listing of the works of the flesh, Paul includes the phrase “and things like these.” By the list that Paul provided, the reader can certainly understand categories of sin today that also fall into this category. The list of sins that fall into this category is endless.

Interestingly, Paul includes at the end of verse 23 “against such things there is no law.” By including this phrase, Paul tells these people that although the false teachers insist on compliance with the various laws and rituals, no law applies to the fruit of the Spirit. Fung explains, “Paul’s words ultimately mean that the law is not against those who walk by the Spirit because in principle they are fulfilling the law.”⁹⁹ One must realize that just as the Holy Spirit brings conviction in the area of works of the flesh, the Holy Spirit can provide each of the areas that appear under the category of the fruit of the Spirit. In addition, the Holy Spirit helps to provide a framework that the counselor can employ to help Christians address sin throughout the biblical counseling process.

George explains that in verses 24-26, “Paul asserted the sufficiency of the Spirit to deal with the flesh by pointing the way to Christian victory.”¹⁰⁰ George describes “that way is the path of sanctification Paul described here in terms of the dual process of mortification, daily dying to the flesh, and vivification, continuous growth in grace

⁹⁶ George, *Galatians*, 391.

⁹⁷ Bruce, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 246.

⁹⁸ Bruce, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 246.

⁹⁹ Fung, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 273.

¹⁰⁰ George, *Galatians*, 404.

through the new life of the Spirit.”¹⁰¹ Paul is enforcing to the Galatians again that believers have the Holy Spirit.¹⁰² The Holy Spirit will strengthen believers in the fight against sin and provide guidance and direction.¹⁰³ Just as the Holy Spirit provides in the believer’s life, the Holy Spirit also provides the power that is needed for counseling.

Summary

Galatians 5:16-25 helps to support the thesis that God has provided pastors with proper spiritual resources to use as the basis for counseling, as this passage helps to provide a framework that a counselor can employ to help Christians address sin. By understanding the conflict between walking by the Spirit and the desires of the flesh and the battle between the desires of the flesh and the desires of the Spirit, the pastor is better equipped to counsel effectively. This helps the pastor to provide counsel that facilitates sanctification in the life of the counselee.

Conclusion

From looking at God’s Word, the reader can see that God has made clear that the pastor has various responsibilities, one of which is to counsel those who are in the flock under his care. God’s call to the pastorate includes a call to counsel. One day, each pastor will stand before God and give an account of the souls placed under his care. From looking at God’s Word, the pastor can also see God’s foundation for counseling and determine that this foundation is absolutely sufficient. The Holy Spirit plays an active role in counseling, as the Holy Spirit provides the power that is needed for effective biblical counseling. Finally, Jesus is the ultimate model for counseling, as He is the object of worship for the believer, and He provides the basis for discipleship.

¹⁰¹ George, *Galatians*, 404-5.

¹⁰² Anders, *Galatians-Colossians*, 66.

¹⁰³ Anders, *Galatians-Colossians*, 66.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL, PRACTICAL, AND HISTORICAL ISSUES RELATED TO THE PROJECT

In order for the pastor to be effective in the area of biblical counseling, he must strive to be a good, moral example. This requires the pastor to focus daily on the spiritual disciplines to be equipped to continually model character that is Christ-like with the goal of pointing the counselee to Christ. During this process, the pastor must focus on caring for souls and be trained to utilize the resources that are available. Finally, the pastor must realize the importance of the doctrine of Scripture and base the counsel provided on a sound theological foundation. Simply put, the successful biblical counselor must strive to achieve a character that is Christ-like, must utilize the resources that are available for the care of souls, and must base his counsel on a sound theological foundation.

The Spiritual Disciplines

Prior to any pastor performing biblical counseling successfully, he must first strive to achieve a character that is like Christ's character. This requires a daily focus on the spiritual disciplines. This must be an intentional, daily focus. Simply put, the pastor cannot counsel successfully apart from this daily focus on the spiritual disciplines. With this focus, the pastor will have a desire to be more and more like Christ. As a result, the pastor will model Christ-like character and desire to point the counselee to Christ. As the pastor considers his biblical counseling ministry, he should remember as Donald Whitney

states, that “the end goal is transformed people—people transformed into the image of Christ.”¹

Before the pastor can successfully focus daily on the spiritual disciplines, he must first understand the spiritual disciplines. Whitney gives the following definition: “The spiritual disciplines are those practices found in Scripture that promote spiritual growth among believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ.”² Whitney goes on to explain that he believes that Scripture commends the spiritual disciplines of “Bible intake, prayer, worship, evangelism, service, stewardship, fasting, silence and solitude, journaling, and learning.”³ Richard Foster simply states that the total transformation of the person is the purpose of the spiritual disciplines.⁴

If an athlete were training to participate in the Olympics, he would realize that serious dedication would be required. This dedication is necessary, no matter how gifted the athlete might be. The athlete must seriously practice and devote effort to the various disciplines of the sport. Sadly, many people do not realize that effort is required to grow in the spiritual disciplines. Although the pastor is not in a competition, his task is even more significant than an athlete’s participation in the Olympic games. Scripture makes it very clear that Christians are to live holy lives. Practicing the spiritual disciplines is not optional for any Christian, as the spiritual disciplines are the means to grow in holiness continually.⁵ Throughout the next few pages, the reader will be walked through the list of disciplines that are defined in Whitney’s book *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*.

¹ Robert W. Kelleman, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church: The 4E Ministry Training Strategy* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2011), 35.

² Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1991), 4.

³ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 7.

⁴ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1989), 78.

⁵ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 14.

This book has been instrumental in this writer’s spiritual journey and in personal growth through an intentional focus on the disciplines.

In order for the pastor to provide biblical counseling and to use the Bible as the basis for the counseling that he provides, he must first know what the Bible says. This sounds so elementary. However, many pastors become consumed with all of the demands that come with serving as a pastor that the serious study of the Bible is neglected.

Whitney describes that the intake of God’s Word as the most important of the spiritual disciplines.⁶ Simply put, the pastor who desires to perform biblical counseling must know the Bible. Unless the pastor devotes serious daily time to Bible intake, he will not know the Bible. When the pastor can reflect on what Scripture says, he will—as R. Carlton Wynne states—“grow in confidence that the Word is made for the work to which he is called.”⁷

Many people in today’s society celebrate what the Bible clearly identifies as sinful. Unless the pastor truly knows God’s Word, he can be lured into believing things that are not true. Even worse, the pastor could say something from the pulpit that would lead others to believe something that is untrue. Pastors must always proclaim the entire counsel of God’s Word and “lovingly press its truth even in those areas so rapidly degenerating in our late-modern age, such as sexual ethics, gender determination, and biblical justice.”⁸

So often in today’s world, when pastors speak the truth of the Bible, they are regarded as insensitive to the world around them, or even hateful. This is yet another reason why daily Bible intake is so essential. During this daily Bible intake, the pastor

⁶ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 22.

⁷ R. Carlton Wynne, “Scripture: Foundational for Life and Ministry,” in *Theology for Ministry: How Doctrine Affects Pastoral Life and Practice*, ed. William R. Edwards, John C. A. Ferguson, and Chad Van Dixhoorn (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2022), 6.

⁸ Wynne, “Scripture: Foundational for Life and Ministry,” 6.

will be equipped for the challenges ahead and will be equipped to speak God's truth in love. This allows pastors to love well, pursue righteousness in their ministry, and hate evil.⁹ Wynne describes, "This approach does not dismiss contemporary intellectual and cultural challenges to what Scripture says. Instead, it recognizes that standing on the Scriptures as God's inspired Word is the very key to preaching, teaching, and counseling with power and persuasion."¹⁰

One of the desires of the pastor should be to disciple his congregation, and an excellent way to accomplish this is to continually model Christ-like character to the congregation. Apart from the daily intake of Scripture (and the resulting application of that Scripture to his life), the pastor will not be able to model this Christ-like character. Instead, the pastor's ministry will suffer and will not likely be fruitful. Wynne explains,

Because God's Word gives us "all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life," it ought to shape how a pastor plans and leads a worship service. It should frame and pervade every prayer, song, sermon, and sacrament. The Bible should guide the counsel he gives to a depressed teenager, drive the loving rebuke he issues to an unrepentant adulterer in his church, suffuse the comfort he extends to a new widow, and fuel the hope he carries for the lost in his neighborhood.¹¹

As described by Whitney, Bible intake comes in various forms, or sub disciplines. Whitney describes that the easiest is hearing God's Word.¹² This would not be classified as even being a discipline by some people. However, the easiest of all of the disciplines must not be overlooked. The pastor must exhibit discipline to regularly hear God's Word. Otherwise, the pastor might "hear it only accidentally, just when we feel like it, or never hear it at all."¹³ This discipline is especially difficult for pastors, as the

⁹ Wynne, "Scripture: Foundational for Life and Ministry," 7.

¹⁰ Wynne, "Scripture: Foundational for Life and Ministry," 7.

¹¹ Wynne, "Scripture: Foundational for Life and Ministry," 9.

¹² Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 23.

¹³ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 23.

temptation can be to preach all the time. Although it is true that effective sermons first minister to the pastor during the process of sermon preparation, there is a substantial difference between preaching a sermon and hearing a sermon. All pastors should seek to regularly hear sermons from other pastors to effectively hear God's Word. Of course, this may come in the form of the pastor having other people fill the pulpit from time to time, or it may come through technology via podcasts or other forms of technology. However, it should be noted that the purpose of Bible intake, including hearing God's Word is not simply to hear but actually to do what God says and to continually become more and more like Christ.¹⁴ As the pastor hears God's Word, he should always realize that the purpose is not simply to hear, but instead to apply what is heard and to cultivate this discipline continually.

Reading God's Word is a form of sub discipline. David Mathis states that the practice of good Bible reading involves understanding the disciplines and sub disciplines and how they work together.¹⁵ Of all of the disciplines, Whitney describes this particular discipline, the intake of God's Word, as the most critical.¹⁶ Mathis explains that it is fundamentally important to have a knowledge of the language and communication.¹⁷ In addition, Mathis emphasizes the importance of the pastor having a good understanding on how "the Scriptures are put together as a whole."¹⁸ As the pastor devotes time to the intake of God's Word, the Spirit will be at work. As with all disciplines, the pastor must be willing to devote the necessary amount of time to this discipline and realize that the goal is to continually become more and more like Christ.

¹⁴ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 24.

¹⁵ David C. Mathis, *Habits of Grace* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 43.

¹⁶ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 28.

¹⁷ Mathis, *Habits of Grace*, 43.

¹⁸ Mathis, *Habits of Grace*, 43.

For the pastor to rely on the sufficiency of Scripture, he must devote the proper amount of time in his schedule to read the Bible. Bible reading is much more effective when using a structured approach to reading the Bible. Various Bible reading plans assist readers to read through the Bible using a structured approach, as opposed to simply allowing the Bible to fall open randomly to a certain page and reading that page. In addition, as the pastor is reading God’s Word, he should meditate on what he is reading. This allows him to focus on what he is reading.¹⁹ Mathis describes the process of meditation as an art.²⁰ A temptation that is frequently present as the pastor reads the Scriptures is to equate the process to some type of checklist. Mathis recommends that the pastor should “think of your Bible reading as a regular surveying of the biblical landscape to find a spot to settle down for a few moments to meditate, which is the high point and richest moment of Bible intake.”²¹ Foster describes that during the discipline of meditation, an emotional and spiritual space is created “which allows Christ to construct an inner sanctuary in the heart.”²² The end result or purpose of meditation is that throughout the process, God is heard more clearly.²³

After reading God’s Word, the pastor must take time to study God’s Word. Paul David Tripp explains that not only does the pastor need time to read the Bible, but he also needs time to study it.²⁴ Tripp further details,

Search for your Lord of Glory in the pages of His Word. What are you learning about His character, His purposes, and His glory? It is not enough to come to know the Word of God; the goal of all Bible study is to come to know, love, worship, and

¹⁹ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 30.

²⁰ Mathis, *Habits of Grace*, 45.

²¹ Mathis, *Habits of Grace*, 45.

²² Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 24.

²³ Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 37.

²⁴ Paul David Tripp, *Do You Believe? 12 Historic Doctrines to Change Your Everyday Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 91.

serve the God of the Word. Your Bible is a narrative of his glory. The story is about Him. Start every day finding Him in His story.²⁵

Studying God's Word is often neglected because it is often perceived as difficult. The pastor must realize that comprehension is critical. Foster describes that when the pastor focuses his mind on Scripture and focuses his attention on the subject and then understands what is being studied, a new level is reached.²⁶ Effectively studying God's Word requires a substantial amount of effort. In fact, much of the time, when the pastor neglects to study God's Word, he is exhibiting laziness that does not honor the Lord. R. C. Sproul described negligence very well when he said, "Here then, is the real problem of our negligence. We fail in our duty to study God's Word not so much because it is difficult to understand, not so much because it is dull and boring, but because it is work. Our problem is not a lack of intelligence or a lack of passion. Our problem is that we are lazy."²⁷

The purpose of the spiritual disciplines is to become more and more like Christ. As the pastor devotes more time to studying God's Word, he will discover that Scripture is very rich. Over time, the pastor's understanding and appreciation of Scripture will grow. One outcome of this growth will be that the pastor's understanding grows "of how the grammar, history, culture, and geography surrounding a text factor into its interpretation."²⁸ Many people in today's society routinely take verses out of context. As the pastor uses Scripture as the basis of counseling people, he must interpret Scripture correctly.

²⁵ Tripp, *Do You Believe?*, 92.

²⁶ Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 82.

²⁷ R. C. Sproul, *Knowing Scripture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1977), 17, quoted in Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 32.

²⁸ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 33.

A second foundational spiritual discipline is prayer. From reading the Bible, it is evident that Christians are expected to pray. Foster maintains that prayer is the most central of all of the spiritual disciplines “because it ushers us into perpetual communion with the Father.”²⁹ Although God uses prayer as a central avenue for transformation, the pastor must be willing to be changed.³⁰ Foster explains that if the pastor is not willing to change, there will be a noticeable absence of prayer in the pastor’s life.³¹ However, sometimes it is easy for the pastor to neglect his personal prayer life. Mathis explains that “we must see his listening to us in prayer in relation to our listening to him in his word.”³² As the pastor grows in spiritual maturity, he will realize that prayer is about getting God, not necessarily getting things from God.³³ Pastors typically spend a reasonable amount of time praying with and for others. Although it is vital for a pastor to pray with and for others, this type of prayer should never take the place of the pastor’s personal prayer life. One of the best ways for the pastor to stay focused as he prays is by meditating on Scripture.³⁴ Tripp explains,

Prayer is real live communion with the King of kings. It is being invited into the Holy of Holies, that place where the Spirit carries our groanings to the Father. Prayer isn’t just praying about the work of the Lord; it is doing the work of the Lord. There are so many things that need to be done that we have no power whatsoever to do. Prayer carries these things to the one who has both the power and the willingness to do the gospel work and produce the gospel fruit that no human being could ever do or produce.³⁵

²⁹ Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 42.

³⁰ Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 42.

³¹ Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 42.

³² Mathis, *Habits of Grace*, 93.

³³ Mathis, *Habits of Grace*, 95.

³⁴ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 86.

³⁵ Tripp, *Do You Believe?*, 407-8.

The pastor must not neglect the spiritual disciplines in his personal life due to the demands that are associated in the process of ministering to others. That is particularly true with the next spiritual discipline, worship. Worship can be defined as “focusing on and responding to God.”³⁶ Sometimes the pastor is tempted to become so focused on the actual worship service that he neglects both public and private worship. If the pastor is consumed with details during the worship service and focuses solely on the sermon, he is not likely to worship. God expects pastors to worship, both in public settings and private settings.³⁷ If pastors neglect this spiritual discipline, he is not likely to be effective in ministering to others. Tripp explains,

We need to participate in public worship. We need to sing the truths of the gospel not only into our own hearts, but into the ears and hearts of one another. We need the public reading of God’s word, always being reminded of its authority, sufficiency, and life-giving wisdom. We need the mutual ministry fellowship of the body of Christ, constantly being reminded that our walk with God is a community project and that we have been called to live with one another in the fellowship of self-sacrificing love. We need the example, wisdom, rebuke, and encouragement of mature brothers and sisters who understand how to live as children of God in this fallen world.³⁸

A spiritual discipline that appears to be the easiest of all of the spiritual disciplines for many pastors is evangelism. A simplistic definition of evangelism is to tell others about Jesus. Evangelism should be something that simply overflows out of the life of every Christian.³⁹ If Christ has transformed the heart, the outcome should be a desire to tell others about the gospel of Jesus Christ. The pastor must exercise discipline to constantly look for situations where evangelism could occur and not to get into the trap of simply waiting for the opportunity to witness.⁴⁰ Daniel Strange explains,

³⁶ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 103.

³⁷ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 110.

³⁸ Tripp, *Do You Believe?*, 365.

³⁹ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 127.

⁴⁰ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 127.

We are in the business of offering people the Lord Jesus, who brings forgiveness and who gives peace. The more we are riveted on the person of Jesus, so the more vibrant our personal conversations and public preaching and teaching will be. This is what has always marked the authentic messenger of Jesus Christ. We come from a person and offer to other persons the person of Jesus Christ, as John Calvin described, “clothed in the gospel.”⁴¹

The next spiritual discipline is service. Serving should simply be an overflow of the heart. If Christ has transformed the heart, then the Christian will want to serve others. Serving might occur in the public eye, but frequently serving occurs in a more private setting. Serving can be sweeping a dirty floor, cleaning a restroom, or serving in the nursery. Unfortunately, serving does not seem appealing to some people, but serving must become a spiritual discipline that is exercised.⁴² Serving is also vital in biblical counseling. Biblical counseling “takes a willingness to be involved and the desire to serve someone in need.”⁴³ The pastor’s ministry should model the ministry of Jesus. Shelley Chapin explains, “Jesus walked this earth spreading love and sharing comfort. Just like today, the world in which Jesus lived was a world filled with suffering and loss, confusion and violence, selfishness and prejudice. The people needed comfort then just as we do now, and He had much to give away to those who sought His relief.”⁴⁴

Stewardship is a spiritual discipline, but many times is not viewed as one. Many people view stewardship as writing a check to drop into the offering plate. However, stewardship goes much deeper than that. Once the Christian realizes that God expects stewardship of our time, our eyes are opened to what stewardship entails. God

⁴¹ Daniel Strange, “Missions: The Magnetic Person of Jesus Christ,” in Edwards, Ferguson, Van Dixhoorn, *Theology for Ministry*, 473.

⁴² Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 143.

⁴³ Shelley Chapin, *Counselors, Comforters, and Friends: Establishing a Caregiving Ministry in Your Church*, Equipped for Ministry (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1992), 95.

⁴⁴ Chapin, *Counselors, Comforters, and Friends*, 41.

owns everything, including the believer's time. Whitney explains that "we are managers or, to use the biblical word, *stewards* of the things God gives to us."⁴⁵

Fasting is also a spiritual discipline. Fasting can be defined as "abstinence from anything which is legitimate in and of itself for the sake of some special spiritual purpose."⁴⁶ When looking at Scripture, only fasts from food are mentioned in the Bible. Foster emphasizes that throughout Scripture "the normal means of fasting involves abstaining from all food, solid or liquid, but not from water."⁴⁷ As with each of the other spiritual disciplines, fasting is expected. It should be noted that fasting is always to be done for a purpose.⁴⁸ Using a fast from food as an example, if the fast is not done for a purpose, it is no different from a crash diet. That is not the purpose of fasting. As the pastor looks at the New Testament, it is apparent that fasting is not optional. In fact, there is a clear assumption that Jesus assumes that Christians will fast.⁴⁹ Mathis explains that "fasting is as basic to Christianity as asking from God and giving to others."⁵⁰ Foster describes that just as there is no reason to try to exclude giving or praying, there is no reason to attempt to exclude fasting.⁵¹ When done correctly and for the right reasons, fasting brings a feeling of closeness to God.

The next spiritual discipline is silence and solitude. Whitney explains, "The Discipline of silence is the voluntary and temporary abstention from speaking so that certain spiritual goals might be sought."⁵² On the other hand, solitude is "the spiritual

⁴⁵ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 170.

⁴⁶ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 193.

⁴⁷ Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 61.

⁴⁸ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 198.

⁴⁹ Mathis, *Habits of Grace*, 119.

⁵⁰ Mathis, *Habits of Grace*, 120.

⁵¹ Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 65.

⁵² Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 224.

discipline of voluntarily and temporarily withdrawing to privacy for spiritual purposes.”⁵³ Both silence and solitude are commonly found together. As with the other spiritual disciplines, Christians are expected to practice this discipline.

Journaling is also a spiritual discipline. One of the benefits of journaling is to help the believer to remember the things that the Lord has done.⁵⁴ In the busy day-to-day lives that most pastors lead, it is often easy to forget all of the things that the Lord has done. When one journals, he can document and review at a later date and stand in awe of the many ways that the Lord has provided. Mathis explains that “journaling has the appeal of mingling the motions of our lives with the minds of God.”⁵⁵ While journaling is certainly about today, it is also about the past, the future, and our present joy.⁵⁶ In addition, journaling helps to leave a spiritual heritage for future generations, such as children and grandchildren.⁵⁷

The final spiritual discipline is learning. Learning is a life-long activity that each Christian should desire. The Christian will never arrive at the place where all has been learned. The Christian should desire to continue to learn until the day of his death. Being willing to learn continually is a sign of humility.⁵⁸ The more that the pastor practices the spiritual disciplines, he will have a greater awareness of the brokenness that exists in the world around him. Sin has impacted all levels of society.⁵⁹ As people experience sin, problems magnify and relationships struggle.⁶⁰ With a keen awareness of

⁵³ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 224.

⁵⁴ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 257.

⁵⁵ Mathis, *Habits of Grace*, 128.

⁵⁶ Mathis, *Habits of Grace*, 130.

⁵⁷ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 258.

⁵⁸ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 273.

⁵⁹ John C. Thomas and Lisa Sosin, *Therapeutic Expedition: Equipping the Christian Counselor for the Journey* (Nashville: B&H, 2011), 41.

⁶⁰ Thomas and Sosin, *Therapeutic Expedition*, 41.

the spiritual disciplines, the pastor's heart will be drawn to the process of caring for the souls that have been placed under his care.

Throughout the preceding pages, the reader has been walked through the list of disciplines that are defined in Donald Whitney's book *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*. As this book has been instrumental in this writer's spiritual journey and personal growth through an intentional focus on the disciplines, it will also be instrumental in the spiritual journey and growth of any individual who makes the intentional decision to take the disciplines seriously. An intentional focus on each of these disciplines is critical for any pastor who seeks to perform biblical counseling. If the pastor does not make an intentional effort to continually practice these spiritual disciplines, he will not be an effective biblical counselor.

The Care of Souls

As the pastor seeks to perform biblical counseling, he must be trained to care for souls. The pastor must first have a correct understanding of what a soul is and why the soul should be cared for. The pastor must realize that in order to properly care for souls, good conversation and listening skills must be present. The pastor must have good observation skills and be trained in how to detect and sort through various forms of self-deception that can prevent the counselee from realizing the truth. Finally, the pastor must be willing to utilize the various resources that are available for the care of souls.

Before a pastor can effectively utilize the various resources that are available for the care of souls, he must first understand what a soul is. What is a soul? David Benner explains, "Let us understand soul as referring to the whole person, including the body, but with particular focus on the inner world of thinking feeling, and willing."⁶¹

⁶¹ David G. Benner, *Care of Souls: Revisioning Christian Nurture and Counsel* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 22.

Harold L. Senkbeil explains that a soul “is a person in relation to God (*coram Deo*).”⁶² *Coram Deo* is translated to mean “before the face of God.”⁶³ As the pastor thinks of the concept of caring for souls, he must look at the entire body of the person, which includes the person’s soul. Kellemen explains, “Biblical counselors are soul physicians who understand people, diagnose problems, and prescribe solutions—biblically. We also need to be church cardiologists who understand our church and community, diagnose the heart condition of the culture where we minister, and prescribe God’s cures—biblically.”⁶⁴

In general, pastoral ministry involves the care of souls. Each person under a pastor’s care in the flock experiences a wide array of emotions on this journey that is known as life. Senkbeil explains,

While there are multiple dimensions to every person’s life—bodily, social, emotional and psychological—as a pastor I’m especially attentive to that person’s relationship to God. Therefore the soul’s spiritual life is my ultimate, though not exclusive, concern. As symptoms arise in that person’s life—be they fear, anxiety, distrust, misery, joy or sorrow—I’m always keen on interpreting them in terms of what they disclose about the soul’s relationship with God.⁶⁵

Pastors must quickly realize that no two people are the same. As a result, no two people will experience the same issue precisely the same. As a pastor talks with a member of the congregation about an issue that has been experienced, the counsel given will be much more effective if the pastor first realizes that the goal is to help the person grow in being more like Christ. When a hurting individual walks into a pastor’s office for counseling, it is often difficult for the individual to realize that the issue that is troubling them at present is an opportunity to become more like Christ. However, the pastor has an

⁶² Harold L. Senkbeil, *The Care of Souls: Cultivating a Pastor’s Heart* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 65.

⁶³ Senkbeil, *The Care of Souls*, 65.

⁶⁴ Kellemen, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church*, 55.

⁶⁵ Senkbeil, *The Care of Souls*, 66.

excellent opportunity to assist in this process. David G. Benner explains that forming the character of Christ within people is the primary goal of Christian soul care.⁶⁶

As the pastor thinks about caring for souls, he must realize that it is a tremendous responsibility. It is a task that can be incredibly difficult and draining. However, this task can also be gratifying. In order for the process to be gratifying, the pastor must never forget that the goal is to help the counselee become more and more like Christ throughout the process. Benner draws the following conclusions regarding soul care:

(1) Christian soul care is something we do for each other, not to ourselves, (2) Christian soul care operates within a moral context, (3) Christian soul care is concerned about community not just individuals, (4) Christian soul care is normally provided through the medium of dialogue within the context of a relationship. The emphasis is about relationships and following the example of Jesus, (5) Christian soul care does not focus on some narrow spiritual aspect of personality but addresses the whole person, (6) Christian soul care is much too important to be restricted to the clergy or any other single group of people.⁶⁷

As the pastor provides care for the souls of the congregation, he must realize that the news he has to share is indeed good news. This news is different from what many secular counselors would give. The news that pastors can share with their counselees can and should be viewed through the lens of eternity. Tripp states,

People struggling with life in a fallen world often want explanations when what they really need is imagination. They want strategies, techniques, and principles because they simply want things to be better. But God offers much more. People need to look at their families, neighbors, friends, cities, jobs, history, and churches, and see the kingdom. They need imagination—the ability to see what is real but unseen. This is what Paul fixed his gaze on (2 Cor. 4). They need to look at a city and see the glorious company of the redeemed being gathered, amidst a brutal spiritual battle, to live in union with God. They need to look at their children and see a Redeemer pursuing their hearts for his own.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Benner, *Care of Souls*, 32.

⁶⁷ Benner, *Care of Souls*, 32-34.

⁶⁸ Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002), 7.

It is important to realize that the care of souls is radically different from a cure. If something is cured, it will never be an issue again. However, the concept of care implies that ongoing attention will be required.⁶⁹ There are times, especially when the counselee comes to the pastor due to the involvement of another person that the problem may never entirely go away. For example, if some type of conflict is involved with another person, the conflict might never go away.⁷⁰

Today's society tends to shift the focus toward the thought process of a cure. For example, scientists have sought for a cure for cancer for many years. As people go to medical doctors for an illness, a cure is desired. Continuing with that thought process, sometimes counselees come to a pastor for biblical counseling and desire a cure for the issue that is being experienced. Many times the counselee is seeking a cure for the soul. However, the soul must be cared for, working toward a change of the heart. When the soul is cared for, the counselee's heart can indeed change, although the actual problem might not go away. As a result, the counselee will become more like Christ. Thomas Moore describes,

Care of the soul, looking back with special regard to ancient psychologies for insight and guidance, goes beyond the secular mythology of the self and recovers a sense of the sacredness of each individual life. The sacred quality is not just value—all lives are important. It is the unfathomable mystery that is the very seed and heart of each individual. Shallow therapeutic manipulations aimed at restoring normality or tuning a life according to standards reduces—shrink—that profound mystery to the pale dimensions of a social common denominator referred to as the adjusted personality. Care of the soul sees another reality altogether. It appreciates the mystery of human suffering and does not offer the illusion of a problem-free life.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Thomas Moore, *Care of the Soul: A Guide for Cultivating Depth and Sacredness in Everyday Life* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 18-19.

⁷⁰ Moore, *Care of the Soul*, 19.

⁷¹ Moore, *Care of the Soul*, 19-20.

How Does the Pastor Care for Souls?

In order to properly care for souls, pastors must have good conversation skills and good listening skills. Before pastors can offer any type of effective counsel, they must first be sure that he has listened to and has heard the counselee in order to properly identify the issue. Senkbeil states that pastors sometimes tend to disregard the importance of probing conversation, while actually listening to the counselee.⁷² Senkbeil goes on to describe,

In my experience, the listening itself provides an immensely therapeutic benefit. Most people in our time are frenetically occupied with so many things that they don't take the time to sit down and unburden their hearts. And if ever they are inclined to do so, there's no one to listen. So simply by giving someone your undivided attention for sixty or so clock ticks, you've given them an immense gift.⁷³

Before the pastor can effectively minister to the soul of the counselee, he must first listen to the counselee's soul.⁷⁴ The heart typically discloses the condition of the soul, so "effective physicians of the soul need to polish their listening skills, opening up not merely their ears, but their hearts to the suffering of the soul as well."⁷⁵ The simplicity of the heart is critical to establish. Jeremy Pierre explains,

Because people are unified beings, their inner experience is not fragmented into multiple, often disconnected, often conflicting forces. People's problems are not either spiritual or psychological, mental or emotional, moral or social. People are moral agents who conduct themselves from a singular response system for which they are responsible before their Creator. Because this is true, all human problems are spiritual problems. Invasive thoughts, haphazard emotions, disjointed personalities, unwelcome impulses—they all are problems of a unified response system designed by God.⁷⁶

⁷² Senkbeil, *The Care of Souls*, 68.

⁷³ Senkbeil, *The Care of Souls*, 68.

⁷⁴ Senkbeil, *The Care of Souls*, 69.

⁷⁵ Senkbeil, *The Care of Souls*, 69.

⁷⁶ Jeremy Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life: Connecting Christ to Human Experience* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2016), 15-16.

As the pastor begins caring for the soul of his counselee, he must try to read the emotions of the counselee.⁷⁷ The pastor must try to imagine what the situation is like for the counselee and as a result, be transparent with the counselee. When the counselee observes that the pastor is not perfect and has struggles and various difficulties, the counselee is much more likely to open up to the pastor and share the heart truly. Senkbeil states, “Faithful pastoral care of the soul starts when one heart discloses itself to another heart then the healing ministrations of God’s word and sacraments may be most effectively applied.”⁷⁸

As mentioned previously, biblical counselors use the Bible as the source of treatment for the counselee. However, unless the counselor listens appropriately, the diagnosis will not likely be effective. This situation could be likened to a sick patient visiting a medical doctor. Unless the medical doctor listens to the patient describe the symptoms, the diagnosis and treatment are not likely to be effective. Therefore, pastors must listen with an equal level of seriousness that medical doctors are expected to listen.

The pastor should always keep in mind, especially during the listening process that sin “has a tendency to blind people to an accurate self-knowledge.”⁷⁹ Many times, as the counselee is going through some type of problem, the counselee is not able to see the situation for what it truly is. As a pastor is caring for souls, a beautiful moment occurs when the pastor can walk with a counselee through the counseling process and address the situation from a biblical perspective. Pierre states, “Counselors accomplish quite a feat if they help others come closer to acknowledging the control beliefs, desires, and comments that lead to specific responses in the key moments of life.”⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Senkbeil, *The Care of Souls*, 69.

⁷⁸ Senkbeil, *The Care of Souls*, 69.

⁷⁹ Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, 37.

⁸⁰ Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, 50.

As the pastor proceeds through the counseling session, he must realize that the session is not an interrogation.⁸¹ If the session feels like an interrogation to the counselee, the session is not likely to be productive. In the counseling session, the goal is for the counselee to perceive that the pastor cares for them and for the situation that is being experienced by the counselee. Pastors must realize that a successful biblical counseling session is a work of the Holy Spirit. The pastor is a vessel that Jesus uses to do His work in this particular situation.⁸² The pastor must never forget that Satan is always at work. The beliefs and thoughts of the heart are often corrupted by sin.⁸³ Pierre explains, “People’s wills are bound tight with sin, constraining their ability to choose good out of a commitment to God’s glory. Their deepest loyalties are bound to self—which is another way of saying that pride pollutes everything, bending the various commitments of the heart toward the construction of an idolatrous self-image.”⁸⁴

One of the ways that the pastor cares for souls is to address the impact that sin has played in the issue being presented by the counselee. It should be noted that the pastor should do this in love. The Bible supports that the core of the problem is sin.⁸⁵ Scripture defines sin “as a condition that results in behavior.”⁸⁶ The Bible clearly states that all people sin. The pastor who is successfully caring for souls will learn to call out sin in the lives of his flock but lovingly. Tripp explains, “If you are going to deal with your own difficulties or assist others who want to deal with theirs, you must correct wrong thinking. Yes, you must deal with the suffering of the past and ways the body isn’t

⁸¹ Senkbeil, *The Care of Souls*, 78.

⁸² Senkbeil, *The Care of Souls*, 78.

⁸³ Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, 62.

⁸⁴ Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, 63-64.

⁸⁵ Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands*, 10.

⁸⁶ Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands*, 10.

properly functioning, but you must do more. You must help them conquer the sin that distorts all these experiences.”⁸⁷

Another way that the pastor cares for souls while meeting with counselees is to observe whether the counselee is exhibiting faith that Christ is sufficient to handle the situation. Even above that, is the counselee truly following Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior?⁸⁸ The answer to that question allows the pastor to know how to proceed. If the counselee is not following Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, this is an evangelistic opportunity. At this moment, their greatest problem is not the same situation that they presented with. However, if the counselee is following Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, it is crucial to determine whether the counselee feels that Christ is sufficient for this issue. Senkbeil explains,

So it will be extremely helpful to me as a spiritual physician to know what I’m up against. Which are the other gods this soul worships besides the true God, the Maker of heaven and earth? If I know these idolatrous temptations I can appropriately call the soul to repentance, to turn from idolatry to live once more out of a living faith in the living God.⁸⁹

As idols are identified, the pastor explains to the counselee that any form of idolatry is dynamic self-worship.⁹⁰ When the sin of idolatry is present in a counselee’s life, it is the equivalent of failing to believe that God is really God.⁹¹ In any given situation, people will choose to believe something. Whatever that “something” is will function as “the authority by which they understand reality.”⁹² When Adam and Eve were in the garden and Adam made the choice to believe Eve, Adam made the choice that

⁸⁷ Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands*, 10.

⁸⁸ Senkbeil, *The Care of Souls*, 80.

⁸⁹ Senkbeil, *The Care of Souls*, 81.

⁹⁰ Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, 65.

⁹¹ Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, 65.

⁹² Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, 65.

God's Word was not correct.⁹³ When Adam made this choice, the end result was worshiping himself, instead of worshiping God.⁹⁴ This happens whenever the sin of idolatry is present. Part of the pastor's task of caring for souls is being able to identify when idols are present and to address the situation lovingly.

As the pastor continues caring for souls throughout the counseling process, he should determine whether holiness is present in the counselee's life. If holiness is not on display in the counselee's life, or if there does not appear to be a desire to live a holy lifestyle pleasing to Christ, the pastor has an opportunity and an obligation to call the counselee to repentance. This is yet another way that a pastor cares for souls.⁹⁵

Part of the process of caring for souls involves detecting and sorting through the various layers of self-deception that prevent the counselee from seeing the truth.⁹⁶ The truth that the counselee needs to hear is God's Word. Throughout the earthly ministry of Christ, it is evident that Christ was on a mission. The same mission that Christ was on during His early ministry is the same mission that pastors should be on.⁹⁷

Senkbeil states,

To heal those hardboiled hearts and comfort those sorrowing, suffering souls, people need to hear the words of Jesus proclaimed into their ears so that faith can take root in their hearts. That faith lives by love all life long, then blossoms into fruition in heaven's glory. Christ's sheep need you, but only because they need Jesus. In your ministry you bring Jesus to them. Specifically they need to hear his voice—the voice of the Great Shepherd.⁹⁸

⁹³ Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, 65.

⁹⁴ Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, 65.

⁹⁵ Senkbeil, *The Care of Souls*, 86-89.

⁹⁶ Thomas C. Oden, *Care of Souls in the Classic Tradition, Theology and Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 56.

⁹⁷ Senkbeil, *The Care of Souls*, 226-27.

⁹⁸ Senkbeil, *The Care of Souls*, 227.

The care of souls should be an intentional focus of each pastor's ministry. As the pastor desires to perform biblical counseling, it is helpful for the pastor to realize that the biblical counseling process provides an opportunity for him to care for the souls of his flock very well. This process is ongoing. In fact, the pastor will never reach the point where he has learned everything about the process of caring for souls. Instead, this is a continual learning process. Therefore, the pastor must devote effort to continual reading, and studying the excellent resources that are available now for the care of souls and the resources that will be developed in the future.

Various skills such as good listening and conversation skills are necessary as the pastor seeks to care for souls throughout the biblical counseling process. In addition, it is important for pastors to have good observation skills and be trained to detect various forms of self-deception which can prevent the counselee from actually realizing the truth about certain situations. When the pastor has these skills and a correct understanding of what a soul is and why the soul should be cared for, he is better equipped to care for souls. Finally, ongoing dedication to reading and studying the various resources that are available regarding the care of souls will help to keep the pastor's skills sharp in this area.

The Doctrine of Scripture

For the pastor to speak truth into the life of the counselee regarding the issue being presented, he must realize the importance of doctrine of Scripture and then base the counsel on a sound theological foundation. Tripp maintains that it is literally impossible to overstate the importance of the doctrine of Scripture.⁹⁹ Tripp states, "The existence, inspiration, authority, and trustworthiness of Scripture is the doctrinal foundation upon which every other doctrine stands."¹⁰⁰ After the pastor realizes the importance of the

⁹⁹ Tripp, *Do You Believe?*, 33.

¹⁰⁰ Tripp, *Do You Believe?*, 33.

doctrine of Scripture, he will then rest assured that Scripture is indeed sufficient as the basis of biblical counseling.

When Christian theologians teach the doctrine of Scripture, many times four characteristics of Scripture are discussed: authority, clarity, necessity, and sufficiency.¹⁰¹ The authority of the Bible comes from God. Everything that God says is true. Therefore, the authority of the Bible is “our supreme standard for what we should believe and how we should behave because it comes from God.”¹⁰² Authority and the Inspiration of Scripture work closely together. Inspiration means that the words in the Bible are indeed God’s words, and that those words are “a verbal reflection of his divine character (e.g., personal, trustworthy, and true.”¹⁰³ As one thinks of the clarity of Scripture, one must realize that the Holy Spirit is involved. With the characteristic of clarity, “the Holy Spirit makes the Bible understandable to all who read it seeking to be submissive to what it says.”¹⁰⁴ When one refers to the necessity of Scripture, he refers to the fact that it is literally impossible for a Christian to “live the Christian life without the Bible.”¹⁰⁵ The sufficiency of Scripture is the fact that the Bible contains all that the Christian needs to know about living a life that is pleasing to God and to know His will.¹⁰⁶

The sufficiency of Scripture is vitally important in biblical counseling. Lambert explains, “In counseling, when people share their most serious and secret problems, counselors need to have something to say. We need guidance about how to

¹⁰¹ Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 36-37.

¹⁰² Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 36.

¹⁰³ Wynne, “Scripture: Foundational for Life and Ministry,” 3.

¹⁰⁴ Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 37.

¹⁰⁵ Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 37.

¹⁰⁶ Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 37.

respond to such information.”¹⁰⁷ For the biblical counselor, this guidance comes directly from the Bible. People come to the pastor’s office for counseling for various reasons. Some are devastated due to hearing their spouse say, “I’m leaving, I no longer love you.” Others are devastated due to one of their children making a poor decision. Others are dealing with depression and anxiety, while others are dealing with various forms of addiction. The list seems to be never-ending. However, how the pastor responds in any of these decisions tells the counselee exactly where the pastor’s trust is.¹⁰⁸ Lambert explains,

The “wisdom” that comes out of your mouth demonstrates where your trust is—whether it is the “wisdom” of the world, the “wisdom” of secular psychology, your own personal brand of “wisdom,” or the wisdom of God in the Bible. Whenever you speak, you do it out of a commitment to some kind of wisdom. The doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture is a promise that God himself will give you something from him to say in those sacred moments.¹⁰⁹

Lambert identifies four categories of Sufficiency: Progressive, Completed, Formal, and Material Sufficiency. Progressive Sufficiency simply refers to the concept that at any point in redemptive history, God’s covenant people will have revelation that is sufficient for that time.¹¹⁰ Completed Sufficiency is the concept “that the completion of God’s work of redemption leads to the closing of the Christian canon and the completion of revelation.”¹¹¹ Formal Sufficiency means “that Scripture contains everything essential for its own interpretation.”¹¹² Finally, Material Sufficiency refers “to the actual contents of Scripture and means that the Bible tells us everything we need to know from God about any topic.”¹¹³ As biblical counselors hold to the truth that the Bible is sufficient for

¹⁰⁷ Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 37.

¹⁰⁸ Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 38.

¹⁰⁹ Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 38.

¹¹⁰ Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 44.

¹¹¹ Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 45.

¹¹² Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 47.

¹¹³ Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 48.

counseling, all four aspects of sufficiency are included. However, in particular, “we mean that the material sufficiency of Scripture extends to the subject matter of counseling.”¹¹⁴

Pastors and biblical counselors have both an opportunity and also a responsibility to help people to “live in light of the inspiration, authority, and sufficiency of the word of God.”¹¹⁵ Not only do pastors and biblical counselors have the opportunity to apply the Bible to every area of our life, but the opportunity also exists to show the counselee the same thing and to realize that the Bible is indeed sufficient to address the issues that are faced today. In order for Christians to live as God has designed, Christians must look to the Bible to see the various ways (or truths) that He has provided through His Word.¹¹⁶

Tripp identifies a number of truths that are contained throughout the Scriptures. These truths are as follows: (1) God’s Word saves; (2) God’s Word points; (3) God’s Word teaches; (4) God’s Word rescues; (5) God’s Word warns; (6) God’s Word protects; (7) God’s Word encourages; (8) God’s Word motivates; (9) God’s Word confronts; (10) God’s Word convicts; and (11) God’s Word guides.¹¹⁷ Looking through the lens of biblical counseling, each of these truths are vital. In fact, from observing these truths, it becomes apparent that Scripture is indeed sufficient for counseling.

Once an individual comes to faith in Jesus Christ, the work of salvation is not completed. Instead, this work continues throughout the lifetime of the individual. Sin is rampant in today’s world. Therefore, there is a war going on within each individual. Is there a genuine desire to focus on Christ, or is the internal desire to focus on self? God’s Word is not like any other teacher. Through God’s Word, the believer can learn things

¹¹⁴ Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 48.

¹¹⁵ Tripp, *Do You Believe?*, 41.

¹¹⁶ Tripp, *Do You Believe?*, 43.

¹¹⁷ Tripp, *Do You Believe?*, 43-55.

that simply cannot be found anywhere else. Through the discipline of studying God's Word, knowledge will be gained. However, throughout the process of studying God's Word, wisdom will form within the life of the individual. If the individual approaches the study of God's Word with a heart that is both willing and open, it will be impossible for the individual to remain the same.¹¹⁸

God intends for the Bible to serve as the believer's spiritual first responder.¹¹⁹ Unfortunately, many turn to the Bible as a last resort. The Christian life would be filled with so much more peace if the Bible was consulted first. When sin is actively present within the life of an individual, there will normally be a resistance from the individual to receive the warning. God provided boundaries for believers through His law. If those boundaries are heeded by the believer, the boundaries protect from danger, are an indicator of God's great love for the believer, and draw the believer into a deeper relationship with Him. God knew that believers would need encouragement. Through the study of God's Word, believers can receive daily encouragement. God motivates the believer through His Word. Through God's Word, the believer will see how God has called Christians to live. That will cause the believer's trust in God to grow and will build confidence.¹²⁰ As the reader begins to spend time in God's Word, there must be an acknowledgment from the reader that the Bible "frequently claims that its words are God's very words."¹²¹ As the reader spends more and more time reading the Bible, it will become apparent from the text that Scripture is indeed the Word of God and is sufficient to address the issues that are experienced today.¹²²

¹¹⁸ Tripp, *Do You Believe?*, 43-47.

¹¹⁹ Tripp, *Do You Believe?*, 48.

¹²⁰ Tripp, *Do You Believe?*, 49-55.

¹²¹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020), 62.

¹²² Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 62.

The Word of God acts much like a mirror. As the Bible is read and studied, the believer will be confronted with things that are present but do not please Him. Because sin intends to blind the believer to the truth, the believer should celebrate the fact that God's Word acts like a mirror in our life. The Word of God is convicting, and the believer needs that convicting power of God's Word. Although the Holy Spirit does the actual convicting, Scripture serves as the Holy Spirit's primary tool in the convicting process. God's Word truly is a lamp to the believer's feet and a light to the believer's path, just as Psalm 119:105 indicates. Christians need this light and should desire this light daily.¹²³

Through biblical counseling, the pastor has the opportunity to speak truth into the counselee's life. By realizing the importance of the doctrine of Scripture, the pastor can have the confidence in knowing that his counsel is based on a solid theological foundation. Wynne states,

What a privilege belongs to the pastor who holds and heralds the Word of God. He does it with the heavenly promise that in the Lord his labor, while dismissed by a world lost in sin, is not in vain. Just as the apostle John wrote his Gospel "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31), so the pastor who handles the Bible in accord with its design as God's historically wrought, Christ-centered revelation can carry on, knowing that by God's grace, his efforts will introduce those with ears to hear into eternal fellowship with their Savior through faith. But even if many turn away, he will restore to preaching and teaching a proper emphasis on God's objective work of redemption in Christ, together with all the entailments of that work for the church's life, and it will please his Father in heaven. And on the last day, his efforts by the Spirit will be met with the words that will make all his trials pale by comparison: "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master" (Matt. 25:23).¹²⁴

Finally, as the pastor performs biblical counseling, he has the assurance that Scripture is indeed the highest authority. In fact, there is no higher authority in which an

¹²³ Tripp, *Do You Believe?*, 55-61.

¹²⁴ Wynne, "Scripture: Foundational for Life and Ministry," 19-20.

appeal can be made to somehow provide that the Bible is indeed God's Word.¹²⁵ In simplistic thinking, if some type of higher authority did exist, the Bible would not be the highest authority.¹²⁶ If the pastor were to look to some other source to try to prove that the Bible is God's Word, "he would make the other source to be a higher authority than God's Word."¹²⁷ Therefore, the pastor has the assurance that the Bible is indeed God's Word.

Conclusion

When the pastor makes the decision to take the spiritual disciplines seriously and to focus on these disciplines daily, he will grow in the ability to model Christ-like character and to point his counselees to Christ. The pastor who desires to perform biblical counseling effectively must intentionally focus on the spiritual disciplines in his personal life. Without a continual focus and growth in the spiritual disciplines, the pastor will not be able to perform effective biblical counseling. As the pastor grows in the spiritual disciplines, he will also be better equipped to utilize the array of resources that are available and to care for souls. Biblical counseling provides a wonderful opportunity for the pastor to better care for the souls of his flock. Throughout this process, the pastor should always seek to see his listening and observation skills sharpen. Finally, the pastor must always base his counsel on a sound theological foundation and realize the importance of the doctrine of Scripture and can then confidently use Scripture as the basis of the counseling that he provides.

¹²⁵ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 68.

¹²⁶ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 68.

¹²⁷ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 68.

CHAPTER 4

DETAILS AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The focus of this chapter is the methodology that was used to train pastors in the RCBA to counsel biblically. The goals of this project were as follows: (1) to assess the pastors in the RCBA regarding the current level of biblical counseling competency and to seek input from the pastors on which counseling areas are considered to be the most pressing in their local church setting; (2) to develop a four-session Biblical Counseling 101 training curriculum and accompanying manual; (3) to teach the four-session Biblical Counseling 101 training course so as to equip pastors in the RCBA of Greensburg, Kentucky, to counsel biblically; and (4) to develop and implement a plan for ongoing communication among the pastors of the RCBA in order to share resources and provide mutual advice in biblical counseling cases while maintaining confidentiality. As a result of the project's goals, the methodology consisted of (1) the preparation of the course materials; (2) reaching out to the pastors of the RCBA and beginning the recruitment process; (3) administering the pre-seminar assessment; (4) teaching the four courses; (5) administering the post-seminar assessment, and (6) administering the end-of-course ministry plan evaluation.

Event Schedule

The seminars were scheduled for various Thursday nights during the month of June 2023. The first seminar occurred on June 8, 2023, the second on June 15, the third on June 22, and the fourth on June 29. What follows is a timeline for the various elements of the project:

- February 1: The development of the training seminar material began.

- May 8: Letters were mailed to the twenty-six churches of the RCBA that have pastors at the present time. The pastors of these churches were invited to attend the seminars.¹
- May 18: The follow-up process began and consisted of reaching out to pastors within the RCBA who had been invited but had not responded.
- May 20: The Basics of Counseling Assessment (pre-seminar assessment) was emailed to all participants who registered for the seminar.
- May 22: The course materials were provided to the expert panel. This panel reviewed the materials and provided input.
- June 7: Certain changes were made to the course materials that had been recommended by the expert panel.
- June 8: “The Pastor and Biblical Counseling” seminar began.
- June 29: “The Pastor and Biblical Counseling” seminar concluded.
- June 30: The Basics of Counseling Assessment (post-seminar assessment) was re-administered to assess changes between the initial assessment and the final assessment.
- June 30: The end-of-course ministry plan evaluation was administered.

The project preparation phase for the seminars covered five months—February through June 2023.

Seminar Preparation and Development of Course Materials

There were a number of challenges that were encountered. When I talked with many of the pastors over the last year, it became evident that scheduling an in-person seminar on any one date would be challenging. When I factored in that I needed to identify a time period of four consecutive weeks to conduct the teaching portion of my project, it became obvious that the perfect time period did not exist. Schedules are always busy. However, the period of time that I needed to implement the project proved to be especially busy for the pastors in the RCBA. In addition, the vast majority of pastors in the RCBA serve bi-vocationally. As a result, I determined that the most effective way to

¹ See appendix 4 for the initial letter that was mailed to the pastors in the RCBA, a flier, and a follow-up email after registration.

carry out the teaching portion of my project would be to offer it via Zoom and to record the sessions. I strongly encouraged the pastors to connect to the live session as I was teaching in order to facilitate discussion. However, the schedules of some of the pastors simply would not allow them to connect during the live session. Those pastors watched the recordings of the Zoom sessions and notified me upon completion of each session.

Another challenge that I quickly encountered was that many of the pastors in the RCBA were simply not interested in any type of training on the topic of biblical counseling. I found this to be both alarming and disappointing. At the beginning of this project, I desired to make training available to all pastors within the RCBA. Many of these pastors do not have a formal theological education, and I so hoped they would take advantage of this training. To have the opportunity to receive free training on how to counsel biblically would have been beneficial to each pastor within the RCBA. However, only a few of the pastors seemed to desire the training. I was encouraged by the pastors who did participate. Those pastors truly desired the training, and they want more!

A strength that manifested during the training that I had not necessarily expected was the amount of fellowship that occurred during the actual sessions. Had the sessions been in a face-to-face environment, I would have probably expected the fellowship. However, I was pleasantly surprised to see this happen in the virtual environment. Each week, I would start the Zoom session fifteen minutes prior to the start time of the seminar. Without exception, people were in the waiting room on Zoom already ready to connect as soon as I made the Zoom session live. The fellowship started each week at that moment. Looking back, if I were to do this training again, I would start the Zoom session thirty minutes prior to the official start time. This would allow even more time for fellowship.

Pre-Seminar Assessment and Expert Panel Evaluation

The pre-seminar assessment (BCA) featured two separate sections. The first section included twelve general questions. The intent of this section was to gather important information about the participants. The questions in this section focused on the spiritual health and practices of the participants. Questions were asked about the length of time they have professed Jesus as their Lord and Savior, whether Bible study and Scripture memorization are part of their life, information on their prayer life, and whether they have a pattern of discipling other believers.

The assessment also asked participants to define their understanding of psychological counseling and of biblical counseling. It also assessed whether participants had previously received any type of formal counseling training as well as whether they had received any type of formal counseling on a personal level. The final question in the first section of the assessment asked participants to list the top six counseling areas in which people seek their counsel.

The second section of the pre-seminar assessment included thirty statements. The statements were intended to identify the participants' understanding of certain key concepts about the biblical counseling process. For example, the first statement was "The Bible commands Christians to counsel one another." Another statement was "I am confident in my ability to provide biblical counseling to a person who faces an issue of suffering or sin." Another statement was intended to ascertain whether participants believe that the Bible is sufficient and authoritative to address both spiritual and psychological problems. As the participants read each statement, they were asked to assign a value to each statement according to a six-point Likert scale as follows: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) disagree somewhat, (4) agree somewhat, (5) agree, or (6) strongly agree.

Since the training seminar was designed to primarily focus on providing competency in the area of biblical counseling, an expert panel was selected to review all

course materials. The panel was asked to evaluate the course materials to ensure that they are faithful to the Scriptures, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the curriculum. The expert panel was also asked to provide explicit input for further improvement of the course materials. I made it clear to the expert panel that I was interested to hear not only the parts of the material that they thought were good but also any portions of the material that they felt needed clarification. The expert panel was free to share any criticisms they had regarding the material. After the expert panel had completed their review of the material, only a few minor modifications were suggested.²

One of the major focuses of this class was to introduce pastors to biblical counseling. Some of the pastors were very open with me from the beginning and shared that they had little to no understanding of what biblical counseling truly was. I personally found those pastors easy to work with, as they displayed a hunger to truly learn about biblical counseling. Throughout this journey, I also encountered some pastors who truly thought they understood biblical counseling. To take that one step farther, this particular group of pastors were adamant that they were already counseling biblically. Many of the pastors in this group were not interested in the training at all and made the choice not to participate. This was heartbreaking to me, as the vast majority of the pastors in this group have no formal theological training, nor do they have any biblical counseling training. It is likely that their understanding of biblical counseling is not correct.

The trainings were conducted on four consecutive Thursday nights during the month of June 2023. Since these training sessions were conducted via Zoom, I followed up with the participants two times each week prior to the Thursday night training session. The first communication each week was an email that I sent each Wednesday morning

² Each person who served on the expert panel has a degree in theological education and a minimum of seven years of experience in serving in the ministry. This panel consisted of the Associational Mission Strategist of the RCBA, two pastors from the association who have a Doctor of Ministry degree, and one biblical counselor.

that reminded participants of the session on Thursday night. On Thursday of each week, I would send the course materials for that particular night. This allowed participants to have time to print the material prior to the beginning of the session and to place the materials into their binder. The training materials that I emailed to the participants each week became their binder for this project.

“The Pastor and Biblical Counseling” Seminar

After all of the course materials were developed, the four-week training period began.³ Session 1 was devoted to the sufficiency of Scripture. Session 2 focused on the theology of Christ-centered biblical counseling. Session 3 centered on the methodology of Christ-centered biblical counseling. Session 4 was a counseling simulation. During session 1, the participants were told about session 4. Since session 4 was a simulation, each participant had an opportunity to privately send a counseling scenario to me. From those suggestions, the counseling scenario for session 4 was selected.

Session 1: Sufficiency of Scripture.

As session 1 began on June 8, 2023, I introduced myself and thanked the participants for beginning this journey. I then asked the participants to identify themselves to the group. I asked that they share the following information: (1) name, (2) name of the church where they currently serve, (3) whether they have received any biblical counseling training, and (4) whether they currently counsel biblically. After those introductions, I shared with the group my journey to this point as well as my heart for why I feel that biblical counseling training is so vital to pastors. As documented earlier in this project, I am convinced that when someone approaches a pastor about a counseling

³ See appendix 5 for seminar session information.

need, the assumption is made by the individual that biblical counseling is occurring. Unfortunately, many times, that is not a correct assumption.

During this portion of my introductory remarks, I reminded the pastors that our local association is one that consists primarily of smaller churches. As a result, the pastors have the opportunity to personally know the members and to know them extremely well. As a result, when something tragic happens in the life of the church member, the pastor finds himself hurting as well. During those times, it can be tempting to counsel from an emotional standpoint instead of actually performing biblical counseling.

I have personally found within the RCBA that pastors sometimes believe that biblical counseling is simply quoting a verse (or verses) of Scripture that might seem to mention or imply the topic that has been presented. Knowing that this false perception of biblical counseling was present in the RCBA, I began this training session by addressing that thought process and informing the participants that is not what biblical counseling is. We then focused on a definition of biblical counseling and then began the thought process with the participants that biblical counseling is a form a discipleship. I made it clear to the participants that biblical counseling should be viewed as a marathon, not a sprint.

We talked about certain things that must be present within the counseling in order for it to be considered biblical counseling. For example, the counseling must be (1) rooted in God, (2) exalting of Christ, (3) enabled by the Holy Spirit, and (4) offered in love. We also spent time reviewing the fact that God has provided pastors with the proper spiritual resources to use as the basis for counseling and that God has charged pastors with the care of souls. It is vital that the pastor understand that he has a spiritual responsibility to minister the Word for the sake of spiritual growth.

I spent a significant amount of time in this session talking about the sufficiency of Scripture and the importance that pastors treat it as such. We talked about the fact that

(1) all Scripture is God-breathed, (2) all Scripture is inspired, (3) all Scripture is profitable for us in whatever task we are facing as well as in our ministry, and (4) all Scripture is profitable for teaching, for reproof and correction, and for training in righteousness. With this, I began to introduce to the participants that in biblical counseling, we are looking to use the Scriptures throughout the counseling process in order for the Holy Spirit to bring about a heart change in the life of the counselee.

The final portion of session 1 was an in-depth focus on the importance of the spiritual disciplines in the pastor's life.⁴ Even with knowing about the sufficiency of Scripture and that Scripture is indeed sufficient for counseling, the pastor must personally focus on the spiritual disciplines within his own life. In fact, before the pastor will be successful in performing biblical counseling, he must focus inwardly on the spiritual disciplines in his own personal life.⁵

Session 2: Theology of Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling

Session 2 was conducted on June 15, 2023. This session focused on the theology of Christ-centered biblical counseling. At the beginning of this session, I asked the question "Who should perform biblical counseling?" From Scripture, we see that there are two answers to this question. The first answer is that all Christians are to perform biblical counseling. The second answer is that all Christians are to perform biblical counseling. Scripture also specifies that pastors, especially pastors are also to equip other Christians to counsel.

⁴ Information from this section of the training was taken from Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1991), 21-304.

⁵ Some of the training material for session 1 was gathered as part of the research that I have performed over the last three years while working on this project. Other parts of the training material came from lecture notes and hand-outs that are used by permission from Robert Jones's course 80551, Stuart Scott's course 80552, and Jeremy Pierre's course 80553.

The discussion around the fact that Scripture specifies that pastors are to equip other Christians to counsel opened the door to review Ephesians 4:1-16. This allowed us to see that Scripture indicates that pastors should equip their church members to counsel each other. This portion of the night was initially met with some resistance. Since this was only session 2, I feel certain that the thought process (although it was not verbalized) was “I am just learning about biblical counseling, how can I possibly train my church members?” I anticipated this was what many of the participants were thinking, and it opened the door for me to emphasize to them that when we begin the biblical counseling process, it is an opportunity to walk beside the person through the process of discipleship. This process is not a quick one; it involves our time on an ongoing basis. On top of this, the pastor still has to pastor the church effectively. God knew this, and he expects the pastor to equip his church members to counsel each other. The pastor simply cannot be the exclusive counseling source within the church.

During this session, we took some time to look at sin and its impact on people and on our society today. I explained that as pastors and as biblical counselors, we must know what the Bible says about the issue that is being presented. I also explained that we must realize that the people we are counseling actually have human hearts that can be impacted by sin. Beyond that, we live in a world that is absolutely saturated with sin. We must be aware of the impact that sin has on the situation.

This session also included the topic of confidentiality, types of questions to ask during the counseling sessions, as well as some things to do (and also not do) during the process of asking questions. I also emphasized that listening is crucial during the counseling process. In fact, I feel strongly that many times we hear things during the counseling session that the counselee might not even realize he or she is sharing. These things can actually be significant to the counseling process.

I talked about the importance of speaking the Word of God wisely to the counselee and also the importance of helping the counselee to establish a new action plan.

Simply put, if the counselee's actions do not change, the overall situation is not likely to change. Finally, I addressed the importance of homework throughout the process of biblical counseling. I gave examples of effective homework assignments as well as how to respond to counselees who choose not to complete the assigned homework.⁶

Session 3: Methodology of Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling

Session 3 occurred on June 22, 2023. During this session, we covered eight biblical counseling methods: (1) involvement, (2) inspiration, (3) inventory, (4) interpretation, (5) instruction, (6) inducement, (7) implementation, and (8) integration.⁷ During the introduction to this session, I talked about the importance of determining early on whether the counselee is a believer. Knowing this information early on allows the counselor to make the decision as to whether to evangelize or disciple the person.

I also reminded the participants during the introduction time of this session that counseling is actually theological, not psychological, as many people believe. I also reminded the participants that during the biblical counseling process, we see heart issues as well as behavioral issues. Shortly after I made this statement, one of the participants asked if I could give an example of what I was talking about. The first thing that immediately popped into my mind was lust. Without question, lust is a heart issue. However, if the person chooses to act on the lust, then it is also a behavioral issue.

During this session, we spent time on each of the eight biblical counseling methods. The one that seemed to initially get the most resistance was “inventory.”

⁶ Some of the training material for session 2 was gathered as part of the research that I have performed over the last three years while working on this project. Other parts of the training material came from lecture notes and hand-outs that are used by permission from Robert Jones's course 80551, Stuart Scott's course 80552, and Jeremy Pierre's course 80553.

⁷ John F. MacArthur Jr. and Wayne A. Mack, *Introduction to Biblical Counseling: A Basic Guide to the Principles and Practice of Counseling* (Dallas: Word, 1994), 173-310.

However, this initial resistance actually opened the door for me to talk about how important inventory really is. Although what we do as biblical counselors is different from what a medical doctor does, I used the process of going to a medical doctor as an example. When a patient goes to a medical doctor for the first time, there is paperwork to be completed. In order to see the doctor, the patient must complete the paperwork. The doctor knows that the paperwork is important as it gives the opportunity to obtain information that the patient might not think is even important. In addition, the patient has an incentive to complete the paperwork, as he or she will not see the doctor without completing it. The interesting thing is that many times, doctors are able to provide a correct diagnosis simply based on the historical information that is completed through the paperwork completion. This process is equally vital to the biblical counseling process.

The other method that we ended up spending the most time on was “implementation.” The participants found this particular method to be both interesting and applicable. This gave me another opportunity to talk about the importance of homework in biblical counseling. I talked about both the reason for homework and also the mechanics of homework. I also provided a sample of homework that I had previously assigned to someone through biblical counseling.⁸

Session 4: Biblical Counseling Simulation

One of the things that would have been very beneficial to me, especially early on in my Doctor of Ministry journey at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, would have been the opportunity to see a biblical counseling simulation by one of the professors. Knowing how beneficial this would have been to me as I began the biblical counseling journey, I announced during session 1 of the training that session 4 would be a

⁸ Some of the training material for session 3 was gathered as part of the research that I have performed over the last three years while working on this project. Other parts of the training material came from lecture notes and hand-outs that are used by permission from Robert Jones’s course 80551, Stuart Scott’s course 80552, and Jeremy Pierre’s course 80553.

simulation of a biblical counseling session. I told the participants that they were free to communicate with me outside of the sessions and suggest a topic to focus on in session 4.

The topic that was suggested multiple times by the participants was the topic of anxiety. That really did not come as a surprise to me, as I am currently counseling a number of people who are struggling with anxiety. It is certainly not surprising to me that other pastors within the RCBA are receiving requests to counsel in the area of anxiety.

During this session, several of the participants role-played as the counselee, and I served as the counselor. Given the fact that multiple participants were playing the role of the counselee, it was a little unusual. However, it did serve to emphasize how scattered and irrational the counselee can be, especially during the first session.

As the “counselee” was sharing throughout this session, I stopped at various times and called on other participants and asked such questions as “What did you just hear?” “What did you think was significant by that?” “What do you believe is the next question that should be asked?” I felt that doing this served a dual purpose—the participants were indeed getting to see me counsel, and doing so allowed them to participate in the role of counselor. The simulation concluded by the class jointly deciding what the homework assignment should be as well as when the next counseling session should be scheduled.

The simulation spanned slightly over one hour. At the conclusion of the simulation, I took the remaining time in this session to share my heart. At the beginning of this journey almost three years ago, I really desired to provide a binder to each of the participants that they could use while counseling people. As a pastor, I realize all of the things that pastors deal with. I also realize that in the RCBA, biblical counseling was virtually nonexistent. I thought that it would be so helpful to pastors if they had a binder that included a section for each issue that they routinely receive requests to counsel. Each section would include information about the topic, relevant sections of Scripture, and

examples of questions to ask, and more. I realize this type of information would be valuable to the pastors in the RCBA.

During Project Methodology week, one of the professors asked me to describe my project. I did, and he immediately reminded me that it was too much to address as part of my project. Although I was disappointed at the time to hear that, he was exactly correct. He went on to suggest that I consider revising my project to equip the pastors in the RCBA to counsel biblically by providing a biblical counseling foundation. After that, he said some words that I really needed to hear: “When you are Dr. Young, you can begin the process of developing the binder that you really want to provide to those pastors.” When I heard those words that day, what I really heard was that the professor thinks I will be Dr. Young one day. I cannot describe what a tremendous encouragement that was to hear!

In those final remaining minutes that I had with the participants, I asked if they would find a binder like I described above to be beneficial. The response was an overwhelming “Yes.” I told the group that I would like to make this binder a priority in 2024. I will survey the group quarterly and allow the group to decide the topic for the counseling focus. After the topic is determined, I will put together the materials and share them with the group. In one year, we will have four topics (four sections of the binder) completed. In two years, there will be eight crucial counseling topics that will have been covered.

Post-Seminar Assessment

After the final session concluded, I emailed the post-seminar assessment to the participants. As explained earlier in this project, it was the same assessment that I provided to the participants prior to the beginning of the seminar—the Basics of Counseling Assessment. The intent of using the same assessment was to be able to assess how the participants’ answers to certain questions changed as the result of completing the

seminar. After the assessments were returned to me, I spent some time analyzing each of the responses. These results will be discussed in chapter 5 in detail.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

The ministry project that was described in chapter 4 will be evaluated in this final chapter. Now that the project has been implemented, certain analyses will be provided, such as an evaluation of the project's purpose and goals, a discussion of the project's strengths and weaknesses, and a brief treatment of what I would do differently if I had to implement this project again. Near the end of this chapter, I will provide some theological and personal reflections about this journey.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip pastors in the Russell Creek Baptist Association in Greensburg, Kentucky, to counsel biblically. Both pre-seminar assessments and post-seminar assessments comprised the initial data that was evaluated for this particular project. A Likert scale was utilized in which each response had point values ranging between one and six. For each question, the desired response was assigned a value of six.

Ten men actually participated in the course. However, I experienced an issue in getting the surveys returned by two of the men. Although they participated in the course, they would not return the surveys, even after I reached out to them multiple times. Since these two men would not return the surveys, I did not include them in any of the analyses that were performed. The eight men who did return surveys completed the pre-

seminar assessment, the post-seminar assessment, and the end-of-course ministry plan evaluation. Attendance was taken for each session.¹

After reviewing the results of both the pre-seminar and post-seminar assessments, I ran a t-test for dependent samples. After reviewing the results of the t-test, I determined that the absolute value of my t-value is 2.94, the p-value to be .021664, and the t-critical value to be 1.89. Since the t-value is greater than the t-critical value, there is a positive statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-seminar assessments. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the curriculum that was taught is the reason for the difference. In addition, there was a positive difference between the pre- and post-seminar assessments concerning the overall score of the group. In fact, the post-seminar assessment score was higher for each participant, with the exception of one participant. After I reviewed the information discussed above, it became evident to me that the overall group's level of biblical counseling understanding had grown over the course of the seminar.

Table 1. Scores for the seminar assessments

Participant	Pre-Seminar	Post-Seminar	Variance
Participant 1	138	152	14
Participant 2	132	156	24
Participant 3	140	155	15
Participant 4	162	167	5
Participant 5	151	154	3
Participant 6	150	148	-2
Participant 7	140	141	1
Participant 8	147	160	13
Average	145	154.125	9.125

¹ See appendix 6.

After I personally reached out to several of the pastors prior to the official announcement of the training availability, and after I tried to decide on the implementation date for the training, it became obvious that the number of participants would be far less than satisfactory if I did not offer an option to watch recordings of each session after the live Zoom session ended. Prior to the beginning of the seminar, I was somewhat concerned as to whether there would be lower post-seminar scores for the few men who—due to schedule restraints—participated by watching the video recordings each week. Of the eight participants, two of these men participated by watching the videos later each week. One of these men is the one who showed a negative variance between the pre- and post-seminar assessment scores. However, the other participant who watched the video recordings after the live session each week scored similar to the men who participated in the live Zoom session each week. With that said, I really do not believe there was any difference in the quality of the training between the men who participated on the live Zoom sessions and the two who watched the video recordings. The reason for this was likely due to the fact that I made myself available to these two men for questions outside of the classroom setting at their convenience.

Table 2. Miscellaneous data on the participants

Participant	Age	Years Following Christ	Weekly Hours in Studying Scripture	Memorizes Scripture	Pray with and for People
Participant 1	37	29	3.5	Yes	Yes
Participant 2	52	8	12	Yes	Yes
Participant 3	60	51	12	No	Yes
Participant 4	41	30	10	Yes	Yes
Participant 5	41	26	7	Yes	Yes
Participant 6	34	26	10	Yes	Yes
Participant 7	56	40	10	No	No
Participant 8	73	60	7	No	Yes

The largest increase between the pre- and post-seminar assessments was from participant 2, with an increase of 24 points. As indicated in table 2 above, this participant has followed Christ for a much shorter time period than any other participant. From personally knowing this participant, I am aware that within the last six months, he surrendered to the call to preach the gospel. This man is hungry to learn. From observing him throughout each of the four weeks of the seminar, I discerned that he latched onto everything I said and demonstrated a desire to learn more.

Evaluation of the Project's Goals

This project had four goals: (1) to assess the pastors in the RCBA regarding the current level of biblical counseling competency and to seek input from the pastors on which counseling areas are considered to be the most pressing in their local church setting; (2) to develop a four-session Biblical Counseling 101 training curriculum and accompanying manual; (3) to teach the four-session Biblical Counseling 101 training course so as to equip pastors in the RCBA of Greensburg, Kentucky, to counsel biblically; and (4) to develop and implement a plan for ongoing communication among the pastors of the RCBA in order to share resources and provide mutual advice in biblical counseling cases while maintaining confidentiality.

Evaluation of Goal 1

The first goal was to assess the pastors in the RCBA regarding the current level of biblical counseling competency—prior to the seminar's start—and to seek input from the pastors on which counseling areas are considered to be the most pressing in their local church setting. An assessment was developed to identify the understanding that the pastors had of biblical counseling. This assessment was named the BCA.² This goal was measured by administering the BCA to the participants.

² See appendix 1.

This goal would be considered successfully met when 40 percent of the pastors from the member churches of the association completed and returned the BCA, the results were compiled, a determination of the counseling competency was made, and the most pressing counseling areas were identified. At the time of the project's implementation, the RCBA consists of twenty-nine churches. However, three of these churches do not currently have pastors. Considering this information, ten pastors (40 percent) from the remaining twenty-six churches would need to complete the pre-seminar assessment. From the assessments that were received, I was able to compile the results and also make a determination of the counseling competency of the group. The most pressing issues were also identified. Although ten men actually participated in the training, only eight of them returned the assessments. As a result, I cannot consider this goal to be successfully met.

Although I am greatly disappointed that a large number of the pastors within the RCBA made the choice to decline the training and, thus, this goal was not met, I was encouraged by the dedication of the ones who did participate. These men truly wanted to learn about biblical counseling, and they desire more training.

Evaluation of Goal 2

The second goal was to develop a four-session Biblical Counseling 101 training curriculum and accompanying manual. This goal was measured by an expert panel consisting of the Associational Mission Strategist, one biblical counselor, and two pastors from the association who have a minimum of a Master of Divinity degree. A curriculum evaluation tool was prepared for the expert panel to utilize in order to evaluate the course materials to ensure that all course materials are faithful to the Scriptures, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the curriculum.³ In order for this goal

³ See appendix 2.

to be considered successfully met, 90 percent of the evaluation criteria had to meet or exceed the sufficient level. I am happy to report that 100 percent of the evaluation criteria either met or exceeded the sufficient level. As a result, this goal was successfully met.

After the panel reviewed the initial curriculum that I had prepared, there were many positive comments about the quality of the material. Two of the panel members did not propose any changes to the curriculum. The other two panel members felt that I had possibly included too much information to cover in the training sessions. After receiving that feedback, I took another look at the curriculum. As a result, I made the curriculum more concise.

Evaluation of Goal 3

The third goal was to teach the four-session Biblical Counseling 101 training course so as to equip pastors in the RCBA of Greensburg, Kentucky, to counsel biblically. The content portion of this goal was measured by re-administering the BCA within two weeks after the completion of the course. This portion would be considered successfully met when a t-test for dependent samples demonstrates a positive statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-seminar results. As discussed above, the t-test represented a positive difference that was statistically significant. Therefore, this portion of the goal was successfully met.

In order to measure the satisfaction of the participants, the end-of-course ministry plan evaluation was administered.⁴ In order for this portion of the goal to be considered successfully met, 90 percent of the participants must complete the ministry plan evaluation. This percentage equates to at least seven participants' completing the survey. All eight men whom I counted as participants in the calculations described earlier

⁴ See appendix 3.

in this chapter completed the end-of-course evaluation. Therefore, this portion of the goal was successfully met.

Evaluation of Goal 4

The fourth and final goal was to develop and implement a plan for ongoing communication among the pastors of the RCBA in order to share resources and provide mutual advice in biblical counseling cases while maintaining confidentiality. This goal was measured by evaluating the responses to the applicable area of the survey and by setting up the preferred communication venue. This goal would be considered successfully met when the means of communication has been established and a plan is in place for future meetings. Throughout the course of the seminar, this goal was discussed. The participants in this training group were overwhelmingly in favor of ongoing communication as well as ongoing training. The group agreed that continuing to meet via Zoom would be the most effective for scheduling and for ongoing meetings. In addition, we agreed that beginning in early 2024, a counseling topic will be selected for each quarter about which the pastors are receiving counseling inquiries and for which they need additional training. From the topics that are submitted by the group, the training topic for the quarter will be selected.

I was happy to hear this from the group, as this will accomplish my initial intent from the very beginning of this journey. I have agreed to assemble the appropriate information and to provide the quarterly training. As the training occurs for each quarter, each of the participants will keep the information in a binder for easy access for when it is needed in the future. As a result of the above, this goal was successfully met.

Strengths of the Project

There were many strengths of the project. However, there are just three strengths that I would like to point out, as I believe these were among the strongest. The first strength was the fellowship and the bonding that occurred among the participants. I

was somewhat worried near the beginning of the implementation phase that since I was conducting the training in a virtual environment via Zoom, perhaps fellowship and bonding would not be present among the group. However, I was so pleasantly surprised. Looking back, I truly believe that conducting the class via Zoom somehow acted to encourage fellowship and bonding among the group. Perhaps the virtual environment was perceived as being less intimidating than a face-to-face classroom environment. Whatever the reason, each week, the participants would connect to the Zoom session several minutes early and enjoy a time of fellowship. In addition, the group bonded throughout these sessions. Communication was good throughout each session, and participants encouraged each other.

A second strength of the project was that the project did indeed equip pastors to counsel biblically. Although the number of participants was less than I would have desired, God sent participants to this training who had open minds. These men were willing to listen and learn. I suspect that prior to the first session, many of these men would have stated, “Yes, I counsel biblically.” However, this group of men was humble and was willing to listen. As a result, they indeed received a foundation for biblical counseling that can be built upon in the quarterly trainings that will begin in 2024. One thing that I am rejoicing about is that the participants are beginning to equip others in their churches to counsel biblically. Discipleship is occurring. One other beautiful thing about this is that some of the participants in this course are close friends with other pastors in the RCBA who chose not to participate. I truly feel that the participants in my training will set the bar high for other pastors in the RCBA. As a result, I believe that more pastors will desire to participate going forward, which will enhance training opportunities for me.

The third strength of the project was the teaching format of the course and the quality of the teaching materials that were covered. During each week’s session, there was much information to cover, but I taught in small sections and stopped for questions

routinely. It has been my experience that especially when learning a new concept, most people have an easier time of absorbing new information if it is presented in small sections. As each session progressed, it became easy to see that the participants were learning. One of the participants in this training is a licensed marriage and family therapist. After I received his registration, I wondered what he would actually think of the training, as his formal training in marriage and family therapy was from a secular standpoint. Honestly, I was somewhat concerned if he would view the training from this project as beneficial. I was so pleasantly surprised. Each week after the training concluded, this participant reached out to me, commended me on the quality of the training session, and told me how much that he appreciated me conducting the training. He also expressed how much training of this type is needed.

Often in biblical counseling, there seems to be a perception that biblical counselors and secular counselors will have strong disagreements. Sometimes this perception is valid. However, the situation that I described above with the licensed marriage and family therapist who participated in my training allowed my eyes to be opened to a potential opportunity. Perhaps the reason that certain pastors might elect to receive secular counseling training is because secular counseling training opportunities appear easier to obtain than biblical counseling training opportunities, especially in the area where the RCBA is located.

Weaknesses of the Project

There are three weaknesses of the project that I would like to mention. The first weakness is the BCA—the pre- and post-seminar assessment. This assessment was developed near the beginning of this journey, during a time of high stress. Although each question on the survey was appropriate, some of those questions could have been changed to ones that could have more accurately assessed the participants' knowledge of biblical counseling.

The second weakness is that there was a lot of material to cover in the course. Although no participants indicated that they felt there was too much information, two members of the expert panel did indicate that there was a lot of material to cover. There was indeed a lot of material to cover. However, in order to provide a foundation for biblical counseling, I felt that I had to include all of the information that I covered. In order to compensate for the amount of material that was covered in the sessions, I made myself available throughout each week to each of the participants to answer questions and to have further discussion.

The third weakness is that it would have been beneficial if I had extended each training session by thirty minutes. The reason that I did not do that was that I was afraid that doing so might deter some of the pastors in the RCBA from participating. Looking back, I do not believe that it would have deterred any of the men who were in the class from participating. Thirty additional minutes would have allowed for a somewhat slower pace for each session. The additional time would have also allowed more discussion time during—instead of outside of—the actual session.

What I Would Do Differently

If I were in the planning stages of this project again, there are some things that I would do differently. First, I would expand the scope of the project to include not only pastors but also key leaders within the churches. Second, I would start the process of reaching out to the pastors concerning the availability of the training much earlier. Although each pastor in the RCBA received a mailer from me that included full details about the training, that direct mail piece was not enough. After I saw that very few of the pastors were responding to the mailer, I began to make direct contacts through phone calls, asking if they received the material in the mail. It was after that second contact that people began to register for the training. It would have been helpful to have done this

sooner. If this had been done sooner, perhaps it would have allowed the training to get on the schedules of the pastors sooner.

Third, as mentioned above, it would have been helpful to have had an additional thirty minutes in each class session. This additional thirty minutes would have equated to an additional two hours of training over the course of the seminar. Looking back, this would have been beneficial. As stated previously, the reason I did not originally schedule this additional time is that I feared that it would deter some pastors from participating. However, from looking at the actual class roster, I do not feel that it would have deterred any of the actual participants from participating. It would have actually given those ten men who participated an additional two hours of biblical counseling training.

Fourth, I would be much more direct about the expectation of returning the assessments. As mentioned earlier, ten men actually participated in the training. However, only eight returned the assessments. As a result, I only included the eight who returned the assessments in my calculations. Had all ten of the men who participated actually returned the assessments, the first goal of this project would have been successfully met. To take this point one step farther, I had to reach out to some of the eight who actually returned the assessments multiple times before I received some of the assessments. Although I talked about the importance of the assessments, I feel that I should have been more direct at the beginning of the seminar about my expectations that the assessments be returned to me.

Theological Reflections

As I reflect from a theological standpoint upon my project, one important point that I have realized is that Scripture must be used in the proper context. Throughout my lifetime, I have seen situations where people quote an isolated passage of Scripture without applying the proper context. Taking Scripture out of context is always dangerous.

However, it becomes especially dangerous within biblical counseling. Although Scripture is indeed sufficient, its proper context must be used. To isolate a verse of Scripture and use it out of context as the basis for counseling is especially dangerous and must be avoided.

Another point that stands out to me from a theological standpoint is that in order for me to rely on the sufficiency of Scripture as the basis to counsel, I must indeed know the Scriptures. This has sharpened me. As I immersed myself in Scripture throughout the past three years, my hunger for Scripture increased drastically. One outcome of this is that many verses of Scripture have been committed to memory. This is so important from a counseling standpoint. As counselees come to me and share burdens, it is so helpful to be able to quickly point them to Scripture.

A final theological lesson that I learned is the importance of correctly defining biblical counseling. In the area of the country where I live, many people are confused as to what biblical counseling is. This process has given me the opportunity to reflect from a theological standpoint and to correctly define biblical counseling and then to use Scripture throughout the process.

Personal Reflections

The last three years have been an incredible journey for me. Although the journey has been stressful, it has been such a blessed time. My first seminar was right after things began to open up after the COVID-19 shutdowns. The vast majority of the people in that first seminar participated virtually. By the last day of the seminar, only two of us remained in the in-person classroom setting. By the time of the second seminar, more people participated in-person, and I began to grow close to some of the people in that seminar. Some were ahead of me in their journey, some were at the exact same spot as me on the journey, and some were behind me in the journey. I began to receive encouragement from those who were ahead of me. As each seminar progressed, I noticed

that the friendships became closer to those who were on this journey with me. I also noticed that we were encouraging those who were behind us in their journey. This has been a beautiful process. I have truly enjoyed my time in the DMin program.

This project has definitely afforded me the opportunity to learn much more about biblical counseling. I have learned much over the last three years. However, this process has also given me the opportunity to refer to biblical counseling as I am preaching and to make the congregation aware of the importance of biblical counseling. Throughout this process, many counseling opportunities have occurred with members of the congregation. As a result, I have been able to perform biblical counseling and walk beside multiple individuals through the process of discipleship.

Given my long career in the corporate world prior to my call to ministry, I have always known the vast importance of proper training. It is even more important within ministry. I fully plan to do everything that I can to continue to offer biblical counseling trainings on a quarterly basis throughout the RCBA. This is only possible through the training that I have received through The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Through this training, my knowledge of biblical counseling has increased. However, my hunger for studying and memorizing Scripture has also increased. In order to counsel using the Word of God, we must first know the Word of God. This has also enhanced my preaching.

Conclusion

Often in ministry, we emphasize the fact that God is faithful. Throughout the forty-eight years that I have been a Christian, I have seen God's faithfulness so many times. However, I have really seen it over the last three years during this journey. Throughout this journey, I have committed to a different level of faithfulness. That occurred as a result of my time in this program. I have committed to remain faithful to preaching the Word of God. I have committed to faithfully perform biblical counseling

each time that God opens the door for a counseling relationship to begin. Finally, I have committed to be faithful to realize that each day God allows me to remain on this earth is an opportunity to point people toward Christ and to the cross. May Christ be exalted through me!

APPENDIX 1

BASICS OF COUNSELING ASSESSMENT

The following instrument is the Basics of Counseling Assessment (BCA). Twelve general questions are followed by thirty statements on a six-point Likert scale. The instrument's purpose is to assess the level of theological understanding and confidence that each pastor has in offering biblical counseling.

BASICS OF COUNSELING ASSESSMENT¹

Agreement to Participate

The Russell Creek Baptist Association (association) is committed to strengthening the skills of its pastors in the area of biblical counseling. The research that you are about to participate in is designed to help the association assess the current competency to counsel one another biblically.

This research is being conducted by Eric Todd Young for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will complete a survey and will have a future opportunity to receive classroom instruction on biblical counseling. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.* By completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

Because ministry is relational, we prefer that you include your name below, rather than completing the survey anonymously. If you prefer to be anonymous, however, please use the last four digits of your social security number or phone number for future reference. If you decide to complete this survey anonymously, please be sure to choose a 4 digit code that you will remember, as this survey will be given again at the end of the course.

Date: _____

Name (or 4 digit code): _____

Gender _____ **Age** _____

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 of a church? _____
3. Are you currently serving as a pastor, teacher, or discipler of other believers?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

¹ This instrument was adapted from Thomas Kenji Sugimura "Equipping Members of New Life Church in Woodland Hills, California to Counsel Biblically" (DEdMin project, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015), 28-32.

4. How many hours a week do you read your Bible for personal study or devotions?

5. Is memorizing Scripture currently a practice of yours?

a. Yes

b. No

6. Do you have a consistent discipline of praying with and for other people?

a. Yes

b. No

7. Briefly define your understanding of psychological counseling:

8. Briefly define your understanding of biblical counseling:

9. Have you ever been trained in any kind of formal counseling? If so, please describe.

10. Have you ever received any kind of formal counseling? If so, please describe.

11. How often do people come to you for help with spiritual (non-physical) problems?

a. Daily

b. Weekly

c. Monthly

d. Seldom

12. As a pastor, what are the top six counseling areas that people seek your counsel?

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

SD = strongly disagree

D = disagree

DS = disagree somewhat

AS = agree somewhat

A = agree

SA = strongly agree

- | | | | | | | |
|--|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 1. The Bible commands Christians to counsel one another. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 2. Every pastor has sufficient spiritual resources to counsel a fellow believer. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 3. I am confident in my ability to love and show compassion to a person who faces an issue of suffering or sin. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 4. I am confident in my ability to provide biblical counseling to a person who faces an issue of suffering or sin. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 5. I depend upon the Holy Spirit in my counseling of others. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 6. I believe that prayer is one of the primary means which God uses to change people's hearts. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 7. I believe the Bible is sufficient and authoritative to address both spiritual and psychological problems. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 8. I know how to ask the kind of questions that expose a person's heart attitudes and desires. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 9. I can clearly articulate the Gospel and lead someone to salvation. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |

10. I have a biblical-based methodology to follow when counseling others.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
11. Many problems with which people struggle require the help of a licensed professional counselor.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
12. Secular psychological therapy can bring about lasting change.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
13. If a friend is struggling with depression or discouragement, I would recommend he speak with a pastor or biblical counselor.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
14. If a friend is struggling with sinful lust, I would recommend he speak with me or a biblical counselor.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
15. A counselor should not develop a friendship with people he or she counsels in order to remain objective.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
16. Man is basically good.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
17. The way we were raised determines how we react to trials.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
18. Sin is the ultimate source of people's problems.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
19. Suffering is never God's plan for his children.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
20. After becoming a Christian, God changes us so we no longer struggle with temptation.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
21. The Bible gives clear guidance for how to deal with anger.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
22. The Bible gives clear guidance for how to deal with anxiety.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

23. The Bible gives clear guidance for how to have a good marriage.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
24. I understand the biblical process for making peace between two believers in conflict.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
25. I know how to apply the Bible's teaching on repentance and forgiveness.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
26. If someone has hurt me, I should wait until I am ready to forgive that person before I talk to him.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
27. The main goal of counseling is to help a person cope with a difficult situation.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
28. I would like to learn how to help Others grow in their faith.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
29. My church encourages its members to care like Christ: to be spiritual friends, and to practice informal one-another ministry.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
30. Our community would be responsive if my church offered biblical counseling as a free service.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

APPENDIX 2
CURRICULUM EVALUATION TOOL

The following evaluation tool was sent to an expert panel consisting of the Associational Mission Strategist, one biblical counselor, and two pastors who serve in the association and who have a minimum of a Master of Divinity degree. The expert panel reviewed and evaluated the course material to be certain that it is applicable in this setting, sufficiently in-depth, and is faithful to the Bible.

Name of Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

Curriculum Evaluation Tool					
1 = insufficient 2 = requires attention 3 = sufficient 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Biblical Accuracy					
Each lesson was sound in its interpretation of Scripture.					
Each lesson was faithful to the theology of the Bible.					
Scope					
The content of the curriculum sufficiently covers each issue it is designed to address.					
The curriculum sufficiently covers a biblical pedagogical methodology.					
Pedagogy					
Each lesson was clear, containing a big idea.					
Each lesson provides opportunities for participant interaction with the material.					
Practicality					
The curriculum clearly details how to develop a lesson to teach the Bible.					
At the end of the course, participants will be able to better teach others the Bible.					

Other Comments:

APPENDIX 3

END-OF-COURSE MINISTRY PLAN EVALUATION

The following evaluation was completed by all participants after the completion of the final teaching session. The purpose of this survey is to evaluate whether or not the participants felt that the course was biblically faithful, applicable to their personal ministry, and was sufficiently thorough.

Name/number: _____

Date: _____

Ministry Plan Evaluation Tool					
1 = insufficient 2 = requires attention 3 = sufficient 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The content of the course is biblically sound and also theologically sound.					
This course was presented at a level that was appropriate for me.					
The course addressed counseling methodology on a level that was applicable to me.					
The course used various learning approaches.					
The course addressed issues that I am routinely asked to provide counsel on.					
I was given sufficient opportunities to ask questions.					
The number of people in the class was a manageable number.					
I was given an opportunity to practice certain counseling applications.					
Overall, this course was beneficial to me.					

How has your view of biblical counseling changed from the start of the course?

APPENDIX 4

LETTER TO ALL PASTORS IN THE RCBA, FLIER, AND REGISTRATION E-MAIL

The following documents include a letter that was sent to all pastors in the RCBA. This letter announced the availability of the seminar. A flier was included with the letter that listed the dates of the training and included further details of how to register. After receiving the completed registrations, I sent a registration email to each participant.



Greensburg Baptist church

128 N. Main St Greensburg, KY 42743
(270) 932-4495 www.greensburgbaptist.com
todd@greensburgbaptist.com

May 8, 2023

«Fname» «Lname»
«Address»
«City_State_Zip»

Dear «Salutation»,

When I first began to serve as a pastor in 2012, one thing that somewhat surprised me was the fact that pastors receive many requests to perform counseling. Sometimes these requests come in the form of a formal counseling request, but many times the request is informal and sounds like “could you tell me what you think I should do about the issue that I’m currently dealing with, etc.” However, no matter what form the request might be presented in, requests for counseling occur frequently.

Although I had three counseling courses in my earlier years of serving as a pastor, I did not feel that I was properly equipped to counsel biblically. Pastors receive requests that are difficult. You’ve likely experienced some of the same situations, such as:

- *What to say/how to counsel the young mother who is sitting across from your desk whose husband has just announced that he no longer loves her and wants a divorce?*
- *What to say/how to counsel the parents who are sitting across from your desk whose child has just announced to them (and to the world) that they are a homosexual?*
- *What to say/how to counsel the person who is sitting across from you who somehow believes there is absolutely nothing wrong with the LGBTQ+ lifestyle?*
- *What to say/how to counsel the married couple who is sitting across from your desk who has been married for 25+ years and now both feel that their lives would be better if they file for divorce?*

The examples listed above are just a few examples of issues that pastors receive for counseling. As pastors, we realize that the Bible clearly identifies each of the examples listed above as “sin,” but how does the pastor use the Bible to counsel in these areas? To

be completely transparent, I quickly realized that I had not been equipped to successfully do that. As a result, I felt the Lord leading me to begin the process of working on a Doctor of Ministry degree with a concentration in Biblical Counseling. I began this journey in the Fall of 2020 and by the grace of God, I am beginning to see the finish line for this program.

I will be offering a **free** four-session training seminar during the month of June 2023 to men who serve as pastors or ministers in the Russell Creek Association. This seminar is the culmination of my project that I am finishing up for my Doctoral program at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. I would love for you to participate in this free training seminar!

I realize this is a busy time of year and that it is difficult to arrive at any date for which there are not conflicts. As a result, I have decided to conduct each session via Zoom on the following dates: June 8, June 15, June 22, and June 29. Even by offering these sessions via Zoom, I realize that some of these dates will likely not work for everyone. Although I would like for as many people as possible to join each live Zoom session, I will also be recording each session in the event that one (or more) of those dates do not work for you. Each session will begin at 5:30 p.m. central and will be approximately 90 minutes. Although we will be dealing with serious material, the sessions will be in casual environment.

Please realize that I do not claim to be the expert in biblical counseling. However, I would love to share with you what I've learned over the last three years. No matter your experience level, I want you to know that I would love for you to participate. We can all sharpen each other. My desire for this seminar is that by the final session, we will be better equipped to counsel biblically by realizing that the Scripture is certainly sufficient to counsel.

I hope that you will participate. If you have questions, please feel free to call or text me at 270-299-5500. To register, go to www.greensburgbaptist.com/counsel.

Blessings!

E. Todd Young
Associate Pastor

Greensburg Baptist Church

The Pastor and Biblical Counseling

A **free** 4-week practical seminar on how to counsel biblically.

This is for any pastor or minister
who desires to sharpen their skills
in the area of biblical counseling.

June 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th at 5:30 p.m. central via Zoom

For more information, contact:

E. Todd Young

270-299-5500

todd@greensburgbaptist.com

Register at www.greensburgbaptist.com/counsel

Flyer sent with letter to pastors

Thanks so much for registering for the upcoming biblical counseling training! I am looking forward to the sessions, and I am excited that you will be participating!

I am attaching a document that I'd like for you to complete and return back to me sometime prior to the first session. It is absolutely fine to scan and email your response back to me, if that is easier than getting the hard copy back to me. One part of my doctoral project requires that I measure the effectiveness of the training. One of the ways that I'll be measuring the effectiveness of the training sessions is through this short assessment.

You'll actually complete this assessment two times. One of those times is now ... prior to the training. The other time will be at the conclusion of the last session. So as you complete this initial assessment, please answer as it applies right now ... **not** what you hope the answer will be after the sessions have been completed, etc. My prayer is that after the last session has been completed, we will all see growth in the area of biblical counseling, and hopefully that will be reflected when that last assessment is completed after all of the sessions have concluded.

If you have any questions about anything contained in the assessment, please let me know. Once again, **thank you** for being part of these training sessions. I appreciate you so much!

Email sent to each participant after they registered for the seminar

APPENDIX 5
SEMINAR SESSIONS 1-4

The following documents represent training materials that were supplied to each participant for each training session. These materials became part of a binder that each participant kept for their files for future reference.

What is Biblical Counseling?

- Biblical Counseling is _____ simply quoting a verse (or verses) of Scripture that might (or might not) address the topic that has been presented.
- The Association of Biblical Counselors defines biblical counseling as follows: a fluid event and process of a Spirit-empowered Christ follower providing face-to-face ministry of the Word to others.
- Biblical Counseling is a form of _____ that is focused on the care of souls. It is focused on the application of God’s Word and walking in God’s Spirit when dealing with matters of life as a whole. It is part of the Great Commission, when a follower of Jesus Christ in the service of the Holy Spirit provides face-to-face ministry of the Word to others.
- For the counsel to be biblical, it must be:
 - _____ . It must acknowledge God as the Creator of all things, uphold the sovereignty and authority of God, remain confident in God’s eternal work in His people, rely upon God’s Word for knowledge, wisdom and direction, embrace characteristics of God’s counsel including compassion, patience, wisdom and mercy, and be devoted to God’s glory.
 - _____ . The gospel changes us. The gospel changes hearts. The gospel is the core message of biblical counseling. Therefore, our counsel must uphold the deity of Christ, His incarnation, the sufficiency of His wrath-bearing death, His resurrection, His future return, His present and future kingdom, and His judgment of the world, among many other truths. We ask “Does my counsel present Jesus Christ as the one mediator between God and man and the Person toward whom my sanctification is focused?” There is no other way, no other road, no other person leading to glory, peace, joy, love, unity, humility, purity of heart, clarity of conscience, and hope. **Any promise of good and eternal change apart from or in addition to Christ is a false gospel.**
 - _____ . We live in the service of God’s Spirit, not the other way around. We don’t use Him to serve our purposes. He uses us to serve His purposes. We are His ministers of grace. More than simply referring to the Holy Spirit, we actively trust the Holy Spirit to enable our counsel, give understanding to the minds of the counselee, as well as soften

and transform their hearts. Every good and lasting change in the souls of people come by the Spirit's power.

- _____ . The relationship between the counselor and those he or she counsels should be filled with and shaped by Biblical love (1 John 4:7; Colossians 1:28-29). Shaped by Biblical love means motivated by affection for God and genuine compassion for others. It means we seek the eternal good of the person or people we counsel. We should be less interested in the applause of people, and more interested in their spiritual health. We should be less concerned with receiving glory from those we serve and more concerned with helping them give glory to the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:26-30). Of course, faithfully holding to these principles will be dependent on the spiritual condition of our souls. Our "mouth speaks from that which fills the heart." (Luke 6:45)
- As Biblical counselors, and believers, we seek the Lord for His grace in these areas. That He would help us know Him and His Word humbly and rightly. That we would learn to counsel according to the Word of the Lord, full of patience and good fruits. That we wouldn't try to fix people and their problems, but love them well, counsel them with wisdom, and help them see and trust our Savior Jesus Christ.¹

¹ John Henderson, "A Definition for Biblical Counseling," Association of Biblical Counselors, August 2, 2021, <https://christiancounseling.com/blog/definition-biblical-counseling/>.

God has provided pastors with proper spiritual resources to use as the basis for counseling.

- God has charged pastors with the care of _____.

“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.” (Hebrews 13:17, ESV)

- The pastor must understand that he has a _____ _____
_____ to minister the Word for the sake of spiritual growth.
 - The pastor will give an account for the _____ that have been entrusted to his care.
- Who are the leaders, and what authority do they have?
 - They are current and prior leaders.
 - The authority of a church leader rests on their _____
_____, not on their _____.
 - The function that the authority of a church leader rests on is the _____
_____.
- What is the significance of obeying and submitting to the leaders?
 - Given the assumption that the leaders are truthfully speaking God’s Word and are leading biblically, the church members are _____
_____ to submit to the authority of church leaders and to display _____
_____ to obey the leaders.
- How should the leader perform his task?
 - The leader should perform his task joyfully and not in an _____
_____ manner.

“You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:10–17, ESV)

- What does it mean to follow?
 - Timothy followed Paul’s example. Timothy had observed Paul’s life and saw that Paul remained true to the gospel. As a result, Timothy *desired* to follow.

- Nine specific qualities that Timothy followed from Paul:
 1. Teaching
 2. Conduct
 3. Aim in life
 4. Faith
 5. Patience
 6. Love
 7. Steadfastness
 8. Persecutions
 9. Sufferings
 - Persecutions and Sufferings are part of living a _____
_____ in Jesus Christ.

- It is important to obey the instructions.
 - Timothy had been taught, now it is time for him to _____
_____.

- The Importance of the Sufficiency of Scripture.
 - **All** Scripture is God-breathed.
 - **All** Scripture is inspired.

- The Scripture was profitable for Timothy in his current task and also to use in his ministry.
 - The same is true for us!
- Notice that the Scripture points out that it is profitable for teaching, for reproof and correction, and for training in righteousness.
 - As we practice biblical counseling, we are doing each of these things.

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.” (Galatians 5:16–25, ESV)

- We must look to the Holy Spirit to provide the power that is needed for counseling.
 - If we look to anything else to provide the power that is needed for counseling, we will **not** be successful in trying to perform biblical counseling. It simply will not work. The power that is needed to perform biblical counseling comes directly from the Holy Spirit being at work in the life of the counselor.
- As biblical counselors, we must realize that there is a _____ between walking by the Spirit and the desires of the flesh.
- As biblical counselors, we must realize that there is a _____ between the desires of the flesh and the desires of the Spirit.

The Importance of the Spiritual Disciplines

- Before the pastor will be successful in performing biblical counseling, he must first concentrate on the Spiritual Disciplines in his own life.
- The purpose of practicing the Spiritual Disciplines is to ...
 - Become more and more like _____.
- What do we mean by the Spiritual Disciplines?
 - The Spiritual Disciplines are those practices found in Scripture that promote spiritual growth among believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - The individual Spiritual Disciplines:
 - Bible intake
 - Reading, studying, meditating on God's Word.
 - Prayer
 - Communicating/talking with our Heavenly Father.
 - Worship
 - Focusing on and responding to God.
 - Evangelism
 - To tell others about Jesus.
 - Service
 - This should be an overflow of the heart. If Christ has transformed the heart, then the Christian will want to serve others – both publicly and privately.
 - Stewardship
 - Giving to God – both financially and with our time.
 - Fasting
 - Abstinence from anything which is legitimate in and of itself for the sake of some special spiritual purpose.

- Silence and solitude
 - Silence is the voluntary and temporary abstention from speaking so that certain spiritual goals might be sought.
 - Solitude is voluntarily and temporarily withdrawing to privacy for spiritual purposes.

- Journaling
 - Literally documenting in a journal things that happen each day in the life of a believer of spiritual significance.

- Learning
 - A life-long activity that each Christian should desire.

Note: Some of the training material was gathered as part of the research that I have performed over the last three years while working on this project. Other parts of the training material came from lecture notes and hand-outs that are used by permission from Dr. Robert Jones from course number 80551, Dr. Stuart Scott from course number 80552, and Dr. Jeremy Pierre from course number 80553.

Who should perform Biblical Counseling?

We will see from Scripture that there are two answers to this question.

Answer Number 1: _____ Christians.

Important Scriptures to support this answer:

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’” (Matthew 28:18–20, ESV)

“I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another.” (Romans 15:14, ESV)

“Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.” (Colossians 1:28, ESV)

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” (Colossians 3:16, ESV)

“And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.” (1 Thessalonians 5:14, ESV)

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” (2 Corinthians 1:3–4, ESV)

Answer Number 2: All Christians, especially _____.

Pastors are called both to _____ and to equip _____ to counsel.

Important Scriptures to support this answer:

Examples from the Old Testament: Exodus 18:13-26, Numbers 27:15-23, Judges 4:4-5, 1 Samuel 9:1-6, 2 Samuel 23:1-4, Psalm 78:70-72, Jeremiah 23:1-6, Ezekiel 34:1-6.

Examples from the New Testament:

- The Gospels are saturated with examples of the personal ministry.
- Revelation 2-3
- Matthew 28:18-20 (the call by Jesus to the apostles)
- John 21:15-17 (the call by Jesus to Peter)
- The ministry of the Apostles and Elders:
 - Paul's example and charge in Acts 20:17-38
 - Paul's example in Colossians 1:28-29
 - Paul's charge to Titus to appoint elders in Titus 1:5-13
 - Peter's example and the duties of elders in 1 Peter 5:2-4
 - The duty of the leaders in Hebrews 13:7, 17
- Pastors should equip their _____ to counsel each other. (Ephesians 4:1-16)
 - How can pastors equip members to counsel people biblically?
 - By the pastor's faithful _____ and _____ of the full counsel of Scripture.
 - Through the pastor's pastoral prayers and worship leadership.
 - Through _____ the members.
 - Through _____ and _____ of the application of biblical counseling truths in his life.
 - Through inviting members to _____ him minister formally and also informally.
 - Through establishing a formal biblical counseling training _____.
 - Through recommending and displaying sound biblical counseling books and booklets.
 - Through _____ members in their ministries to others.

Why should we counsel biblically?

If the pastor faithfully preaches and teaches, is that enough?

- We should counsel because ...
 - Jesus did not just model public ministry. He also modeled personal ministry.
 - Through the Scriptures we see that Jesus did indeed speak to the crowds/multitudes. However, He also spent a lot of time in one-on-one conversations ministering directly to the needs of people.
 - Because the Apostles of Jesus also modeled both personal and public ministry.
 - *“how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house,”* (Acts 20:20, ESV)

How should we counsel?

- Know what the Bible says about the issue.
 - Be on guard. Do not take Scripture out of context.
 - Although it might be tempting to isolate certain verses of Scripture and try to make them apply to the situation that you are counseling, **THIS IS DANGEROUS, AND IT IS WRONG.** Be certain that you understand what the entirety of Scripture says about the issue.
 - Realize that people have human hearts and that we live in a world that is saturated with sin.
 - The human heart is the center of all internal functioning – beliefs, motives, thoughts, emotions, affections, desires, etc.
 - The human heart is active, not passive.
 - The human heart is the source of all godliness or ungodliness.
 - Our world will frequently tell people “follow your heart.” The biblical counselor should never tell people to “follow your heart.”
 - *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?”* (Jeremiah 17:9, ESV)
- Ten distinctions to consider about sin:
 - The personal sin we commit and the suffering we experience due to external sin. We not only commit personal sin, but we also suffer the consequences of sin:
 - We are part of a fallen creation.
 - We are sinned against by others.
 - We reap the consequences of our own sin.
 - Sin as our inborn condition and sin as our behavior.
 - Sin as unbelief and sin as rebellion.
 - Sin as desiring forbidden objects and sin as desiring good things too much.
 - Sin as internal (concealed) and sin as external (revealed).
 - Sin as commission and sin as omission.
 - Sin as rational and Sin as irrational.
 - Sin as degenerative and sin as self-contained.
 - Sin as intentional and Sin as unintentional.

- Sin as violating God’s explicit law (clear guilt) and sin as violating one’s conscience (confused/distorted guilt).

The subject of Confidentiality in Biblical Counseling

“Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a thing covered.” (Proverbs 11:13, ESV)

- Confidentiality is crucial in all counseling relationships.
 - Many times as people come to pastors for counseling, they are dealing with a situation that seems to have turned their world upside down. When we are performing counseling, we must be sensitive and understand that it may be extremely difficult for the person to share about the problem. At any point, if they suspect that you are sharing their information with others, one of two things is likely to happen:
 - They will be much more selective with what they share with you in the future.
 - It is very possible that they will make the decision to end the counseling relationship with you.
- Is it ever ok to break confidentiality?
 - There are a few instances where it is ok to break confidentiality. Those instances are as follows:
 - In difficult counseling situations, to ensure that the counselee is receiving consistent counsel and support. In this situation, the counselor might need to discuss the situation with appropriate leaders in the church.
 - In situations where there has been any type of indication that some type of danger is involved. This might be danger to the counselee, or it could be danger to anyone else. In this case, civil authorities might need to be contacted, as well as others who might be in danger.
 - In cases of abuse: both child abuse and abuse to the elderly. In Kentucky, we are required to report child abuse, neglect and dependency and abuse to those who have a physical or mental disability and are unable to protect themselves. This can include an elderly person.

- When counseling children or teens (if a parent is not present in the counseling session.)

Types of questions to ask in the counseling session

Biblical examples: Genesis 3:9; Genesis 3:11, Genesis 16:7-8a, 1 Samuel 15:14, Isaiah 55:1-2, Matthew 7:3, Luke 24:5-7

- Where do you see God in this situation? What do you believe God is up to?
- How do you think that God looks at you...regarding this situation?
- What do you think God thinks about how you are handling this?
- What impact did your action have on your wife (or husband or child)?
- What were you hoping to accomplish by that?
- What was going on in your mind?
- What keeps you from you serving your spouse with that same energy?
- If you could change your situation (or the other person) in some way, how would you?
- What are some of the biggest concerns you have in this situation?
- How would you like people to pray for you right now?

Some “Do’s and Don’ts in asking questions ...

- Don’t be stuck to a list of prepared questions. (1, 2, 3, etc.)
- Do let the person’s answer to one question lead you to the next question.
- Don’t let your own personal curiosity lead you along. Know when to stop a line of questioning.
- Don’t settle for answers from the counselee that are non-specific.
- Do explore the motives of the person’s heart behind actions by asking “why” questions.
- Don’t ask either/or, or menu questions.
- Don’t ask two or more questions at once.
 - Remember – God listens well....we should too.

Notetaking during the counseling session

- Why take notes?
 - It shows the counselee that you are taking seriously what they are sharing with you.
 - It will help you in the session to organize, clarify, and summarize information as you hear it.
 - Permits you further reflection, later review, future reference.
 - Adds seriousness to your assignments; shows the importance of homework.
 - Holds the person accountable.
 - Helps protect you from false reports.

- What information should you record in your notes?
 - Name of the counselee and the names of all who are present.
 - Date and location of the session, and session number.
 - Running record of conversation, including any key quotes, and also the counsel that you give.
 - List of topics to explore now and address later.
 - Homework assigned and the next session date.
 - After the session: a summary of the session and a tentative agenda for the next session.
 - Keep your notes in a secure location.

Speak God’s Word to your counselee wisely.

“I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another.” (Romans 15:14, ESV)

“Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,” (Ephesians 4:15, ESV)

“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.” (Ephesians 4:29, ESV)

“Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.” (Proverbs 27:5–6, ESV)

“Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.” (Colossians 1:28–29, ESV)

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” (Colossians 3:16, ESV)

“Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.” (Hebrews 3:12–13, ESV)

• **Helping the counselee to establish a new action plan:**

1. Think with the person about his situation, his behavior, his heart, God’s provisions in Christ, and the path of change that God desires.
2. Instill and reinforce in the person a firm grasp of his biblical identity in Christ, its implications for growth, and God’s provisions of grace. (Ephesians 1-2, Philippians 4:11-13, 2 Timothy 4:17b, 2 Peter 1:3-9)
3. Determine concrete steps of needed change:
 - What does God call me to begin to believe and do that I have not been believing and doing (or believing and doing well)?
 - What does God call me to stop believing and doing that I have been believing and doing?
4. Stress the need for the person to commune constantly with the Lord in prayer.
5. Look for ways to involve other mature believers to help the person (when appropriate).

6. Along the way, address any remaining or new heart or behavioral sins that may arise in the course of implementing godly change.

Homework is very important!

While other forms of counseling might not include homework, biblical counseling should always include homework. Think of it like this, biblical counseling involves using the Scripture as the basis of our counseling and then apply the Scripture to the life of the person. As counselors, we make certain suggestions. Those suggestions come into play in the person's life through homework.

- Assigning Homework – this is a crucial part of biblical counseling. It is absolutely essential. It helps the counselee to grow. As biblical counselors, we must assign homework well (i.e. it must be appropriate to the situation, etc.)

1. The assignments should be growth assignments. Why?

- Growth assignments direct our counsees to Scripture and Scripture-based resources so they can see God and themselves biblically and so they can respond with godly change.
- Growth assignments extend the session's focus into the person's daily life. A one-hour session is not enough; homework reinforces and applies the content of our session.
- Growth assignments prepare our counselee for where we plan to go in the next session.
- Growth assignments place the responsibility for change on the person, not on us. By making homework a vital part of our counseling process – not an optional add-on – we minimize counselee dependence on us.

2. Examples of growth assignments:

- Scripture to read/memorize. Scripture should be part of each homework assignment. Remember we are counseling biblically. It is crucial that Scripture be part of each homework assignment.
- Reading appropriate books/booklets.
- Christ-centered music.
- Journaling
- Prayer.
- Church worship, small group participation.
- Specific action steps to take.
- Support, encouragement, accountability and prayer.

- Physical health matters: exercise, healthy eating, sleep, regular medical exams. In addition, sometimes we need to restate the obvious. For example, a counselee who is struggling to sleep needs to try restricting their caffeine intake.
3. What if a counselee doesn't do their homework? Note: at times, there are legitimate reasons that someone was not able to do their homework. However, this should NOT be a pattern. If a pattern develops of the counselee not doing their homework, there is a problem that needs to be addressed.
- On the first occasion, find out what happened that they did not complete their assignment. Make sure they understand the importance of the homework.
 - On the second occasion of missed homework, ask them to help you understand why they did not complete the homework.
 - Make sure they understand this is the equivalent of them going to a medical doctor, being diagnosed correctly...the doctor prescribes medication, but the patient refuses to take it...but goes back to the doctor to discuss the same symptoms.
 - Many times, failure to complete homework is a glaring indication that the person is not willing to do what is necessary to "get well."
 - I have had situations where homework has been repetitively neglected. Sometimes in these situations, it helps to ask the simple question "do you want to get well?"

Remember ... When a pattern develops of the counselee not completing their homework, it is a problem. This would be the equivalent of going to a medical doctor and receiving a correct diagnosis (including medication), but refusing to take the medication...and continuing to expect to get well.

How to deal with the counselee who resists or rejects your counsel.

1. Recognize the signs of resistance:
 - Frequent cancellations without good reasons.
 - Failure to complete homework.
 - Distancing himself from you – decrease in self-disclosure, eye contact, etc.
 - Threats, intimidation, manipulation
 - Pessimism, criticism, cynicism
 - Giving opinions of others—competing counsel, alternate explanations or action plans, etc. (maybe from family, friends, or others)
 - Adding another counselor or source of counsel to his life (this should be a clear red flag)
2. Dealing with dissenting voices and competing counsel:
 - Be sure your counselee understands your counsel and your biblical rationale behind it.
 - Be sure you and your counselee seek to understand the competing counsel.
 - Urge your counselee to commit to biblical change and to evaluate all counsel in light of Scripture.
 - If the competing counsel continues to hinder your counselee's progress, encourage him to invite the dissenter to join you and your counselee for the next session to discuss the issues (in humility)
3. Dealing with refusal:
 - Ask, don't assume or accuse (Proverbs 18:13)
 - Seek to determine and deal with the reasons for refusal. This includes honestly examining any failures on your part (Matthew 7:3-5)
 - Help the person admit and deal honestly with refusal.
 - Renew biblical hope
 - Appeal to outside allies who love the person and are committed to his biblical change.
 - Discuss the consequence of refusal. To God, to yourself, and to others.
 - Be sure that your goal as a biblical counselor is to please God by being faithful to His Word, even if the person refuses.

4. Dealing with the person who threatens to quit (or who does quit):

▪ Attitudes to convey:

- I am willing to continue my commitment to help you; I am not quitting on you.
- I remain committed to biblical counseling, to help you understand and apply the gospel.
- I am willing to consider your concerns, objections, alternate interpretations..in light of my commitments, or speak with other biblical ministers and counselors.
- I do not want you to quit and it would sadden me, but if you decide to quit that is your choice. I am not responsible for your choice.

Remember:

- Your counselees do not and never did belong to you.
- You are not the only means of grace God can use. There are other people that God can use.
- Your sinful desires can easily arise here.
- Jesus and his apostles faced rejection.

How to prepare for the initial counseling session:

Have a big picture agenda: Enter the person's world; understand his need (felt and real); bring him Jesus and His answers.

1. Personal Preparation
 - a. Prayer and heart preparation.
 - b. Send or make available in advance your standard informational and intake forms for your counselee to complete and bring.
 - c. Bring items that you will need for the session.
 - d. Be on time (arrive early)
 - e. Connect with, guide, and pray with whoever will be sitting in on the session with you.

2. Room Preparation
 - a. Comfortable chairs
 - b. Inviting (not threatening) environment
 - c. Water, coffee, etc.
 - d. Tissues (have them in plain view and easy for the counselee to reach)

3. Goals for session one:
 - a. Warmly welcome the person. Let them know that you care.
 - b. Know the person: get to know the person by gathering information about him and to help him to begin interpreting his life biblically.
 - c. Give the person hope in Jesus.
 - d. Present a plan.
 - e. Ask for commitment from the counselee.

Opposite Gender Counseling

There are certainly times when pastors counsel women. Here are 10 recommendations to keep in mind when the pastor counsels a woman:

1. Do NOT counsel a woman alone. Be certain to have another person present. It would be wise for the other person to be your wife or another trusted female in the church.

2. Sometimes the situation is a crisis situation and there is not sufficient time to arrange for another person to be there. This should be the exception, not the rule. In cases like this, briefly meet with the person (with your door open .. so you are visible to others in the building...or meet in a more public place (like in the sanctuary after a worship service)).
3. Don't touch a female counselee – EVER, other than possibly a handshake. If she breaks down and cries, pray, point her to the tissue box, let the female who is counseling with you console her. Learn to listen and wait in silence, even if there is an awkward pause.
4. If you are married, speak highly of your wife. Never disclose your wife's sins in a counseling session with someone else.
5. Discipline your eyes to not look at a woman below her face. This is for your sake and also for her sake. She might already feel exposed by opening her life to you.
6. Don't compliment her about her appearance.
7. Be conscious of the effect you might have as a godly, caring man who listens to her.
8. Instruct your female assistant who is counseling with you to notice and speak to an immodestly dressed female counselee after the session, but only if this would be prudent.
9. If your female assistant is not your wife, observe similar precautions as above. In addition:
 - a. Make sure your wife and your assistant's husband are each comfortable with her role.
 - b. Realize that working together can create an unwise intimacy, and also that if she is qualified to assist then she probably has some attractive character qualities.
 - c. Do your co-counseling communication (strategizing, debriefing, etc.) by phone or email instead of meeting alone before or after the session.
10. Train and encourage the godly older women in the congregation to counsel younger women, per Titus 2:3-5.

Note: Some of the training material was gathered as part of the research that I have performed over the last three years while working on this project. Other parts of the training material came from lecture notes and hand-outs that are used by permission from Dr. Robert Jones from course number 80551, Dr. Stuart Scott from course number 80552, and Dr. Jeremy Pierre from course number 80553.

Methodology of Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling

In this session, eight Biblical Counseling methods will be covered:

1. Involvement
2. Inspiration
3. Inventory
4. Interpretation
5. Instruction
6. Inducement
7. Implementation
8. Integration

Introduction

- At the very beginning, as best as you can determine – is this person a believer? Are they following Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior?
 - Be aware that every person is a worshiper.
 - Who (or what) are they worshipping? We need to quickly come to the decision as to whether to disciple them, or evangelize them.
 - Is there a foundation to build on in Christ? We need to approach this early on.
- Counseling is not _____, Instead it is _____.
- Biblical counseling is not _____, but it is simple.
 - The vast majority of biblical counseling that pastors perform will be _____.
 - When it comes to the principles that we will look at, there is much wisdom in counseling. We might approach a situation differently, not necessarily right or wrong.
 - Wisdom is not right or wrong. There are _____ issues and there are _____ issues.
 - What is this person's understanding and implementation of his/her union in Christ? (Rom 6-8)

- Do they understand Justification and Sanctification? How do they think they are going to change and grow?
- When they pray, what are they asking God for?
- The Holy Spirit is essential in the change process (Rom 1-7, then 8)
- The Importance of the Church (“you” is more plural than singular)
- The Importance of Meditation and Prayer (dependent work, faith and love)
- The Reality of the Spiritual Battle (Eph 6; 2 Cor 10; 1 Pt 5)

Involvement (1) _____ care.

“And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”” (Matthew 9:35–38, ESV)

“And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”” (Matthew 22:37–40, ESV)

“Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:14–16, ESV)

“Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears.” (Acts 20:31, ESV)

“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” (Ephesians 5:1–2, ESV)

“But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us. For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers. For you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.” (1 Thessalonians 2:7–12, ESV)

- Hebrews 4 emphasizes His humanity. He is a sympathetic high priest—draw near to Him. All of our counseling problems should take us to _____.
- Loving God and Loving Your Neighbor ... you can't _____ them. If you love God, you will love your neighbor. For example, if someone says that their relationship with God is great, but they can't stand their spouse....something is wrong.
- Definition — “Building a _____ relationship with the disciple/counselee where you put yourself (a fellow sinner and sufferer) in a position to help them know and love God and love others (full of grace and full of Truth).”
Proverbs 27:5, 6, 9; Matt 22:37-40; John 1:14; Gal 6:1-10; Eph 5: 1-2; Col 1:28-29

How Care is Evidenced

- **Be** _____ (Acts 20:31) — Keep balance of Galatians 6:2 and 6:5
- **Show** _____ (Isa. 9:6; Matt. 9:35-38) — Until we ourselves are moved with compassion; we are not ready to minister. You are a fellow sinner and a fellow sufferer. This will include being patient with all (1 Thess 5:14). If someone has not suffered at all, it is rare that they would actually be a good counselor.
 - Ways to develop compassion:
 - Read the Scriptures, memorizing and meditating on them
 - Think about how has God shown you compassion.
 - Read specifically about our God (full of compassion), specifically about Jesus in the Gospels (Mat 9)
 - Ask them “what is it like going through?”
 - Ask yourself what would it be like to be in this person’s place?
 - Say to them, “This has got to be hard...”

- Pray to be more compassionate
 - Be around people who model it
 - Yield to trials in your own life and learn all you can (humble yourself)
 - Serving others in need
- **Take the disciple/counselee seriously** – don't _____ the problem, but maximize the sufficiency of Christ!
- **Express _____ in disciple/counselee's ability to obey Scripture** (2 Cor. 7:16; Phil. 1:6)
- **Receive disciple's/counselee's disagreements without being _____** (2 Tim 2:24-26)
- **Observe limited confidentiality** (Mat 18; Rom 13; Eph 5-6)
 - We don't promise full confidentiality. It is limited to the Government, church leadership, possibly parents, etc. Wherever there is God given authority, we must submit to it.
 - If someone makes a statement such as "I will tell you something, but you must promise not to tell anyone else"...**be very careful**. Respond with something like "I will be as confidential that Scripture allows me to be." For example, (1) if someone tells me that they are going to kill someone, I will notify the police, etc. (2) if a minor tells me they are being abused, I will report it.
 - When you are teaching someone, it is not necessary to ask permission from the counselee for me to ask someone to sit in on the session. For example, say something like "This person will be sitting in with us today. We are a teaching church, etc."
- **Be _____** (Eph 4:25)
- **Model _____ of the _____** — It's hard to give away what you don't have (1 Cor 11:1).
- **Pray with and for the disciple/counselee**
- **Keep being motivated by God's love for you in Christ (Luke 7:41-47; 2 Cor 5:14)**
- **Remember God is working on your own _____ as well**

Inspiration (2) Provide _____.

- an effectual confidence in who God is and what He has promised (as good as done) in regard to the future with present day implications to holiness
- Hope is focused on the future aspect of faith (a subset of Faith)
- Hope is needed – Romans 8:18; 12:12; 1 Cor 10:13; 2 Cor 1; 4:1-18; 1 Thess 1:3
- True Hope vs. Empty/False Hope
 - EMPTY
 - Due to wrong goals
 - Denying reality
 - Due to mystical, pseudo-spiritual thinking
 - a. TRUE
 - (1) Focused on God and His Promises (Ps 42-43), “...But God...”

 - (2) Result of salvation (1 Pet. 1:3)

 - (3) Based upon Scripture (Ps. 119:49; Ps. 130:5; Rom 15:4,13)

 - (4) Realistic (Rom. 8:28-29)

 - (5) A choice (1 Pet. 1:13) in focusing on God, His deeds and His promises (e.g. Christ’s return and heaven - Rom 8:18; 2 Cor 4:16-18 1 Thess 1:10)

 - (6) Based on what we know to be true (Rom. 5:2-3; James 1:2-3)
- How to Inspire Hope
 - b. Share whole gospel in context: narrow (1 Cor 15) and broad implications (e.g. Eph 1:3-14)

 - c. Help them grow in their faith in Christ (2 Pt 3:18)

 - d. Teach counselee to think biblically (major work here)
 - (1) About God’s character (Ps 73; 77; Lam 3; Jer 45)

- (2) About possibility for good (Gen 50:20; Rom 8:28-29)
 - (3) About divine resources (2 Pt 1:3ff)
 - (4) About the nature and cause of the problem
 - (5) About language used (1 Cor 2). For example, be careful using the word “alcoholic”. That is a very hopeless word. It becomes their identity.
 - (6) Focus on Christ’s soon return (1 Pt 1:13)
 - (7) Beware of partial truths (usually this is a lie) We want all of God’s truth in all of the proper context.
 - (8) Where we find true and lasting comfort (Rom 15:4,13)
 - (9) We don’t have to experience the same thing as others in order to share God’s comfort with them (2 Cor 1)
- e. Be solution-oriented (not coping but more than conquerors)
 - f. Be a model of hope (Phil 4:9)

So often with anxiety or depression ... we listen to ourselves, instead of speaking truth to ourselves.

Nervous breakdown – nerves do NOT break down. Instead, it is a resource deficiency in the mind.

If someone is taking medication to solve a “soul” problem, then it is sinful.

Inventory (3) Gathering of _____ Information. The inventory is a tool for gathering data.

“If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.” (Proverbs 18:13, ESV)

“An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.” (Proverbs 18:15, ESV)

“The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him.” (Proverbs 18:17, ESV)

“The purpose in a man’s heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.” (Proverbs 20:5, ESV)

Keep in mind ... Most of the time when you go to the doctor, 80% of the time, they get a correct diagnosis simply from the historical information that is gathered. We need to pay attention to this....as data gathering in biblical counseling is crucial.

1. Why gather personal information?
 - a. Which one? (1 Thess. 5:14)
 - b. Which approach? (Jn. 3 & 4)
 - c. What is the true issue? (Jer. 6:14; Jn 9:18-23)
 - d. Is it a sin or trial or both?
2. What kind of information to gather
(PREACHD acronym by Wayne Mack)²

P—Physical--sleep patterns; medications; diet; activity level; illness

R—Resources and Relationships--job situation; school; intellectual; social; spiritual

E—Emotions; they are feeling responses to what we want & think and choose (if non-organic in nature)

A—Actions--behavior; sins of commission and omission

C—Conceptual (Thinking)--goals; values; beliefs

H—Historical--good and bad in past context; present context; failures; school/job problems

D- Desires, affections
3. Ask proper questions
 - a. Extensive and intensive questions
 - (1) Why? Because “All areas of their life need alteration.”³
Focus upon *the* sin or *the* problem alone is insufficient.”⁴
 - (2) Examples of extensive data gathering:
 - How have relationships with others been affected by your drinking?

² John F. MacArthur Jr. and Wayne A. Mack, *Introduction to Biblical Counseling: A Basic Guide to the Principles and Practice of Counseling* (Dallas: Word, 1994), 173-310.

³ Jay E. Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual: The Practice of Nouthetic Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973), 206.

⁴ Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual*, 208.

- How has your lack of self-control shown up in each area of your life?
- How has your pattern of deceit affected your finances?
- How has your desire to *get* versus your desire to *give* affected your view of church and ministry?

Types of Questions to Ask

- Avoid yes and no questions unless it is what you are looking for or you have a non-communicative counselee.
- Ask questions that will eliminate extraneous material.
- Ask questions about specifics.
- Ask *what* questions for basic data gathering. After asking the *what*, follow it with:
- *How?* The answer to this question gets at the mechanics of something, i.e., the *way* in which it happened.
- *What for?* The answer to this question is aimed at motive, purpose, or function. It is not identical with *why*, although at first it may seem to be. *Why* implies all of the problems of the various steps of causality that so often lead into speculation and frustration. *What for* is narrower and focuses only upon intention.
- *How often?* By this question the counselor seeks to discover whether an event was a practice or only one isolated incident. He asks it when he is looking for patterns.
- *When?* The answer to this question may reveal contingencies. One of the basic questions that counselees often should be asked is, “What led you to come for counseling *now*?” Often the answer to that question will uncover an important precipitating factor. It may disclose the fact that one has reached a desperation point at the culmination of many events.⁵

Examples of Questions to Ask

Preliminary Questions

- What is your problem?
- What have you done about your problem?
- Why do you want to fix your problem?
- What would fixing your problem look like?
- What do you want me to do?

⁵ Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual*, 274-75, 285-88.

More Specific Questions

- What was going on? (Tell me about the situation.)
- What were you thinking and feeling? (Heart response to situation.)
- What did you do? (Active, behavioral response to situation.)
- Why did you do it? (Motives, goals, desires that shaped the active response.)
- What was the result? (How their response affected the situation.)
- When you have a problem, what do you usually do?
- Tell me about your relationship with God:
 - How did it begin?
 - How has it developed?
 - How important is it to you?
 - Where does God fit into the total picture of your life – or the picture of what is happening to you now. What are you doing to strengthen your relationship with God?
- When you have had problems in the past, what has helped you most in resolving them?
- What are some things you wish you could undo?
- What do/did you want, desire, seek, aim for, pursue, hope for? What do you fear or tend to worry about?
- When did you first begin to experience this problem?
- What brings out the worst in you?
- What brings out the best in you?
- What were you thinking when you ...
- What do you think about most often?
- What do you talk about?

Physical

- Generally speaking, how would you describe your present and past physical health?
- Tell me about your sleep patterns.
- What is involved in the work you do?
- If you could change four things about your work, what would you change?
- Give me a description of what you do in a typical day in your life.

Resources

- Tell me about the most important persons in your life, and why they are so important to you.
- Share with me the relationships in your life that give you the most joy; the most sadness or heartache.
- When you have a problem, what do you usually do?

- Tell me about the persons in your life with whom you feel comfortable sharing your private thoughts and feelings?
- Tell me about your relationship with God: how it began, how it has developed, how important it is, where God fits into the total picture of your life or the picture of what is happening to you now, what you are doing to strengthen your relationship with God.
- Describe what your church means to you.
- When you have had problems in the past, what has helped you most in resolving them?
- What are some of your greatest resources, strengths; greatest deficiencies/weaknesses?
- What are your Bible reading and prayer practices?

Emotions

- What are some emotions that you frequently experience?
- How do others see you emotionally?
- If you were able to change anything about yourself emotionally, what would you want to change?
- Give me a few examples of times when you were extremely... (angry, happy, sad).
- How do you feel about what is happening in your life right now?
- If I had tape-recorded what you have just said and played it back to you, what emotions would you hear?

Actions

- As you look back over your life, what are some of the things you have done that were worthwhile?
- What are some of the things you wish you could undo?

Interpretation (4)

10 Commitments that a church must have to have a Biblical Counseling Ministry:

1. A commitment to Sufficiency of Scripture.
2. A commitment to careful investigation and to know people well.
3. A commitment to God's goal for discipleship.
4. Commitment to Biblical compassion and care.
5. Commitment to Biblical method of caring for people's souls and not adding man's wisdom.
6. Commitment to the whole person...not just inner man but also to the body.
7. Commitment to the Biblical standard of confidentiality.
8. Commitment to address change from the inside out. Salvation and sanctification have to be addressed.
9. Commitment to the supernatural work of God.
10. Commitment to the body of Christ.

Instruction (Love Seeks to _____) (5)

We must train our people on how to accurately study the Scripture. We must help our people become better students of the Word.

In our counseling relationships, we want God to be _____ and for them to be sanctified.

1. Biblical Instruction plays an important and strategic role in every person's change and growth.
2. Two Mistaken Ideas about Counseling Instruction (2 Tim.3:15-17)
 - a) Counseling is all instruction
 - b) Counseling is no or little instruction
3. The Nature of Counseling Instruction

- a) Instruction should always have love as its motive and aim (Eph 4:15; 1 Tim 1:5)
- b) Instruction should be biblically centered (not integrated with secular theory)
 - (1) Because the Bible alone is sufficient (2 Pt 1:3ff)
 - (2) Because the Bible alone is powerful (Heb 4:12)
 - (3) Because the Bible alone is comprehensive (2 Tim 3:16)
 - Don't mistake this with exhaustive (Ps 119:105)
 - (4) Because the Bible alone is helpful for every good work (2 Tim 3:16-17)
- c) Instruction should be biblically accurate (2 Tim.2:15)
 - Jesus confronted the Pharisees – Mark 7:13
 - (1) Know the meaning of important biblical words.
 - (2) Determine the meaning of a verse (passage) within its context.
 - (3) Interpret every passage in harmony with the rest of Scripture.
 - (4) Biblical instruction must be Christotelic (the Gospel of Jesus Christ and its implications out into application. Jesus is the end of all of our study but do not force Him in every verse.)
Col 3:15-17
 - (5) Biblical Instruction should always be Grace-based
 - Romans 5:2
 - Romans 5:20
 - Romans 11:6
 - 2 Corinthians 9:8
 - 2 Corinthians 12:9
- d) Instruction should always be action-oriented, and faith directed - Col.1:9-10, Matt.28:20

- e) Instruction should always be a three-factored application - Eph.4:22-24; Col 3:1-17
- f) Instruction should be ministering the Word and not dispensing bible verses
 - It is a dialogue not a monologue (no preaching or lecturing!)
- g) Instruction should clearly differentiate between divine directives and human suggestions (1 Cor 4:6)

Luke 3

- h) Instruction should always deal with the person's immediate crisis
- i) Instruction should always take into account the person's physical state
- j) Instruction should always take into account the person's spiritual state
- k) Instruction should always be biblically appropriate
 - (1) The content of instruction should be appropriate to the counselee's problems, need and condition, spiritual maturity, receptivity, personal background (i.e. Heb.5:11-14)
 - (2) The method of biblical instruction should be appropriate (delivery) – look at Christ in the Gospels
 - (3) The timing of instruction should be appropriate - John 16:12 (the disciples couldn't process all the Revelation at that point – more was to come (the Epistles)

4. The Development of Counseling Instruction

- a) Develop a topical work list and/or files.
- b) Produce a personalized chain-referenced Bible.
- c) Become familiar with people and their research on certain topics.
 - (1) People to call or email
 - (2) Books written addressing specific issues

d) Utilize training resources (sample)

- (1) ACBC (Association of Certified Biblical Counselors) – 5401 N. Oak Trafficway, Kansas City, Missouri 64118-4626
www.biblicalcounseling.com (816)282-2836
- (2) The Master's University, Santa Clarita, CA www.masters.edu (offers a BA and MA in biblical counseling). Offers a BA and MA in biblical counseling. They are soon to offer a DMin in biblical counseling.
- (3) Grace Community Church, Sun Valley, CA – an ACBC training Center as well.
- (4) Southern Baptist Theological Seminary/Boyce College (Offers a BA, MA, MDiv, ThM, D.Min and PhD all in Biblical Counseling) 2825 Lexington Road, Louisville, KY 40280 (502) 897-4799
- (5) Faith Biblical Counseling Ministries, and Seminary 5526 State Road 26 East Lafayette, IN (765) 448-1555
www.faithlafayette.org/counseling (They have a resource center, online)
 - Vision of Hope (women's in-patient facility)
 - Bethany Farms (men's in-patient facility)
- (6) Midwestern Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Missouri (ACBC headquarters is located there)
- (7) Placerita Bible Church Training Center, www.placeritachurch.com Santa Clarita, CA 91321. This is Dr. Scott's church.
- (8) www.oneeightycounseling.com An educational and training service to assist local churches in the training and counseling area (Midwest and California). It's an ACBC certified Training Center.
- (9) Grace Fellowship Church, Florence, Kentucky (counseling training offered each Fall) www.graceky.org 859-371-7880
- (10) www.twelvestones.org (biblical counseling services offered for churches, Morgantown, IN 812-597-1212)
- (11) The Damascus House (8-men facility for men with drug and alcohol enslavement, no charge) <https://www.thedamascushouse.com>
- (12) The Adirondack Bible Chapel (In-house for men and women)
www.adirondackbiblechapel.org/ministry-center

- (13) C.C.E.F. East, 1790 East Willow Grove Ave., Laverock, PA 19118
(215) 884-7676 (*Journal of Biblical Counseling*) www.ccef.org with discernment
- (14) Steve Yu – counseling resources in Orange County, CA
www.biblicalcounselingbooks.com
- (15) BCC (Biblical Counseling Coalition) with discernment
www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org
- **Meditation/Sight & Prayer** (helping the counselee to internalize/see the truth for their own situation. Disciple/Counselee begins to see the heart issues for himself and keep very dependent on the Holy Spirit.⁶
 - Biblical Meditation – Jos.1:8; Ps.1; 119:99; 143:5
 - “The Bridge between knowing and doing” (Donald Whitney)
 - E.g. Matt 13:10, 36; Acts 17:10-12
 - “Meditation is a serious applying of the mind to some sacred subject until our affections are warmed and our resolution is strengthened against evil.” George Swinnoek
 - “It is a holy exercise of the mind whereby we bring the truths of God to remembrance, and seriously ponder them and apply them to ourselves.” Thomas Watson

Holy Resolve/Diligence/Inducement (6)

“And he said, “There was a man who had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.’ And he divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything. “But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you.” (Luke 15:11–18, ESV)

⁶ David Saxton, *God’s Battle Plan for the Mind: The Puritan Practice of Biblical Meditation* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2020), 3-14. This is one of the best books on biblical meditation.

“For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.” (Romans 8:13, ESV)

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.” (Philippians 2:12–13, ESV)

“Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance.” (1 Timothy 4:7–9, ESV)

“But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.” (James 1:25, ESV)

- By God’s grace, I will do what the Lord instructs...
 1. Understand the natural tendencies of the unbeliever’s heart and our own sinful flesh (Jer 34:8-22; Rom 12:11; 2 Pt 1:5, 10)
 - a. Be very careful/cautious when someone says something like “I know that I should do that, but it is probably not going to happen.”
 2. Keep the balance of both – the person working as well as dependency on the work of the Holy Spirit within (Phil 2:13).
 3. Seek to handle the hindrances and rationalizations of the heart.
 4. Seek commitment to follow God’s Authoritative Word no matter how they might feel to the contrary as they live in the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Implementation (7)

“Take care lest you forget the LORD your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today,” (Deuteronomy 8:11, ESV)

“For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the LORD, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel.” (Ezra 7:10, ESV)

“He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” And the crowds asked him, “What then shall we do?” And he answered them, “Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise.” Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to

him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Collect no more than you are authorized to do.” Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages.”” (Luke 3:7–14, ESV)

“If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.” (John 13:17, ESV)

“Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person’s religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.” (James 1:19–27, ESV)

“We can help our counselees to avoid frustration and discouragement by helping them to understand that change is a gradual process requiring practice. And we can help them through the change process by assigning homework that facilitates practice - not just homework that teaches principles but homework that requires application of those principles” (Wayne Mack, *Introduction to Biblical Counseling*, p. 293).

“According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.” (1 Corinthians 3:10–15, ESV)

What lasts is God’s Word...what does NOT last is man’s wisdom.

- Counseling often fails because of improper interpretation or because of weak, vague or ineffective homework.
- Assigning homework that is going to be effective for change and growth must be taken seriously in counseling.

- To begin with, the use of effective homework in counseling is vital and therefore, non-expendable (Jas 1:22-25).

Homework is an essential part of each biblical counseling session.

The Reasons for Homework⁷

1. It translates what was discussed into action. (Prov.14:23)
2. It puts responsibility for change where it belongs. (Jas.1:22-25)
3. It keeps expectations clear for both the counselor and counselee.
4. It helps minimize dependence (on the counselor and transfers it to the Lord Jesus).
5. It helps the counselor to be a faithful steward of his time.
 - a) Brings out problems and patterns more quickly
 - b) Helps you discover those who don't mean business
6. It continues counseling principles between sessions.
7. It says you believe things can be different today.
8. It can provide data for subsequent sessions

B. The Mechanics of Homework

1. Effective homework needs to be specific. We sin specifically and concretely, and we change that way as well.
2. Effective homework emphasizes action; not just hearing, reading and memorizing. (Jn 13:1-5,7,12-17; Phil 4:4-9; Jas 1:22-25)

⁷ Taken from Adams, *Christian Counselor's Manual*, 294-343.

- “Theology is application” (Dr. John Frame)
3. Effective homework involves the counselee in the process of change – 1 Tim 4:7-9 (no room for passivity or letting go and letting God. He will not obey for them). God will empower them, but it will be dependent work (Phil 2:12-13; Col 1:28-29)
 4. Effective homework addresses the issues of the heart (Prv 4:23; Mk 7:21-23)
 5. Effective homework addresses one’s life in light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Phil 1:27; 1 Pt 2:12)
 6. Effective homework causes real change to occur (2 Cor 3:18)
 - Inform them that you have the expectation that they will do their homework and that they will take it seriously. Be reasonable in light of their situation.
 7. Effective homework should be tailored to the individual. No two souls are alike.
 8. Effective homework turns the person’s focus from inward to upward and outward (Matt 22:34-40)
 9. Effective homework gives hope and generates enthusiasm in the person.
 - We were created in Jesus Christ for the purpose of good works (Eph 2:10; Jn 15:1-5; Titus 2-3)
 - The Bible anticipates God’s people will be actively changing and growing (2 Cor 3:18; Heb 5:12-14; 2 Pt 3:18)
 - Holy Spirit inspired, Bible-based homework is the active tool (discipline) by which God’s people become productive members of His kingdom again.
 10. Assignments need to be appropriate to their problem(s).
 11. Review previous homework at the beginning of each session.
 12. Examples
 - a) **Scripture** (Rom 15:4; Acts 20:20,27; Heb 4:12)

This will be a change for people who are coming from secular counseling. They will have been used to just talking and not having to do anything. We assign homework that is grounded in Scripture and expect them to do work. Do not let counselees get into the habit of not doing their homework...when they can do it.

- b) Memorization and meditation. It is important to know the Scripture, but then to apply it. If they just memorize the Scripture but do nothing with it, it doesn't do a lot of good. There must be application.
- c) Pamphlets. "Tell me what verse or passage stands out in that chapter, etc." It is the Scripture that will help to bring sanctification.
- d) Books
- e) Data gathering assignments, example: Journal of Upsets (Conflicts)
- f) Daily study/prayer times
- g) Church attendance & involvement (serving)
- h) Loving deeds
- i) Various Bible Studies
- j) Download a message or music on a counseling topic. It is fine to assign songs that will minister to the specific situation they are going through.
- k) Journal of Biblical Counseling – article to read
- l) Interview another believer on a relevant topic. For example, this could be another believer who has worked through a similar problem that is willing to share with others who are experiencing the same thing, etc. We are looking for someone who has experienced the problem and have worked through the situation well (with Scripture).

Love for God and Love for their neighbor. When people come for counseling, it is very self focused. They are struggling with a trial or a sin issue, etc. It is about them. That is usually the starting place. God isn't in their thoughts and we are trying to change their thought process.

C. RESOURCES

- *How to Help People Change* (Adams)
- *The Christian Counselor's Manual* (Adams)
- *Homework Manual for Biblical Living* (Mack)
- *Changed into His Image* (Berg)
- *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands* (Tripp)
- *What to Do on Thursday* (Adams)
- *Committed to Craftsmanship* (Adams)

D. Sample of Homework

- Read Deuteronomy 6 daily, journaling each day things that stand out to you that are important to you to live by and important for you to teach your children. Write two for each day, noting how God intends for these commands and promises to impact your life.
- Read 2 Timothy 3:14-17, and look up each main word in verse 16 (teaching, reproof, correction, training), writing out how God intends his Word to be a help, not only to your own heart, but to the training of your children.
- Read 2 Peter 1:3-4, writing out how God intends his Word to be a help, not only to your own heart, but to the training of your children.
- Memorize 2 Peter 1:3-4, thinking deeply on it and write out 2 ways you can apply this verse to your given situation.
- Write a brief testimony.
- My intention is that _____ will thoroughly understand and grasp and be able to share with another God's intentions for one to live a life of godliness, His provision of the Word that sufficiently instructs, reproofs, corrects, and trains the heart, and His goodness in working all things together beautifully, for the believer's good and for His glory. I incorporated Deuteronomy 6, so that she could see the benefits of loving God and the consequences of not, and just as importantly, her responsibility in parenting very intentionally. I feel it all ties together beautifully, as God's Word always does.

Other helps:

- Share with at least one person (your husband, friend, co-worker, etc.) what you are trying to change this week (from what habit to what) and have them ask you about it.
- Ask others how you can pray for them (and do it right then or a short time later)
- If assigning a passage to read:
 - Read through the book of _____ one chapter per day.
 - Keep a journal answering the following questions related to your daily reading:
 - Record the portion that you read.
 - What did this passage say about God?
 - Is there a sin to avoid? Is there a command to obey? (What did this passage say about putting off sin or putting on righteousness?)
 - What is a specific teaching that can be understood from this passage?
 - What is one thing from this passage for which I can thank God?
 - How might this passage be helping me to know and love Jesus more?
 - Write down a specific application you will make in your life today because of your reading. Write out a prayer to God to enable you to practice this principle.

Integration (8)

(Transfer/Disciple) the Word into their lives, minister to others in the church)

1. Realizing where we go for the Truth (Jn17:17; 1 Cor.4:7; Eph.4:11ff)
2. Realize we must first study and then apply the truth to our own lives

(Ezra 7:10; Jas 1:22-25)

3. Understanding discipleship is teaching them to observe the truth and then pass it on to others (Mt.28:18-20; 2 Cor.1:3-7; 2 Tim 2:2)
4. How do we know when we can cease counseling them?
5. Realize that you are truly discipling when those you disciple are discipling others.

If the session is not moving, review Jay's 50 Failure factors in the Christian Counselor's Manual.

After reading the 50 failure factors, I have considered the following:

1. I am unsure if ZQ is a believer
2. I am unsure if she has truly repented of this sin.
3. I am not sure she is ready to commit to true repentance and wants to change.
4. I think she wants her anxiety to go away, but I want her to have a personal relationship with Christ.
5. I believe I have gathered a great deal of data but there may be more questions I need to ask, primarily about her understanding of the gospel
6. Abstract vs Concrete – I believe I could have given different homework, or could have focused more specifically on her issue – I allowed our conversation to get side tracked, as enlightening as it was.
7. I do not believe I have been intellectualizing.
8. While a medical examination could be beneficial, I don't think it is necessary for her issue.
9. I think it is clear she is struggling with anxiety and a lack of trust in the Lord.
10. The first issue to be settled is if she is a believer.
11. I think her relationship with the Lord is very weak, resulting in the issues she is having.
12. I have given hope in the past two sessions, but could have given more, that change is possible.
13. I do think I should have stressed more that she is in sin.
14. Her thoughts on her husband are totally from her perspective.
15. I do think I gave her concrete homework, but she didn't do most of it. I think I ought to have spent more time stressing the importance of it.
16. I think a DPP isn't necessary because she clearly sees her sinful pattern
17. I do think she may need to restructure her life, but don't feel I had enough data to be able to admonish her to do so.
18. She is not in the midst of self-pity

19. She has talked a great deal about her problems and I have shown her on many of them what God's answer to such an issue is.
20. Her attitude and language shows that she is confused and seeking answers.
21. She is not actively speaking behind the backs of others beyond what is needed to ask a question.
22. There have been no new additions to the issue in our two meetings.
23. I don't think I am focusing on the wrong problem, I am not sure she is a believer.
24. Open rebellion – as she has been working w/ another counselor for a while and is still not seeking to put this off like she could be, she could ask to consider if this is rebellious.
25. I feel the homework I gave her was appropriate for the time I had with her – she chose not to do it.
26. I am not struggling in this sin.
27. Doctrinal Error – unsure, I feel I need to know more about what she believes before I can proceed in counseling.
28. No drugs, but she struggles with caffeine addiction.
29. Focusing on the put off's rather than the put on's. I would like to review this with her if I can, as I am not sure how well her previous counselor went through this.
30. Have you prayed about this? I have.
31. I have not tuned her out, but realize that while I have met with her twice, I was not able to give much help, and the Lord needs to draw her near.
32. She is specifically speaking answers from the Lord for her issue.
33. I think I could have given her hope possibly by calling her anxiety sin and by talking about God gives hope for sinners that we can cast off sin.
34. I do think I could have been more aggressive in calling out her sin and calling for repentance.
35. Does she think change is impossible? She thinks she may always struggle with this, but that she has hope for her spiritual life because of the Lord. She can have joy because of the Lord.
36. Feeling based counsel vs command based. I don't believe I have focused on feelings. I specifically took her to many commands in the past two sessions.
37. I have appealed to her to turn to her community in the coming weeks while I am not here.

38. I don't think church discipline is called for in this case.
39. I failed to rebuke her over her not doing her homework, but I did focus on why she needs to do it in the future.
40. I think the bible is clear that anxiety is sinful – I believe the bible calls us to trust in the Lord with all our hearts and not to lean on our own understanding. I believe the solution in this case is to renew the mind and put on a trust of the Lord. I would like to be able to work with her for a few weeks or months and discuss each week why she can have trust in the Lord, focusing on His character.
41. I believe there is total freedom from this sin in the bible.
42. She does not pray regularly on her own, meditate on Scripture, or read.
43. I do think I need to consult others on this case. I think it would be wise to speak to her previous counselor.
44. Patterns – I have no records to be able to review but I do see the patterns she is following.
45. I have asked both intensive and extensive questions.
46. This is not like any other case I have handled.
47. I don't think this Ce is trying to hide anything.
48. I think her husband and kids could give further account of the severity of this issue in her life.
49. I do not think I am incompetent but that I have not yet had adequate time with this Ce. I do think my time this session could have been better spent if I had better control of the session.
50. I am reasonably sure that there is no organic source for this issue.

Note: Some of the training material was gathered as part of the research that I have performed over the last three years while working on this project. Other parts of the training material came from lecture notes and hand-outs that are used by permission from Dr. Robert Jones from course number 80551, Dr. Stuart Scott from course number 80552, and Dr. Jeremy Pierre from course number 80553.

Session Four: Counseling Simulation

Session four was a counseling simulation. The topic of anxiety was selected, due to several of the participants expressing a desire to see a session on this topic. This session included role playing by various participants. Material from the previous three sessions was used during this session.

APPENDIX 6
ATTENDANCE RECORD

Participant	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Participant 1	X	X	X	X
Participant 2	X	X	X	X
Participant 3	X	X	X	X
Participant 4	X	X	X	X
Participant 5	X	X	X	X
Participant 6	X	X	X	X
Participant 7	X	X	X	X
Participant 8	X	X	X	X

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ABSTRACT

EQUIPPING PASTORS OF THE RUSSELL CREEK BAPTIST ASSOCIATION IN GREENSBURG, KENTUCKY, TO COUNSEL BIBLICALLY

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2023
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This project seeks to equip the pastors of the Russell Creek Baptist Association in Greensburg, Kentucky, to counsel biblically. Chapter 1 briefly introduces the ministry context of the Russell Creek Baptist Association and lists the goals of this project. Chapter 2 provides exegesis of four passages of Scripture (Heb 13:7-19; 2 Tim 3:10-17; Gal 5:16-25; Matt 28:18-20) to show that pastors have a responsibility to counsel biblically as well as the biblical resources needed to counsel biblically. Chapter 3 details various resources that are readily available to biblical counselors as compared to the practices and beliefs of other counselors. Chapter 4 describes the implementation of the project, detailing the content and the teaching methodology of the course curriculum. Chapter 5 evaluates the effectiveness of the project in relation to the completion of the goals that were outlined in chapter 1. Ultimately, this project intends to equip the pastors of the Russell Creek Baptist Association with resources, confidence, and competency for providing biblical counseling to their congregations.

VITA

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EDUCATION

BS, Western Kentucky University, 1988

MDiv, Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016

ORGANIZATIONS

Mission Board, Kentucky Baptist Convention

Missions Mobilization Committee, Kentucky Baptist Convention

Green County Ministerial Association

Russell Creek Baptist Association

Certified Facilitator, Prepare/Enrich

MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT

Associate Pastor, Greensburg Baptist Church, Greensburg, Kentucky, 2012-