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EQUIPPING LEADERS OF SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE
MINISTRIES IN KUBAMITWE, UGANDA,
FOR BIBLICAL COUNSELING

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the Faculty of
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APPROVAL SHEET

**EQUIPPING LEADERS OF SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE
MINISTRIES IN KUBAMITWE, UGANDA,
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I dedicate this project to my loving and devoted wife, Angela Almira Huffstutler, for her patient endurance during my many long hours away from her and the family. Angela has been a long-suffering helper in my never-ending educational pursuits, and I could not have done this without her support.

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PREFACE

This project was completed by the grace of God. First, I am thankful to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for calling me and saving me from my sin. I cannot imagine my life without knowing Jesus Christ, the wonderful Counselor.

Second, I thank the Lord for my godly parents, Dale and Linda Huffstutler. Through much struggle, prayer, diligence, and faithfulness, they reared me in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. In their home I was privileged to grow up in Bible-believing churches. I am grateful for their continued prayerfulness and encouragement.

Third, I am thankful for the privilege to serve the Lord in both Kenya and Uganda. A debt of gratitude is due to the Sufficiency of Scripture Ministries and Dr. Shannon Hurley for allowing me to complete this project in their midst.

Fourth, I will always be grateful to my doctoral supervisor, Dr. Stuart W. Scott, Associate Professor of Biblical Counseling, at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Thank you for your patience, wise counsel, and support throughout the project.

Finally, I owe a great deal of gratitude to my wife, Angela, for her patience and support through my many years of schooling. She has been a faithful partner, my best friend, and she has sacrificed her time and energy while I often studied for hours on end.

My prayer and hope are that this project will equip Christlike counselors within Sufficiency of Scripture Ministries, and that God would be greatly magnified in my life and in those who are helped by this project.

Daniel Huffstutler

Kubamitwe, Uganda

May 2024

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Sufficiency of Scripture (SOS) Ministries is based in the village setting of Kubamitwe outside Kampala, Uganda. Uganda is one of the poorest countries in the world with many people living on less than a few dollars a day. Uganda's brief modern history has been marked by colonial rule, the atrocities of Idi Amin Dada in the 1970s, a Ugandan Bush War in the 1980s, the AIDS epidemic in the 1990s, a seemingly never-ending cycle of poverty, broken families, orphans, alcoholism, cults, false religions, and now the prosperity gospel in all its perversities.

The magnitude of the challenges in Uganda, East Africa, is overwhelming. In this seemingly hopeless context, SOS Ministries was born. The vision of SOS Ministries is "to see Christ reigning through his Word in the hearts of all people."¹ That vision is explained more fully in its mission and core values. The mission of SOS begins with its local community of Kubamitwe, Uganda, where SOS endeavors to strengthen God's church and disciple believers through that church. SOS Ministries accomplishes its mission by recognizing the supremacy of Jesus Christ in all things, daily depending on God, focusing on the local church, developing a passion for holiness and discipleship, working to raise up godly leadership, being faithful stewards of all God gives, working harmoniously with national Ugandans in love and unity, and encouraging people to wholly devote themselves to God.

¹ Sufficiency of Scripture Ministries, "SOS Plan and Passion," accessed February 26, 2020, <https://www.sosministries.com/about-us/sos-plan-and-passion/>.

Context

Sufficiency of Scripture Ministries was founded by Shannon Hurley in 2002 to lay the foundation for future ministry in Uganda. After several annual trips Shannon and Danielle Hurley moved their entire family to live in Uganda in 2006. Since then, SOS Ministries has grown to include three core institutions: Community Bible Church of Kubamitwe (CBCK), Legacy Christian Academy (LCA), and Shepherds Training College (STC). In addition, the Lord is using SOS Ministries to strengthen the churches of Uganda through its various ministries. SOS ministers to the Baptist denominations of Uganda and South Sudan by strengthening their existing organizations and leadership in their member churches. SOS works with the leaders of East African denominations to help their churches mature spiritually and live according to God's Word. Church strengthening is primarily done through resourcing, national conferences, leadership training, church visitations, and national strategic planning.

CBCK began in 2009 in the home of Shannon Hurley with only a few people from the local village.² From the beginning, CBCK has desired to be a model church, providing an example to the community and theological students at STC. CBCK longs to provide a living example of a vibrant and healthy church operating by biblical principles for its local community and visiting theological students. The CBCK elders, deacons, and leadership team consist of missionaries and local men who are responsible for the direction of the ministry at CBCK. Working in tandem with LCA, CBCK has seen many families changed by their exposure to the gospel and biblical Christianity. Today, more than five hundred souls attend CBCK on a weekly basis.

LCA began in 2013 and exists to help disciple the community of Kubamitwe by providing a Christ-centered primary and secondary education in a loving and professional environment that develops students academically, socially, morally, and

² Sufficiency of Scripture Ministries, "Community Bible Church of Kubamitwe," accessed February 22, 2021, <https://www.sosministries.com/ministries/local-church/>.

spiritually to make a positive impact in their world.³ SOS's LCA uses an integrated teaching curriculum that is effective, excellent, practical, and highly desirable in the Ugandan context.

STC was founded in 2018 to see Christ reigning through God's Word in the hearts of all people.⁴ While focused on the needs in Uganda, a tremendous opportunity exists to equip pastors throughout East Africa. The mission of STC is to equip the shepherds of God's church spiritually and academically to effectively carry out the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20). STC plans to accomplish this mission through a certificate in discipleship, a diploma in biblical studies, and a degree in pastoral ministries. STC's three-phase plan (i.e., discipleship, Bible, and pastors' level programs) will address the great need of pastoral training in Uganda. STC seeks to carry out these educational programs in a loving environment that exemplifies and emphasizes an uncompromising commitment to the worship of God, a submission to the absolute authority of Scripture, an undying love for the church, and a deep compassion to penetrate the world with God's truth.

Theological Foundation of SOS

Undergirding the ministries of SOS is the firm conviction in the absolute authority and sufficiency of the Bible for all of life. From this conviction, SOS ministries undertakes other evangelistic, educational, social, and training ministries in Uganda. God has given SOS the opportunity to disciple the communities in and around Kubamitwe as God's Word is gloriously changing a community steeped in alcoholism, violence, superstition, and sin.

³ Sufficiency of Scripture Ministries, "Legacy Christian Academy," accessed February 22, 2021, <https://www.sosministries.com/ministries/legacy-christian-academy/>.

⁴ Sufficiency of Scripture Ministries, "Shepherds Training Center," accessed February 22, 2021, <https://www.sosministries.com/ministries/shepherds-training-center/>.

Missionary Team of SOS

The Lord has provided and guided several missionary families to SOS over the years to help SOS in each stage of its growing ministry. Whether planting churches, constructing buildings, developing a growing campus, operating a primary school, or laying foundations for future ministries, God continues to provide the missionaries necessary for the tasks. Living overseas in a rural setting brings many unique challenges to families and ministries. Finding the right servants of the Lord to serve in SOS Ministries is an ongoing challenge that burdens Shannon Hurley, the founder of SOS.

Relationships with Local Leaders in Uganda

A missionary team's success is greatly magnified when it partners well with local leaders and the national church.⁵ SOS Ministries, through the personal ministry of Shannon Hurley, has developed enduring relationships with leaders in the United States, Uganda, South Sudan, and Kenya. Due to the many needs of the Baptist Union of Uganda, SOS has been able to serve that group of churches by helping its national headquarters with facilities, conferences, and leadership training. SOS Ministries also works with an American and Ugandan board that serves alongside and supports the work in Kubamitwe. Most of the ministries based at SOS are operating with Ugandan staff in key roles. In addition, denominational leaders from both South Sudan and Uganda are committed to partnering with SOS to accomplish its mission. Many of these leaders have committed to sending men from their denomination to Shepherds Training College for education as well. The Baptist Union of Uganda and others partner with SOS Ministries to provide teachers needed for the six hundred students at LCA.

⁵ Writing on effective mission partnerships, Daniel Rickett asserts, "In this new world, the rule will be: Build alliances, coordinate your strategies, and you will make progress. Focus on working together and you will make more progress. We have come to that historical moment when, if we are to be for the gospel of Christ, we must also be for each other." Daniel Rickett, *Making Your Partnership Work* (Enumclaw, WA: Winepress, 2002), 20.

Existing Facilities and Institutions of SOS

The mission, vision, and ministries of SOS Ministries are greatly benefited by the facilities the Lord has provided. SOS currently owns a few hundred acres in the Luwero District of Uganda just outside Kampala, the capital of Uganda. Not only does this facility provide housing for missionaries, national staff, schoolteachers, administrators, and theological students, but it also provides the space needed for CBCK, STC, the SOS medical clinic, and LCA. These institutions and facilities enable the organizations to function well, host groups on site, and Lord willing, influence East Africa with God's Word in the years to come.

Hurdles to Biblical Counseling Training at SOS Ministries

The first challenge to developing and implementing biblical counseling training at SOS is the current social and economic challenges that exist in Kubamitwe and much of Uganda. Like many places in East Africa, poverty, illiteracy, diseases, broken families, biblical illiteracy, rampant unemployment, and failing educational institutions are just a few of the problems that significantly hamper the ability of Ugandans to devote time to understanding and knowing God through his Word. Living life wisely in the fear of the Lord is not on the minds of many because of their daily challenges.

A second challenge to developing and implementing biblical counseling training at SOS is the theologically weak, ignorant church leadership throughout the region. Biblical ignorance, Pentecostal-infused prosperity gospel, and indigenous cults have largely replaced the biblical gospel that may have been preached at one time in East Africa. Faithful denominations and church networks are few. Few pastors have theological training or access to theological literature, depriving them of the opportunity to grow in their faith. This theological famine has caused great harm to the people of Uganda, like so many other places in the world where God's Word is ignored or unknown.

A third challenge to the development of biblical counseling training is the lack of understanding in the sufficiency of the Scriptures and its relevancy for all of life. While nominal Christians in Uganda respect the Bible, few read it even if they have a copy they can easily understand. East African culture is not currently a reading culture, and the labor of reading God's Word well in any language is often not a skill many have acquired. There is a growing appreciation of education and reading, but the challenges remain significant. When a people do not read books, let alone the Bible they possess, there will be significant challenges to using God's Word in biblical counseling.

Finally, the final most concerning challenge to developing and implementing biblical counseling training in Uganda is the scarcity of information about the field of biblical counseling. Through various personalities and ministries, western Christians have only recently rediscovered the sufficiency of God's Word to treat the hearts and minds of men with the medicine of God's Word.⁶ Unfortunately, the field and practice of biblical counseling is still unknown in many places in this world, including Uganda. Applying the truths of God's Word to daily life requires a deep knowledge of God's Word and a willingness to apply it. While there might be a basic understanding of some of the main ideas of the Bible in some places, using the Scriptures to diagnose and heal the human soul is not comprehended by many. This is the most concerning weakness in the situation among Christians in Uganda. To properly practice biblical counseling, a solid theological foundation joined with wise applicational guidance in the local context will be necessary.

⁶ David Powlison describes the resurgence of biblical counseling:

Nouthetic counseling enjoyed an initial spurt of popularity in the decade after 1970, leveled off through the 1980s, and then has become resurgent since about 1990. . . . But at present biblical counseling is in an expansive mode. Books by new authors are being published, conferences attendance and course enrollments are swelling, fresh conflicts are occurring both outside and inside the movement, and institutions are being developed or redeveloped. (David Powlison, *The Biblical Counseling Movement: History and Context* [Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2010], 13)

Rationale

Sufficiency of Scripture Ministries exists “to strengthen lives and communities through Christ, and we believe that the most enduring avenue for personal and collective strength comes through bringing Scripture to life in Christ’s church.”⁷ Biblical counseling is a potentially vital part of the ministry of God’s Word that SOS can use to bring Scripture to bear on the sin and problems that many Ugandans face every day. Because of the opportunities and challenges mentioned previously, SOS is strategically placed to help people apply God’s Word to their lives no matter where they are financially, educationally, or socially. God’s Word is for all his creation, and SOS Ministries exists in a place where the potential to teach God’s Word to children, teachers, church members, theological students, and church leaders is compelling.

I serve as a missionary at SOS and as teacher and administrator at Shepherds Training College. I also serve in the local church in a variety of roles. Because of the opportunities and challenges previously mentioned, I considered the following questions when developing the counseling course for biblical counseling training at SOS. Who is ultimately responsible for counseling believers? Why do church members, teachers, and theological students need training in biblical counseling? How can the ministries of SOS best help inform and educate Ugandans to counsel biblically? Finally, how can SOS Ministries support the work of the church in equipping people to counsel one another biblically?

Because the local church is a pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim 3:15) and God’s institution for this age, this project shows the necessity of the church to equip people to counsel biblically. This project depended on biblical instruction to train earnest believers to care for souls who are suffering from sin (Gal 6:1-2) or circumstances (e.g., Job) God has allowed into their lives. Furthermore, this project promoted a biblical view of character transformation where all true spiritual change occurs by the Holy Spirit and uses

⁷ Sufficiency of Scripture Ministries, “About SOS,” accessed February 24, 2021, <https://www.sosministries.com/about-us/about/>.

the Word of God in a person's heart and mind (2 Cor 3:18). Another foundational aspect of this project was the concept of disciple making. The Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20 and the command of 2 Timothy 2:2 to entrust what has been heard to faithful men compels Christians to help disciples of Jesus make more disciples of Jesus.

Besides forming a foundational biblical framework for training believers to counsel each other, this project also explored other forms of equipping that might be effective in training believers and theological students to biblically counsel others. To develop competent counselors, the introductory concepts of biblical counseling must be taught in church and school settings. Teachers and theological students must understand how to apply the biblical theology they are learning to real counseling situations with real people. They must be equipped with the knowledge, resources, and tools to handle the difficult cases in their own Ugandan context.

From this theological foundation described, this project answered the fourth question regarding how participants will be equipped to counsel biblically. A counseling class was taught to the individuals of various SOS ministries to inform and equip teachers, students, and ministry leaders to use biblical counseling more effectively. This plan assessed the status of biblical counseling at SOS and resulted in Ugandans being equipped to implement spiritual transformation through the life-changing ministry of the Holy Spirit employing his Word within the context of our local church and ministries.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip leaders of Sufficiency of Scripture Ministries in Kubamitwe, Uganda, for biblical counseling.

Goals

I established three goals for this project to equip leaders for biblical counseling at Sufficiency of Scripture Ministries.

1. The first goal of this project was to assess the leaders' perceived competency in biblical counseling.

2. The second goal was to develop a thirteen-lesson curriculum in biblical counseling to equip the leaders.
3. The third goal was to increase the leaders' perceived competency in biblical counseling.

Specific research methodology measured the successful completion of these three goals.⁸ The research methodology and instruments used to measure the success of the goals are described in the following section.

Research Methodology

The research methodology for this project included a pre-training survey, a post-training survey, and an evaluation rubric. Three goals determined the successful completion of this project. The first goal was to assess the leaders' perceived competency in biblical counseling. Leaders include LCA school teachers, CBCK church members, SOS department heads, community leaders, and SOS medical personnel. A pre-training survey helped to identify areas of biblical ignorance to be addressed in the course. The survey was designed to explore a person's understanding of biblical counseling, the sufficiency of Scripture, and the role of biblical counseling in the leaders' lives.⁹ The survey included twenty-five questions regarding their perceived competency and skill in using biblical counseling. A six-point Likert scale was utilized. The survey took 10-15 minutes to complete. This goal was considered successfully met when at least twenty people within the ministries of SOS completed the pre-training and post-training surveys enabling analyzation and interpretation of the results to occur.

The second goal was to develop a thirteen-lesson curriculum in biblical counseling to equip leaders of SOS Ministries. This goal used the information gathered from the pre-training survey to inform the development of the curriculum to equip leaders of SOS Ministries in biblical counseling. The course primarily focused on understanding

⁸ All the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

⁹ See appendix 1.

and implementing essential principles of biblical counseling and developing godly character. Due to the diversity of the people and ministries of SOS (i.e., local church, pastors' college, primary and secondary academy, medical clinic, and disability ministry), participants came from different cultural and work backgrounds and have different roles. This diversity of people required a nuanced simplicity for the biblical counseling training. The course primarily focused on cultivating basic counseling competency and developing Christlike character in the people taking the class. A panel of three biblical counseling experts used a rubric to evaluate the curriculum in four categories: biblical faithfulness, scope, methodology, and practicality of the curriculum.¹⁰ The goal was considered successfully met when ninety percent of the expert panel evaluations rated the curriculum as sufficient or exemplary.

The third goal of this project was to increase the SOS leaders' perceived competency by educating them in biblical counseling. I invited leaders of SOS who were recommended by the executive leadership of SOS or were active in one of the ministries of SOS. Individuals displaying spiritual maturity or an interest in biblical counseling were specifically encouraged to attend the classes. The course was conducted in-person in a classroom setting on the campus of SOS Ministries and laid an introductory foundation in the field of biblical counseling. Each session spanned a maximum of two hours and included instruction and classroom discussion. Course participants were encouraged to faithfully attend and participate in class discussions.¹¹ This goal was measured by administering a post-training survey using the same counseling assessment that was used in the pre-training survey.¹² This third goal was considered successfully met when the *t*-

¹⁰ See appendix 2.

¹¹ Participants unable to attend a particular session could arrange to complete the missed session via an audio recording of the session.

¹² Only participants attending seventy percent of the sessions were considered to have finished the course.

test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-training survey scores.

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

Terms used in this project have diverse meanings depending on the personal experience, educational background, and biblical training of the readers. The following key terms are defined to clarify their meaning for the reader and to increase an appreciation for the project focus:

Biblical counseling. Paul David Tripp defines biblical counseling simply with God and his reliable Word at the center when he writes, “Speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into . . . Christ (Eph 4:15).”¹³ Counselees must know that their words are grounded in God’s words. Robert Kellemen expands biblical counseling to all of life when he writes,

Christ-centered, church-based, comprehensive, compassionate, and culturally informed biblical counseling depends upon the Holy Spirit to relate God’s Words to suffering and sin by speaking and living God’s truth in love to equip people to love God and one another (Matt 22:35-40). It cultivates conformity to Christ and communion with Christ and the body of Christ, leading to a community of one-another disciple-makers (Matt 28:18-20).¹⁴

Robert D. Jones may provide the most concise definition when he describes biblical counseling as “the Christlike, caring, person-to-person ministry of God’s Word to people struggling with personal and interpersonal problems to help them know and follow Jesus Christ in heart and behavior amid their struggles.”¹⁵ In summary, for this project I defined biblical counseling as using God’s Word to help people with the troubles they encounter.

¹³ 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), 332.

¹⁴ Robert W. Kellemen, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church: The 4E Ministry Training Strategy* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2011), 36.

¹⁵ Robert D. Jones, Kristin L. Kellen, and Rob Green, *The Gospel for Disordered Lives: An Introduction into Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling* (Nashville: B & H, 2021), 21.

Sufficiency of Scripture. Biblical counselors are committed to the foundational truth of the Scripture's sufficiency.¹⁶ John MacArthur clarifies that this scriptural sufficiency means that "Scripture offers sufficient help for all the deepest needs of the human heart."¹⁷ Heath Lambert states that the Scriptures are there to help Christians when they need to provide wise counsel: "The doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture is a promise that God himself will give you something from him [through His Word] to say in those sacred moments."¹⁸ John Frame simply affirms, "Sufficiency means simply that in Scripture we have all the words of God we need. We should not try to add to them, and we dare not subtract from them, since we live by *every* word that comes from God."¹⁹ The sufficiency of God's Word for life and godliness in the Old and New Testament (2 Pet 1:3) is the one doctrine that distinguishes biblical counseling from all other forms of counseling.

The primary limitation for this project was the minimum thirteen-lesson term allotted for completing the biblical counseling class. The thirteen-lesson term did not include the time required to prepare the course, pre- and post-assessment, and the creation of an equipping class.

Several delimitations applied to this project to improve the quality of participants. First, participants were required to be significantly involved in the ministries

¹⁶ Jones describes how scriptural sufficiency guides biblical counselors: "Biblical counselors use the Bible as our God-given, Spirit-written tool to diagnose, explain, and solve counseling problems. The Bible alone provides his true, authoritative, and sufficient wisdom for every person in every life situation." Jones, Kellen, and Green, *The Gospel for Disordered Lives*, 3. Yet this sufficiency does not mean that the Bible has every answer to every question. Powlison clarifies, "Scripture is sufficient, not in that it is exhaustive, containing all valid knowledge, but in that it rightly aligns a coherent and comprehensive system of counseling that is radically at odds with every a-theistic model." Powlison, *Biblical Counseling Movement*, 276.

¹⁷ John MacArthur Jr., "Preaching and Biblical Counseling," in *Introduction to Biblical Counseling*, ed. John MacArthur Jr. and Wayne Mack (Dallas: Word, 1994), 323-24.

¹⁸ Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 38.

¹⁹ John M. Frame, *Salvation Belongs to the Lord: An Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R), 70.

of SOS. SOS senior staff or ministry leaders were ideal candidates as well as others from the staff. Second, participants were strongly encouraged to complete the electronic pre-training survey. Third, participants had to express a desire to be accepted into the equipping class and commit themselves to it. Fourth, the effectiveness of the biblical counseling curriculum would be diminished if participants failed to attend each class session. To mitigate the impact of missed sessions, each session was recorded, and audio recordings were made available for the participants.

Conclusion

The staff of SOS Ministries has an exalted view of Scripture and a strong desire to serve the world with God's Word. This project revealed how individuals at SOS were trained to use these ideas to counsel biblically. Chapter 2 reveals the biblical basis for equipping leaders for biblical counseling. Chapter 3 explains the theological, methodological, and resource foundations for equipping leaders for biblical counseling.

Biblical counseling is important in helping believers find hope for the sin and suffering experienced in life. Equipping leaders at SOS to use biblical counseling can help create a biblical culture where people find hope in God through his Word and by his Spirit and not in sinful cultural habits. Biblical counseling focuses on the biblical truths alone that will provide hope in the person of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL BASIS FOR EQUIPPING LEADERS OF SOS MINISTRIES FOR BIBLICAL COUNSELING

This chapter examines four biblical texts that explain a biblical and theological basis for equipping leaders for biblical counseling. Christian leaders have sufficient resources at their disposal to instruct them in their mission to biblically counsel others. To accomplish the stated purpose, this chapter examines these passages to establish a solid foundation for training leaders in biblical counseling.

First, an investigation of Matthew 28:18-20 shows that the task of discipling others toward Christlikeness involves obeying the Lord's Great Commission. Second, in Colossians 1:24-29 Christian leaders are to be mature in Christ and useful for the work of the ministry. Like the apostle Paul, these leaders carry the privilege of making the Word of God known among saints and sinners to encourage Christian maturity. Third, an examination of 1 Corinthians 2:6-13 reveals that Christian leaders are to be growing in wisdom and sanctification by means of God's Word and his Spirit. Paul was committed to imparting wisdom to those who were spiritual, so that they would evaluate all things and lead the people of God well. Fourth, an exegesis of Hebrews 10:19-25 confirms that Christian leaders should be experiencing godly, biblical change and helping others to change through loving confrontation and counsel. The life and work of Christ should give believers confidence to come before God with full assurance, firmly grasping God's promises in Scripture while encouraging others to love and good deeds.

Christian Leaders Equip Others as a Manifestation of Discipleship (Matt 28:18-20)

In dramatic fashion, followers of Jesus were specifically commissioned by the Lord to make more trinitarian, baptized, obedient disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christian leaders not only have the commands of Christ, but also his example and those of the apostles and the early church. Discipleship is at the heart of what it means to be a Christian leader. Matthew 28:18-20 reads, “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.’”¹

The Definition of the Discipling Process (vv. 18-20)

This project defines discipleship as the means by which disciples of Jesus Christ bring unbelievers into a relationship with him that results in that new believer being conformed into Christ’s image through the Spirit’s application of the Word of God. Matthew 28:18-20 motivates Christian leaders to evangelize and equip others as a manifestation of biblical discipleship, ideally within the context of a local church.

Matthew 28:18-20 was written to be the pinnacle of his Gospel.² Matthew concludes with the resurrected Lord dramatically commissioning his disciples to take the good news to the ends of the earth. In preparation for their fears, Christ anchors his commission by his own divine authority which his Heavenly Father has given to him. In unambiguous terms, Jesus claims ultimate authority when he says, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”³ Jesus bases his authority on multiple ideas. First, his Father had sent him on a mission to do his Father’s will which has now resulted

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

² Craig Blomberg explains that Matthew is leading his readers to “the climax and the conclusion” of his Gospel. Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, New American Commentary, vol. 22 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 431.

³ Donald Hagner emphasizes the Lord’s authority for commissioning: “It is accordingly the one who has “all authority in heaven and on earth,” i.e., the sovereign authority of God, who now sends out his disciples on the mission to evangelize the world. This is to provide them in turn with authority and supply them with confidence as they go.” Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 33b (Dallas: Word, 1995), 886.

in his own resurrection and eternal glory.⁴ Second, his death and resurrection unquestionably established his claim as the Son of God who lived in perfect submission to his Father throughout his earthly ministry. And as the sovereign Lord over heaven and earth, he is perfectly qualified to commission his disciples.⁵

The Extent of the Discipling Process (vv. 18-19)

With the authority of their risen and glorified Lord, the disciples of Jesus were to “go therefore and make disciples of all nations (πορευθέντες οἷν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη; v. 19).⁶ The main verb in this sentence is μαθητεύσατε, which by definition is bringing someone such as a student under the authority of, but also in relationship to, a teacher.⁷ However, Jesus is not proposing a dry academic classroom where a teacher dogmatically instructs his students. Jesus wants his disciples to find and disciple others into a personal, vibrant, and transforming relationship with himself. This task will transform the life and mind of the disciple who is led to Jesus and believes in him. Leon Morris writes that Jesus is not looking for “nominal adherence to a group,” but rather, “wholehearted commitment to a person. . . . The life of a disciple is different because of his attachment to Jesus.”⁸ Carson remarks that a disciple is one who is being radically changed because “Disciples are those who hear, understand, and obey Jesus”

⁴ The glory Jesus receives from obedience is highlighted by R. T. France: “Jesus, going the way of obedience to his Father’s will even to the cross, has received far more than Satan could offer.” R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 1113.

⁵ D. A. Carson highlights the authority that Christ’s resurrection has given him: “Because of that authority, his followers may go in confidence that their Lord is in sovereign control of ‘everything in heaven and on earth.’” D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 8, *Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 594.

⁶ Blomberg, *Matthew*, 431; Carson, *Matthew*, 594; Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 886; Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 746.

⁷ Walter Bauer et al., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2000), s.v. “μαθητεύσατε.” Carson, *Matthew*, 595.

⁸ Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 746.

teaching.”⁹ A disciple is one whose life is entirely influenced by his master, and Jesus expects no less of his disciples.

Jesus places no limit on this disciple-making process. His commission knows no boundaries. Jesus envisions his commission always taking place among all people everywhere. The disciples of Jesus are to make disciples in their home areas but also far beyond, even to the ends of the known earth (Acts 1:8).¹⁰ As Matthew 28:19 makes clear, the eleven disciples, and all those who follow them by implication, are commanded to joyfully make disciples and vibrantly equip those disciples in the way of Christ, knowing no geographic, ethnic, or language barrier.¹¹

The Essential Elements of the Discipling Process (vv. 19-20)

Jesus provides the essential elements of making a disciple in his name. In verse 19 he explains that the disciples are to “Go therefore and make disciples, 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” (vv. 19-20a).¹² Baptism (βαπτίζοντες) is the formal evidence of a person’s confession to believe in Jesus and an announcement of one’s entrance into the body of Christ. This outward symbol of an inward reality is usually the result of the evangelistic process and an indication that the discipling process has begun.¹³

⁹ Carson, *Matthew*, 596.

¹⁰ Hagner writes that the participles πορευθέντες, βαπτίζοντες and διδάσκοντες are ones that carry an imperatival potency stretching the command to disciple to baptizing and teaching. Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 886.

¹¹ Carson, *Matthew*, 597.

¹² France explains the force of the main verb in this passage: “The sentence structure is of a main verb in the imperative, ‘make disciples,’ followed by two uncoordinated participles, ‘baptizing,’ ‘teaching,’ which spell out the process of making disciples.” France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1115.

¹³ Blomberg, *Matthew*, 432; France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1116; Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 749.

Teaching (διδάσκοντες) is the means by which the words of the Lord are communicated to his disciples to carefully communicate the way Christ wants them to live.¹⁴ The goal of this teaching is to equip and mature disciples to be obedient Christlike individuals. Disciples of Christ are not to merely take in the information Jesus has given, but rather to make the life-changing way of Christ their own.¹⁵ This discipling process given to the disciples of Christ should not be done in an irresponsible fashion, but rather with the full knowledge that their omniscient and sovereign Lord is with them the entire time. Jesus intentionally assures his disciples by telling them, “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (v. 20b). The Spirit of Christ that would soon be given to his disciples would guarantee his presence no matter what happened or where they went. Morris helpfully comments, “The disciple is not going to be left to serve God as well as he can . . . [he] will find that he has a great companion as he goes on his way through life.”¹⁶

The Application of the Discipling Process (vv. 18-20)

The process of disciple-making and biblical counseling is formally inaugurated in Matthew 28:18-20. It is here that one finds the mission of Christ to his disciples and the initial impetus in biblical counseling to give biblical instruction and to encourage Christlikeness in Christ’s followers. Matthew 28:18-20 explains the essential disciple-making and teaching functions of Christ’s disciples and its ultimate purpose to make obedient disciples of Christ. Furthermore, Paul describes this disciple-making pattern in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 as he clarifies how God’s Word is helpful “for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” Paul also echoes the Great Commission when he informs

¹⁴ Blomberg writes, “Teaching obedience to all of Jesus’ commands forms the heart of disciple making.” Blomberg, *Matthew*, 432.

¹⁵ Hagner points out, “It is thus the particular responsibility of the church to hand on that teaching and to see to it that new disciples make it their way of life.” Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 888.

¹⁶ Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 749.

the Romans that the essential nature of disciples is to be “filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another” from the Scriptures (Rom 15:14). Furthermore, part of lovingly instructing others necessarily includes teaching how the sovereign and compassionate “God of all comfort . . . comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction” (2 Cor 1:3-4). Everything done by a faithful follower of Christ in discipleship (i.e., evangelism, discipleship, instruction, comforting, etc.) occurs as believers in the church speak biblical truth to one another in a manner that reflects the spirit of Ephesians 4. In Ephesians 4, leaders are to equip believers for the work of ministry to build up the body until “we all attain to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of Christ” (vv. 11-16).

Discipling in a heart-focused manner and applying God’s Word to a person’s life while addressing sin and suffering is an example of how leaders should equip others. The way discipling is done is a demonstration of the discipling Christ commanded (Matt 28:18-20). The Scriptures discussed in this section clarify how Christian leaders follow Christ’s discipling process in Matthew 28:18-20, and how discipling is connected to the equipping process of biblical counseling.

Christian Leaders Are Responsible to Make the Word of God Known (Col 1:24-29)

In Colossian 1:24-29, Paul writes to the Colossians about their stewardship of the gospel.

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 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. (Col 1:24-29)

This section will consider how Christian leaders, following Paul’s example and encouragement, are called to make the Word of God known, to emphasize the glorious

hope of Christ, to warn and teach everyone with wisdom, and to strive to present everyone mature in Christ.

The apostle Paul was an accomplished church planter, but he wrote the book of Colossians to a church he did not personally plant. As he fulfilled his ministry to the Gentiles, he was eager to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ and encourage these newer Colossian Christians toward greater Christlikeness.¹⁷ When Paul wrote to this church, he wanted them to “be filled with the full knowledge of the Lord’s will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding” (Col 1:8). He longed for the church to “walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy” (Col 1:10). Paul’s love for the church is evident as he lovingly instructs, encourages, and motivates the Colossians to live wisely in this world while pursuing godly maturity.

However, the Colossians seemed to be struggling with a compromised understanding of the person and work of Christ, and Paul is concerned that this may result in a defective faith. Some scholars believe a Jewish syncretism was creeping into the church, and Paul was eager to strongly address the problem.¹⁸ As John Calvin explains, “This Epistle . . . to express it in one word, distinguishes the true Christ from a fictitious one.”¹⁹ Paul is zealous to center the Colossians on an accurate understanding of who Christ is. He is concerned that they are being deceived to add things to their simple faith in Christ alone for salvation. To that effect, “Paul labels everyone who adheres to

¹⁷ David Pao explains the Gentile orientation of Colossians when he writes, “Significant Jewish influence in the Colossian community cannot be denied. Nevertheless, in this letter Paul appears to be addressing primarily a Gentile audience.” David W. Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 25.

¹⁸ Pao writes, “In light of the fact that the Colossian false teaching appears to contain both Jewish elements and those that do not fit comfortably within a traditional Jewish framework, it appears that some sort of syncretism lies behind this false teaching.” Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, 30.

¹⁹ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 134.

religious practices not centered on Christ as captives to an ‘empty and deceitful philosophy according to human tradition . . . not according to Christ’” (Col 2:8).²⁰

As David Pao explains, Paul wants to make sure that “the supreme authority of Christ is proclaimed not simply as one who is the Creator of the universe, but as one who accomplishes God’s plan of salvation and is therefore the Lord of the new creation as well.”²¹ Yet, Paul is not satisfied with only a soteriological understanding of Christ. He presses into the full deity of Christ to expand the Colossians’ comprehension of Jesus to magnify his striking uniqueness. He wants them to know that “in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (Col 2: 9). In an uplifting and escalating manner, he instructs this Colossian church to a greater understanding of the Lord Jesus Christ and the impact it should have on them. He desires to “let no one disqualify you” (Col 2:18), but instead to be “nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments . . . with a growth that is from God” (Col 2:19).

Paul means to correct false teaching and lift their attention to the greatness of the Lord and his life-changing power.²² While false teaching and religious ritual created “an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body” for the Colossians (Col 2:23), Paul knows that they are “of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh” (Col 2:23). Rather, since they are “raised with Christ” (Col 3:1), they should “seek the things that are above” (Col 3:1) and “set your minds on things that are above” (Col 3:2), waiting for the return of Christ so that “you also will appear with him in glory” (Col 3:4).

²⁰ Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, 19.

²¹ Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, 19.

²² Pao points to the life-changing and Christ-centered focus of Paul’s letter to the Colossians when he writes, “Instead of simply pointing out the errors of the various practices and beliefs promoted by the false teachers, Paul begins and ends with an intense focus on Christ as the foundation of the believers’ existence. As a result, one finds powerful theoretical and practical outworkings of a robust Christology.” Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, 31.

Making the Word Known (vv. 25, 27)

A Christian leader is not an island unto himself. A Christian leader serves others and works to make the Lord Jesus Christ, the hope of glory (v. 27), a reality in each person's life. The apostle Paul's life serves as an example to Christians and especially Christian leaders in many ways. His life and ministry were marked by great learning, humbling self-sacrifice, and brutal suffering for others, for Christ, and for the church. As an apostle to the Gentiles, missionary, church planter, and Christian leader, Paul was determined to faithfully steward the roles God had given him. Paul's testimony has been a sterling example for Christian leaders for ages.

Foundational to Paul's ministry was the revealing of the Gentile mystery given to him by God. Despite being a persecutor of Christians, Paul was chosen by God to make known the riches of the glory of Christ to Gentiles. He was to do this by proclaiming, admonishing, and teaching everyone, including Gentiles, to present themselves complete in Christ (v. 28) just like their Jewish brothers.²³ Paul informs his readers in Colossians 1:29 that this was why he strenuously labored with God in his ministry: he was committed to "struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me."

Paul's careful stewardship of the Gentile mystery and his unceasing travels in that quest provide an excellent example for every Christian leader. Paul zealously preached God's Word everywhere he went.²⁴ He believed the Word of God was fully sufficient to convince Gentile minds that Jesus Christ was their Savior. To that end, Paul provided the

²³ In the present context, this "mystery" centers on the inclusion of the Gentiles (v. 27) as Paul presents "everyone" mature in Christ (v. 28). This aspect of the "mystery" can also be found in Romans 11:25 and is elaborated in Ephesians 3:1-9. Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, 214.

²⁴ N. T. Wright explains, "The word of God is, for Paul, a power let loose in the world, embodied in the true gospel message (see 1:6). It must be allowed to have its full effect, to be 'fulfilled' in that sense." N. T. Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 12 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1986), 91.

Holy Spirit-inspired example for all Christian leaders who follow to proclaim the person and gospel of Jesus Christ.²⁵

Emphasizing the Glorious Hope of Christ (v. 27)

From the early days of the New Testament (Gal 1:6), Christian leaders have been tempted to add something to the gospel and the glorious hope of the glory of Christ. Since Christians' gospel confidence is often weak, the supposed improvements of the world around them tempts them to add to the simple truth and question the power of the gospel (Gal 6:13-15). In the New Testament era, the Colossians were being tempted to add Jewish rituals to their faith and practice. For centuries, Christians have been tempted to add human traditions, extra-biblical habits, and cultural practices to the simple gospel of Jesus Christ. The astounding simplicity of Paul's message, "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (v. 27), is a clarion call reminding believers of the life-giving, effective gospel. Pragmatism, promising techniques, and clever gimmicks often shimmer and dazzle as deceitful replacements for the effective gospel message they have already been given.

For Jews in the early New Testament era, hearing that their Jewish Messiah embraced Gentiles and promised to dwell within them by his Spirit was even more troubling and disturbing.²⁶ For generations, the Jews had been taught to avoid Gentiles and consider them unclean, refusing to even eat with them. They had diligently perfected the means to keep themselves unspotted from Gentile influence, but they had lost God's purpose for them to be light to the Gentiles. Now, one of their own, the Pharisee Paul, is

²⁵ James D. G. Dunn explains, "All this is confirmed by the description of the commission as 'to fulfill (literally) the word of God,' the latter a regular phrase to denote the gospel, delivered as it was by word of mouth." James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; 1996), 118.

²⁶ David Garland explains the offense most first century Jews would have experienced if their Messiah was focusing on the Gentiles: "Christ among the Gentiles and for the Gentiles seriously undermined most Jewish expectations. It seemed at best to be a betrayal; if true, God was acting in contradiction to an agreed course of action." David E. Garland, *Colossians and Philemon*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 92.

an apostle to the Gentiles, and the multi-ethnic church is God's new program replacing the uniquely Jewish culture and worship structure of the previous economy. Paul, of course, realizes how his fellow Hebrews are struggling and holds forth the hope that is found in Christ to motivate the Colossians to reject appealing Jewish rituals or ideas.²⁷ For the Colossian Gentiles and many millions more, this new identity in Christ was life-changing and provided a great hope²⁸ in the eternal future.²⁹ It should not be compromised or denied by false teaching. Rather, those Colossians should hold to Christ and "walk in him, [being] rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving" (Col 2:6-7).

Warning and Teaching Everyone with Wisdom (v. 28)

By his proclamation and letter, Paul identified the problems and anchored the Colossians in Christ. Now he wants to emphasize the foundation and strengthen it in the minds of the Colossians. Paul is eager to leave no one out, so everyone is his target. F. F. Bruce explains, "The repetition of 'everyone' is emphatic. There is no part of Christian teaching that is to be reserved for a spiritual elite. All the truth of God is for all the people of God."³⁰ Christian leaders will follow Paul's example and seek to equip everyone with godly wisdom as God gives opportunities. Whether young or old, all must

²⁷ Dunn remarks, "It is striking that for the third time in these opening paragraphs the theme of hope is given central place in the gospel" Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 123.

²⁸ Dunn explains, "Christ in you" is "the hope" of that "glory" because retransformation into the divine image and glory is a lifelong process already underway in the person of faith." Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 123.

²⁹ Douglas Moo emphasizes the life changing impact of this new identity: "Paul's focus here is on how God's new covenant people are completely identified with their representative, Christ, and how that new identity gives hope for the future." Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 159.

³⁰ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 87.

hear of the hope of glory. There is no limit to the message of Christ, and Paul wants to make that clear to the Colossians.

Paul uses similar words to describe and emphasize how Christ is proclaimed. Translations generally use admonishing (νουθετέω) or warning and teaching (διδάσκω) for these important disciplines Paul encourages Christian leaders to do. James D. G. Dunn notes, “Νουθετέω and διδάσκω are near synonyms, both meaning ‘instruct.’ The former carries the implication of exhortation, warning, and correction, hence ‘admonish, warn’ and its use in Jewish literature with reference to God’s chastening.”³¹ It is interesting that Christ is proclaimed not only by teaching the truth but also by wisely warning and instructing others in the process. Pao explains, “In this context, Paul uses ‘admonishing’ and ‘teaching’ perhaps not to elaborate on the act of proclamation but to highlight the subsequent phrase ‘with all wisdom,’ which illustrates its content.”³² Speaking the truth properly often requires wisdom only God can provide. Paul recognizes the counselor’s need for heavenly wisdom since three of the four times he mentions the need for wisdom occur in Colossians (1:9, 28, 3:16).

Jay Adams notes that Christian leaders’ counseling must not only warn or teach others but also must do both concurrently like Paul did. Adams writes, “Counseling (*nouthesia*) and teaching (*didasko*) were the two sides of his ministry. . . . He engaged fully in both. It is a serious mistake to separate them (Cf. Acts 20:20,31). The two complement one another. And, only by coupling them can one hope to present each individual mature in Christ.”³³ A Christian leader must share absolute truth when counseling, not merely talk around a subject. He must both warn and teach God’s Word to his hearers.

³¹ Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 124.

³² Pao. *Colossians and Philemon*, 132.

³³ Jay E. Adams, *Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon*, Christian Counselor’s Commentary (Cordova, TN: Institute for Nouthetic Studies, 2020), 142-43.

Striving to Present Everyone Mature in Christ (vv. 28-29)

As Christian leaders take their stewardship of the gospel and Christian truth seriously, they will make God’s sufficient Word known, elevate the glorious hope of Christ, wisely warn and teach everyone, and strive to present every person complete in Christ. In this effort of making Christ known, one sees the mysterious convergence of human actions and divine providence that is channeled to help others reach maturity.³⁴ It was God who willed, but it was also Paul who admonished, taught, and presented.

The glorious gospel of Christ and the hope it brings motivates Christian leaders to tell everyone they are acquainted with of that hope. Like Paul, Christian leaders will not live dichotomized lives. Instead, the hope of the gospel propels them outward to those around them who do not have hope in Christ. Paul emphasizes the ministry to every person in verse 28 to help the reader understand the universal and individual personal responsibility Christian leaders have. Paul modeled his ministry example when he labored to present mature believers to the Lord (Phil 4:9; 1 Cor 11:1). The example of Paul and his associates shows that the gospel was given to every³⁵ person they are acquainted with.³⁶ Douglas Moo highlights that the individual emphasis of this verse “is remarkable for its emphasis on universality: the Greek word *pas* occurs four times. . . . Particularly striking is the threefold ‘every person’ (*panta anthrōpon*).”³⁷

³⁴ Pao explains, “Paul and the other gospel messengers become the agents through whom the recipients can receive ‘all wisdom.’ This points to the emphasis on both divine acts and human mediation in this letter.” Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, 132.

³⁵ The individual application of the gospel to everyone is evident. Pao reveals the emphasis: “Paul focuses on the power of the gospel among the Gentiles and uses the Greek term “all” (πᾶς) three times: “admonishing everyone [πάντα ἄνθρωπον],” “teaching everyone [πάντα ἄνθρωπον],” and “with all [πάση] wisdom.” The reference to “everyone” (πάντα ἄνθρωπον) in v. 28 confirms this emphasis. Against the elitists, Paul is again emphasizing the universal scope and power of this gospel.” Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, 133.

³⁶ Moo clarifies, “The repetition of the phrase therefore emphasizes the full measure of gospel proclamation that Paul and his associates bring to every person they encounter. Each one is “admonished’ and ‘taught’ with the goal that each one might be presented fully mature in Christ.” Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 89.

³⁷ Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 159.

The spiritual maturity Paul emphasizes in Colossians 1 is grounded in the unfolding of the will of God (Rom 12:2). His perfect will, will be fully accomplished by God's action in the eternal state when the perfect is fully revealed (1 Cor 13:10). In eternity Christians will finally be in entire union and knowledge with Christ (Eph 4:13).³⁸ While all Christians should be progressing in their sanctification and always striving to be more holy, they should not expect sinless maturity in this life (1 John 1:8; Jas 1:13-15).

Christian Leaders Grow in Sanctification (1 Cor 2:6-13)

A Christian leader is one who is spiritually more mature than those he is trying to lead. Christian leaders must give counsel, model godliness, and provide direction to the people they lead. Providentially, God has provided all Christians with what they need to grow in sanctification and to develop Christlikeness. Paul teaches the Corinthians that God has provided exactly what they need. First Corinthians 2:6-13 reads,

Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"—these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

Paul writes that God has provided his Spirit,³⁹ so that the spiritual man can judge all things (v. 15). This wisdom was hidden from the rulers of this world (v. 6) and

³⁸ Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, 133.

³⁹ Fee writes, "The key to understanding God's wisdom lies with the Spirit. . . . Therefore, the Spirit of God becomes the link between God and humanity, the 'quality' from God himself who makes the knowing possible." Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 118.

was held back in secret before the world was created (v. 7). This wisdom from God has now been revealed with clarity through the apostles of Christ from the Spirit of God (v. 10), which Christ has sent to his church.

God has given Christian leaders all the resources they need in the context of the local church to develop themselves and others in sanctification and Christlikeness. The first resource, the Bible, God's written Word, is 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 Tim 3:15-17). In this list of functions, the Christian leader finds the complete process for encouraging biblical change in a person's life. With the Scriptures, leaders can move from not only teaching the truth, but also reproofing what is wrong, then providing correction from the wrong actions, resulting in times of training in righteous behavior.

Second Peter 1:3-4 is a complementary passage to 1 Corinthians 2:6-13 that also extols the blessings of knowing God's Word and clearly teaches that the Scriptures are sufficient to live a life pleasing to the Lord. The apostle Peter informs Christian leaders that God has provided all that is needed in his Word to live a godly life pleasing to him. He writes, "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises" (2 Pet 1:3-4).

In addition to the written Word of God, all believers have the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is wholly given to all who repent of their sin and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Believers are instantly made into new spiritual creatures who are then baptized in the Spirit and sealed until the day of complete redemption and glorification. At salvation, believers are given the Holy Spirit in full and are not waiting for a spiritual boost when they achieve an ecstatic earthly experience. Biblically speaking, the Spirit's influence upon

a person is measured by evidence of the Holy Spirit's fruits, by the Spirit's gifts, or by godly self-control (Rom 8:9-11; Gal 5:22-24; Eph 5:18).

The two divine resources of the Word and the Spirit belong to all Christians and are best utilized in the context of the local congregation. A leader's powers of persuasion or personality are given no credence in Scripture. First Corinthians 2:6-13 explains that only God's Spirit using God's Word will have any lasting impact on a person. An unbeliever does not even have the capacity to understand divine truth because he does not have the Spirit of God to enlighten him.⁴⁰ Christian leaders have been given God's Word and God's Spirit to help them counsel others. They would be foolish not to use these divine resources in the equipping of those God has placed under their leadership.

God's Will Is Revealed by His Spirit (vv. 10-12)

Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 2:10-12 that God reveals divine truth only through his Spirit⁴¹ and only to those who are spiritual (v. 14), who "have the mind of Christ" (v. 16), in order that they may understand his will for them.⁴² Mankind in his natural state is not able to understand the vital truths of God's Word because "the natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God" (v. 14). Because of humanity's depravity and love of darkness, God sent his Spirit to help us "understand the things freely given us by God"

⁴⁰ Adams recognizes, "Paul's point is that the unregenerate person cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God, because they are spiritually understood (which is to say, unless the Spirit works a work of regeneration to enlighten them, they are incapable)." Jay Adams, *I Corinthians and II Corinthians*, Christian Counselor's Commentary (Cordova, TN: Institute for Nouthetic Studies, 2010), 17.

⁴¹ Gardner explains, "Paul insists that the deep things of God include the very revelation that Paul has been talking about, the self-revelation of God in Christ crucified. The Spirit alone can penetrate the depths of God's purposes and his self-sacrifice in Christ. He alone enables people to understand something the rulers of this age are unable to comprehend." Paul Gardner, *I Corinthians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), 143.

⁴² Gardner writes, "It was God's predetermined purpose to reveal these things to those who love him. This is what God has prepared, and the means by which these things have been revealed is 'through the Spirit' (διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος)." Gardner, *I Corinthians*, 143.

(v. 12) in the Word of God through his Spirit. Adams explains how God’s Word and Spirit complement each other in the revealing of truth:

God’s truth is welcomed by those whom the Spirit enlightens. By His holy working in their lives, they are made capable of understanding what others cannot. . . . Otherwise, it is impossible to know God’s thoughts. It was the Holy Spirit’s task to supervise the writing of the Scriptures. Those Scriptures are a record of the thoughts of God, applied to life situations, that the Spirit, through chosen men, has made known to those whom He has enabled to love God (cf. Romans 5:5). By that selfsame Spirit, who illumines God’s children, they can know all those things that God has “freely given to us” (v. 12b).⁴³

The Spirit of God Knows the Deep Things of God (vv. 10-13)

Paul continues to develop his argument in verses 10-13 when he reminds his readers that only the spirit of a man knows the deeper thoughts of a man. And therefore, only the Spirit of God knows the deeper things of God. If those things are true, then a person can only know things about God as the Spirit of God reveals things to him. Paul’s crucial truth teaches that only the Spirit of God can illuminate a person’s mind to understand God’s truth. Roy Ciampa and Brian Rosner state, “The Spirit has free and full access to this knowledge, and can thereby reveal it. . . . This wisdom is not attainable by human beings without the aid of God’s Spirit, a point Paul emphasizes throughout the paragraph.”⁴⁴ Clearly the Spirit of God must be the one who teaches about the deep and difficult things of God.

Unbelievers Cannot Receive the Things of the Spirit of God (v. 14)

While unbelievers can understand the facts of God’s written revelation,⁴⁵ they cannot understand the spiritual importance of that information. Adams clearly confirms

⁴³ Adams, *I Corinthians and II Corinthians*, 17.

⁴⁴ Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010). 130.

⁴⁵ Anthony Thiselton writes, “This ‘wisdom’ of 2:6-16, however, is *not* a matter of ‘new contents’ . . . but a deeper grasp of realities.” Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 263.

this when he writes, “In essence, Paul declares ‘unless you have been regenerated by the Spirit of God, you will not, indeed *cannot*, accept the wisdom that comes from God.’”⁴⁶ This truth has significant effect on the effort to counsel an unbeliever. Christian leaders seeking to influence and counsel unbelievers must realize that they must begin with and remain focused on the gospel until conversion takes place. Attempts to biblically counsel an unbeliever will ultimately fail.⁴⁷

Christian Leaders Spiritually Discern All Things (v. 15)

Christian leaders must be Spirit-filled people who understand God’s Word as directed by the Holy Spirit.⁴⁸ Paul clearly teaches, “The spiritual person judges all things” (v. 15).⁴⁹ When counseling others, all the things of a person’s life must be understood and discerned in the light of the Scripture with the Spirit’s leading. Craig Blomberg explains the difference between believing and unbelieving people who understand the meaning of the biblical text:

But the Spirit never teaches that which is contrary to the plain meaning of passages interpreted in their original historical and literary contexts. And this meaning is accessible to anyone—believer or unbeliever—willing and able to put in the necessary study time. Many non-Christians, skilled in the biblical languages and in ancient history and literature, can tell us what specific passages of Scripture *mean* every bit as adequately as the best Christian commentators, and often better than some less competent Christian interpreters. The “understanding” these non-Christians

⁴⁶ Adams, *I Corinthians and II Corinthians*, 15.

⁴⁷ Adams clarifies that Christian counseling is gospel focused: “The counselor must recognize that all counseling that purports to be Christian *must* bring about change *that is pleasing to God*. But if unregenerate persons can neither understand nor do those things that God requires, it is impossible to counsel them. The important truth for counselors, therefore, is that they *should not attempt to counsel unbelievers*.” Adams, *I Corinthians and II Corinthians*, 18.

⁴⁸ The enlightening influence of God’s Spirit is explained by Blomberg when he writes, “The ‘spiritual man’ (v. 15a) simply refers to the person *with* the Spirit, and, hence, to any Christian (cf. 12:13).” Craig Blomberg, *I Corinthians*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 65.

⁴⁹ “Makes judgments” comes from the same verb as “discerned” and helps to interpret it. Believers have the ability to bring God’s perspective to bear on every aspect of life.” Blomberg, *I Corinthians*, 65.

do not possess is what the Bible consistently considers to be the fullest kind of understanding: a willingness *to act on and obey* the word of God (cf. v. 14a).⁵⁰

While believers and unbelievers can understand the meaning of Scripture, Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 2:6-13 that the wisdom of God is understood by Christians. God's wisdom is different from the wisdom of this world, and many are fooled by the world's wisdom. Christians are led to not only understand, but also to obey the teaching of Scripture. Wise believers then take that understanding of Scripture's meaning and apply it to their lives and others.

Christian Leaders Experience Christlike Change and Help Others Change through Loving Confrontation (Heb 10:19-25)

Christian leaders are men and women of influence who encourage others toward Christlikeness. As those leaders are growing in sanctification, they lovingly encourage and confront others to do the same. In Romans 15:14, Paul is confident that his Roman readers are "full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another." To experience this Christlike change and help others pursue holiness, Christian leaders must be in close communion with the Lord who uses his Word and his Spirit to bring God-honoring change. The author of Hebrews instructs his readers to "draw near to God" (10:22), and he grounds that optimistic directive in the Christian's relationship with God. Hebrews 10:19-25 reads,

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Christians should have confidence to come before God because of the atonement of Jesus Christ who has opened the way to approach God directly without an

⁵⁰ Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 68.

interceding priest. That knowledge should encourage Christians to believe the Scriptures and boldly approach God with a confident assurance of acceptance, cleansing, and forgiveness from sin.⁵¹

Draw Near to God in Sincere Faith (v. 22)

The first of the three exhortations in Hebrews 10 is for all Christians to draw near to God. Christian leaders should lead others to draw near to God sincerely and confidently and provide examples of how to do it.⁵² Furthermore, God is spirit, and a person's physical location has nothing to do with how close he is to God. One can approach God from anywhere on earth. Hebrews 10:19-22 prepares leaders with all the reasons to confidently draw near to God while explaining how to do it.⁵³ The author reminds them that the blood of Jesus shed on the cross has created a new way to approach God directly.

When drawing near to God, Christians are to do so “with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water” (v. 22) A true heart is a loyal heart, referring to the entire

⁵¹ John Calvin writes, “A *true* or sincere heart is opposed to a heart that is hypocritical and deceitful. By the term *full assurance*, πληροφορία, the apostle points out the nature of faith, and at the same time reminds us, that the grace of Christ cannot be received except by those who possess a fixed and unhesitating conviction.” John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews*, trans. John Owen (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 237.

⁵² Gareth Cockerill encourages believers to draw near to God: “Such regular and continuous “drawing near” through prayer and worship is vital because life in God’s presence is the essence, means, and end of their existence as the people of God. Their present continuous drawing near . . . is the means of perseverance until they enter his presence finally and forever (12:25-29).” Gareth Lee Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 379.

⁵³ Richard Phillips instructs believers to come to the worship service with a true heart; that is, with undivided affection and intent to worship him. . . . Second, we must come with the assurance and confidence of acceptance that comes from genuine faith in his saving work. Third, we must be able to deal with our own sinfulness, our guilt from things we have done and the sinfulness we bring into the sanctuary. . . . Finally, we must come believing and relying upon the work of the Holy Spirit, trusting him to cleanse and renew our hearts as we come to the Father in Christ’s name. (Richard D. Phillips, *Hebrews*, Reformed Expository Commentary [Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2006], 361)

person.⁵⁴ Every Jew in the Old Testament period would have known that God must be approached with great reverence and holiness. And Hebrews speaks of a believer's approach before God being done with a "true heart in full assurance of faith," being "sprinkled clean from an evil conscience."⁵⁵ These ideas encourage the reader to approach God with holy boldness.

Hold Fast the Confession of Our Hope (Heb 10:23)

The second exhortation to exhibit hope and unflinching commitment because of the work of Christ.⁵⁶ That persevering loyalty is grounded in the absolute trustworthiness of the God who made the promises. Faithful devotion to the Lord Jesus and his gospel is important to the writer of Hebrews. He is committed to avoiding compromise and encourages his readers to do the same. These Hebrew Christians were not to return to the former ways of Judaism but were to boldly confess Christ and hold fast to their faithful God.

Stir Up Others to Love and Good Deeds (Heb 10:24-25)

The third exhortation is to earnestly love others and to do good works. As a person confidently draws near to God in sincere holiness and persevering faith while firmly grasping the faith confessed, that person is preparing himself to minister to the

⁵⁴ Paul Ellingworth and Eugene Nida confirm, "A *sincere heart* gives the meaning of 'a true heart' . . . 'loyal.' . . . *Heart*, as usual, stands for the whole person, especially what is central to the personality." Paul Ellingworth and Eugene Nida, *A Handbook on the Letter to the Hebrews*, UBS Handbook (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 230-31.

⁵⁵ David Allen writes,

These are actions which have already been accomplished for us at the moment of conversion, when the atonement is applied to our hearts resulting in the objective forgiveness of sins, internal cleansing, and the concomitant deliverance from a guilty conscience. This metaphorical language of sprinkling a heart emphasizes the internal nature of salvation in contrast to the external nature of the old covenant. (David L. Allen, *Hebrews*, New American Commentary [Nashville: B & H, 2010], 444)

⁵⁶ Cockerill defines Christian perseverance: "Perseverance in faithful living is dependent on an adequate grasp of Christ and his sufficiency." Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 382.

people around him. Hebrews 10:24-25 naturally directs love and godly action toward the local congregation of believers to which a person belongs. As Paul Ellingworth points out, once a leader's relationship with God is in proper order, the leader's attention will be directed outward to those in his circle of influence.⁵⁷ The leader's natural place of impact will often be the local church where he will be able to influence those looking to grow as Christians.

Christian leaders draw near to God in true faith, hold fast to the confession of hope in Christ, which results in those very leaders stirring up others to love and good works. This is the scriptural pattern for Christian leaders to personally experience and encourage Christlike change in others.

Conclusion

The Scriptures have much to say about spiritual leadership and the equipping of believers. So much in fact, that it is not possible in the confines of this chapter to examine every Scripture. Nevertheless, this chapter demonstrated a biblical and theological basis for equipping leaders at SOS Ministries in biblical counseling. The explanation of the four biblical passages in this chapter revealed that God has given Christian leaders sufficient information to instruct themselves in Christlikeness, so that they can counsel others. First, Christian leaders must obey the Lord's command to evangelize and disciple all the nations (Matt 28:18-20). Second, Christian leaders should be mature in Christ and useful for the work of the ministry (Col 1:24-29). Third, they are to grow in sanctification by the Word and the Spirit of God (1 Cor 2:6-13). And fourth, they are to experience Christlike change and help others change through loving confrontation (Heb 10:19-25). The next chapter discusses a training model for equipping leaders in biblical counseling at SOS Ministries.

⁵⁷ Paul Ellingworth notes, "With his third exhortation, the author passes from the vertical to the horizontal dimension of Christian living. The implied setting, as explicitly in vv. 22, 25 and by implication in v. 23, is the believing community, especially as gathered for worship." Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1993), 526.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES RELATED TO EQUIPPING LEADERS FOR BIBLICAL COUNSELING

This chapter reveals the operational methodology for equipping leaders to help people change. This chapter demonstrates that equipping leaders for biblical counseling requires resources that promote genuine Christlike change. Four necessary factors are required to equip leaders for biblical counseling. First, leaders must have a theological foundation based on God’s Word. Biblical counselors must have an unswerving allegiance to God’s Word and the truth contained therein and then teach that truth to their counselees. Second, leaders must have biblically defined character. Biblical counselors must be men and women of integrity with blameless character while seeking to help their counselees conform their lives to that of God’s Son, Jesus Christ. Third, leaders must have a biblical methodology that reflects biblical teaching. Biblical doctrine and commands impact methodology in biblical counseling. Fourth, leaders must be familiar with the vast resources at their disposal in the counseling endeavor. In the last thirty years, there has been an explosion of helpful resources in the field of biblical counseling.

Theological Foundations for Equipping Leaders

Biblical counseling is an intensive and individual part of the discipling process where one disciple comes beside another disciple and applies the Scriptures in a way that points the person toward Christian maturity.¹ Heath Lambert writes, “Counseling is a conversation where one party with questions, problems, and trouble seeks assistance from

¹ Paul Tautges, *Counseling One Another: A Theology of Interpersonal Discipleship* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd, 2016), 20.

someone they believe has answers, solutions, and help.”² Biblical counseling uses the Bible to help people solve the problems they experience and grow in sanctification.³ To properly address those problems, biblical counselors must have a methodological foundation for doing the work. A wise methodology includes a biblical theological foundation, godly character, and biblical methods with an awareness of the resources available. The first theological foundation to equip leaders for biblical counseling is the sufficiency of Scripture.

Sufficiency of Scripture

The sufficiency of the Scriptures plays an important role in the life and ministry of every Christian. It is upon the sufficiency of Scripture that the apostle Peter encourages all believers to “make every effort” (2 Pet 1:5) to do what the Lord commands to be effective and fruitful (2 Pet 1:5-9). Godly Christian leaders desire to obey the Scriptures and to warn others about the dangers of spiritual stagnation (2 Pet 1:10-11) while they learn to actively participate with the Holy Spirit in the pursuit of their own spiritual growth.

The sufficiency of the Scriptures is important in biblical counseling because it provides confidence that God has provided what a person needs to know about a situation. A biblical counselor can proceed with confidence in counseling knowing God’s Word is sufficient to provide the answers to address life’s problem. Believers do not have to look for supernatural signs or direct personal communication to know what to do. Instead, they can go directly to the principles and commands of God’s Word to know what they should do.

² Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 13.

³ Jeremy Pierre and Deepak Reju understand biblical counseling to be “the ministry of the Word by which Christians help others understand how their hearts are actively responding to God amid their specific life circumstances, and how faith in Christ Jesus changes those responses.” Jeremy Pierre and Deepak Reju, *The Pastor and Counseling: The Basics of Shepherding Members in Need* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 133.

The sufficiency of Scripture is the idea of the Scripture's capacity to contain all the truth needed to live a godly life that is pleasing to the Lord.⁴ Wayne Grudem defines the doctrine of Scripture's sufficiency: "Scripture contains all the words of God we need for salvation, for trusting Him perfectly, and for obeying Him perfectly."⁵ The idea of God's sufficient Word is not a new idea in this century. Lambert writes that biblical counselors have consistently believed "the same basic position on Scripture and the relevance of outside information for the counseling task."⁶ He clearly states that there has never been "some kind of different view of sufficiency among those in the biblical counseling movement."⁷

When a person needs help, the Bible has the answer. A Christian leader can rest assured that God's Word can help him. The sufficiency of Scripture does not mean that the Scriptures provides all that God knows on a matter. Rather, God has shared all that he wants us to know about a topic. Bob Kellemen and Jeff Forrey explain, "In Christ and in His sufficient Word, we have access to divine resources as we gently and skillfully help broken people experience his freedom, forgiveness, and grace. Watching the Holy Spirit use His Word to magnify Jesus in the lives of those whom we counsel is a marvelous privilege."⁸ The doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture is of critical importance to biblical counseling.

⁴ Powlison clarifies what biblical counseling is not when he writes, "Scripture is sufficient, not in that it is exhaustive, containing all valid knowledge, but in that it rightly aligns a coherent and comprehensive system of counseling that is radically at odds with every a-theistic model" David Powlison, *The Biblical Counseling Movement: History and Context* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2010), 276.

⁵ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020), 152.

⁶ Heath Lambert, *The Biblical Counseling Movement After Adams* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 152.

⁷ Lambert, *Biblical Counseling Movement*, 152.

⁸ Bob Kellemen and Jeff Forrey, *Scripture and Counseling: God's Word for Life in a Broken World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 61.

Gospel Orientation

Man has a problem—the world is not as it should be, and mankind is aware and troubled by that fact. Every worldview created by men is their attempt to describe and understand the problems that face humanity. In western society today, the dominant view is the medical model that understands most human problems as a genetic disorder or a chemical imbalance duly described in *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*.⁹ Robert Schuller, a positive-thinking Christian televangelist of an earlier generation in the United States, popularized the idea in some Christian circles of having “self-esteem.”¹⁰

Many societies in the world have an animistic worldview, and they think very differently about life’s problems compared to a western worldview. For example, Karl Grebe and Wilfred Fon explain that an animistic worldview,

recognizes a multitude of spirit beings and ascribes mystical powers to objects, extends to every sphere of the African’s life. It determines his relationships within the family, his relationship to the land on which he lives, and his relationship to the tribe to which he belongs. When looking carefully at how society functions in these *spheres of life (lineage, land, tribe)*, it becomes clear that in each one *a spiritual power* is in ultimate control (*ancestor, spirits, gods of land and tribe*).¹¹

Today, there are hundreds of psychiatric theories masquerading as medical models attempting to make sense of humanity’s challenges throughout the world.

However, the Bible points to a much different problem afflicting humanity: sin. Despite all the afflictors in this fallen world, sin is the greatest problem (Jas 1:1-15).

⁹ The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* is the definitive authority for making psychiatric diagnoses. See American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th ed. (Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Biblical counselors on the other hand see through the medical terminology to feeble physiology in this sin-cursed world. Jay Adams writes, “Organic malfunctions affecting the brain that are caused by brain damage, tumors, gene inheritance, glandular or chemical disorders, validly may be termed mental illnesses. But at the same time a vast number of other human problems have been classified as mental illnesses for which there is no evidence that they have been engendered by disease or illness at all.” Jay Adams, *Competent to Counsel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 28.

¹⁰ Robert H. Schuller, *Self-Esteem: The New Reformation* (Waco, TX: Word, 1982).

¹¹ Karl Grebe and Wilfred Fon, *African Traditional Religion and Christian Counseling* (Bamenda-Nkwon, Cameroon: Oasis, 1997), 10-11, emphasis original.

The pain often felt in this world is not the primary problem to be solved (Mark 7:21-23); instead, it is mankind's defiant rebellion against his Creator God (Rom 3:10-12). Millard Erickson provides a classic definition for sin, which is "any lack of conformity, active or passive, to the moral law of God."¹²

Since Adam's fall, his descendants have been sinful by nature (Ps 51:3-5) and therefore in behavior too (1 John 1:8, 10). Being a descendant of Adam and being born into a fallen and cursed creation (Rom 8:22-27), humanity faces consequences (i.e., natural disasters, physical disorders, evil from others, etc. (Titus 3:3) and the due justice of personal sin against a holy God (Rom 6:23a). All of humanity, even the godliest, are, as Paul David Tripp says, "people in need of change helping people in need of change."¹³ Jay Adams writes with clarity on this issue: "Personal sin [is] the root and cause of most of the day-by-day counseling problems that arise."¹⁴

When a leader truly understands and addresses the most basic problem, he is then able to be hopeful about its resolution. When a problem is clearly understood, only then can a solution be found. J. I. Packer explains, "The Bible is an exposition of God's answer to the problem of human sin, and unless you have that problem clearly before you, you will keep missing the point of what it says."¹⁵ Anthony Hoekema explains the grave danger of ignoring the true problem:

In today's world there is little emphasis on the biblical doctrine of sin. But a person with a shallow sense of sin and of the wrath of God against our sin will neither feel the need for nor understand the biblical doctrine of justification. When sin is ignored, minimized or redefined we no longer live aware of our desperate need for Jesus Christ nor appreciative of what he accomplished on the cross for us.¹⁶

¹² Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 596.

¹³ Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping Others in Need of Change* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2002).

¹⁴ Jay E. Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973), 136.

¹⁵ J. I. Packer, *God's Words: Studies in Key Biblical Themes* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1981), 71.

¹⁶ Anthony A. Hoekema, *Saved by Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 153.

Sin is horrible and damning, but Christians should be hopeful that a cure has been found. The apostle Paul reminds Timothy that this “saying is trustworthy and deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim 1:15). There are no real answers for those who do not realize that all people are spiritually sick and in need of the gospel medicine that only the Great Physician can provide. Robert Jones and Brad Hambrick note the importance of the gospel in solving man’s real problem: “A biblical view of sin makes us long for a solution larger than ourselves. It causes us to cling to Christ, the only one more powerful than the cause of human problems.”¹⁷

God provided hope for the problem of sin shortly after sin entered the world. Even though the creation was “very good” (Gen 1:31), evil was permitted to have influence (Gen 3:1-24). Yet in the tragedy of falling short of God’s glory (Rom 3:23), God ordained for his Son to fulfill humanity’s purpose and provide the salvation humanity would never obtain by itself. Jesus Christ, “the image of the invisible God” (Heb 1:3a), became “flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14) and was “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). That God-man, Christ Jesus, succeeded where Adam failed and achieved complete victory where all failed (1 Cor 15:21-22; Rom 5:14-18).

God’s gospel plan from the beginning was to see “all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son” (Rom 8:28-29a). When Jesus became “the firstborn among many brothers” (v. 29b), he rescued his sin-cursed image bearers and prepared to renew them in his perfect likeness. Romans 8:30 says, “And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.” Through the gracious work of Jesus Christ,

¹⁷ Robert Jones and Brad Hambrick, “The Problem of Sin,” in *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, ed. James MacDonald, Bob Kellemen, and Stephen Viars (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2013), 152.

God the Father makes his creation new. Second Corinthians 5:17 reads, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

The substitutionary work of Christ in his life and on the cross provides the believing sinner with freedom from sin (Rom 6:1-7). Now the sinner declared righteous can walk by faith in the Spirit (Gal 3:1-3) and will eventually enjoy permanent glorification like his Savior (1 John 3:2). Philippians 1:6 says, “And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” God has begun this good work in his people, and he will complete it. When practicing biblical counseling, a Christian leader must realize, as Adams says, that “Counseling in its fullest sense, then, is simply *an application of the means of sanctification.*”¹⁸

On the authority of God’s Word, a counselor must confront man’s sin with the hope that only the gospel of Jesus Christ provides. When understood properly, the gospel will naturally address man’s sin problem. Paul Tautges warns believers of the debilitating consequences of ignoring sin: “Once the authority and sufficiency of the Bible are undermined, it soon follows that belief in the total depravity of man and his desperate need of redemption through Jesus Christ is replaced by the psychological gospel of self-improvement.”¹⁹

Only God’s Word and the gospel truly address the problems of sin and provide the necessary resources for spiritual change (Heb 4:12-13). Leaders in biblical counseling must be convinced of the gospel to address man’s primary problem of sin. David Powlison comments on the uniqueness of biblical counseling in this gospel-oriented approach: “This care and cure for the soul systematically differs from how other psychotherapies

¹⁸ Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 73, emphasis original.

¹⁹ Tautges, *Counseling One Another*, 16.

deal with the same problems in living.”²⁰ Biblical counseling must be centered on the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Grace Dependent

Christian leaders must be dependent upon the grace of God to do biblical counseling. And while seeking to do the work of biblical counseling, the counselor must help a counselee rely on God’s grace. The spiritual descendants of the Reformers, the Puritans, taught that a believer can primarily access God’s grace through three means: (1) God’s Word, (2) personal communication with God, and (3) fellowship with God’s people.²¹ No Christian leader seeking to practice biblical counseling will accomplish anything spiritually profitable without patiently and humbly relying on God through his Word, through personal communication with him (i.e., prayer), and through his body, the church.

First, Christian leaders must depend on the Word of God as their functional authority in biblical counseling. When God’s Word is central to counseling, the thoughts and solutions of God are central. God’s Word is sufficient for all of life’s problems and must be used to effect any true lasting change.²² Lambert uses the difference between general and special revelation to clarify the essential nature of the Scriptures for true change: general revelation is not adequate to reveal the nature of personal sin, to reveal even the basic details of the gospel, to tell people who Jesus Christ is, what he did, and what He requires. General revelation has no power to save men from sin or to provide what is desperately needed to know how to be sanctified.²³

²⁰ David Powlison, “A Biblical Counseling View,” in *Psychology and Christianity: Five Views*, 2nd ed., ed. Eric L. Johnson (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2010), 245.

²¹ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 603-6.

²² Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 127.

²³ Lambert, *Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 326-29.

Second, Christian leaders must depend on the gracious power of prayer in biblical counseling. The confusing and difficult dynamics of biblical counseling often leave the counselor bewildered about what to say or do next. Yet, a biblical counselor must speak to the counselee on behalf of God through his Word and must also speak to God for the counselee. Real spiritual change in a person's life only comes through God's work in the process. A biblical counselor must intentionally communicate with God through prayer and encourage the counselee to follow his example. Every leader must be equipped to know the ministry of prayer.

Third, Christian leaders must depend on the gracious and sanctifying influence of Christ's church in biblical counseling. Truly biblical counsel speaks the truth in love to a counselee (Eph 4:15), yet genuine spiritual change in a counselee requires God's means of change. God's means of change always includes his people in their God-given and biblically defined roles. The context of "speaking the truth in love" happens in the context of hearing the Word preached and taught by a pastor (Eph 4:11) and within the context of relationships with other believers (Eph 4:12-13, 15b-16).

Christian leaders are not merely counseling to solve one isolated problem in a counselee's life. They are seeking whole life change which often involves more than dealing with the problem that has been presented. Counselees dealing with life-dominating sin often need more scrutiny than the presenting problem offered. Many times, the counselee needs a whole person change, which means growing in the context of a local church and taking part of all the grace communicated through the various blessings of being a part of Christ's body.

Christian leaders must depend on the gracious influence of God's Word, the power of prayer with a gracious God, and the gracious gift of Christ's church for biblical counseling. These gifts were lovingly given to all Christians to bring godly change and help equip leaders for biblical counseling. These gracious gifts combined with a person of godly character are a powerful force for sanctifying change in people's lives.

Character Foundations for Equipping Leaders

Equipping leaders for biblical counseling requires not only biblical Christian teaching, but also counselors of godly character. Christ requires his church to teach biblical doctrine and be people of holy character unstained from the world. Properly equipping leaders to biblically counsel includes developing Christlike character, becoming spiritually disciplined, and using God-given spiritual gifts.

Christlike Character

Equipping leaders for biblical counseling inevitably requires that both the counselor and the counselee grow in Christlike character. As a leader exemplifies and practices godly character, his influence will challenge others to do likewise. In the pursuit of Christlike character, perfection is not the goal, but instead a life committed to spiritual progress and growth in godliness.

Many professional secular fields have ethical codes. The medical field is known for its Hippocratic Oath to do no harm. Most industries or companies that deal with people will use some ethical code to guide them. Christian leaders engaged in biblical counseling are no different. Every Christian is called to live a holy life pleasing to the Lord, and the requirements for biblical counselors are repeatedly mentioned. First Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 clearly explain the character qualities required for those who would lead in the church of Christ. All Christians, but especially Christian leaders, should follow the Lord's instructions to produce spiritual fruit (Gal 5:22-23), to evidence progress in godliness (2 Pet 1:3-8), and to demonstrate Christlike wisdom (1 Cor 2:11-16).

In addition, well-equipped biblical counselors humbly care for people made in God's image (Col 3:12-14), allow God's Word to dominate their lives (Col 3:16a), demonstrate godly wisdom (Col. 3:16b), and passionately praise God. (Col 3:16c-17).²⁴

²⁴ Ron Allchin and Tim Allchin, "Equipping Biblical Counselors for Your Church," in *Biblical Counseling and the Church*, ed. Bob Kelleman and Kevin Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 196-98.

Christian leaders must be “full of goodness, filled with all knowledge” (Rom 15:14), and able to counsel competently. Paul tells the Thessalonians, “We urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all” (1 Thess 5:14).

But how are these leaders to acquire Christlike character? Fortunately, Jesus’s manner of life is recorded for his disciples to model. Jesus provided in human form the only perfect example from which one can learn Christlikeness. For example, “when he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them” (Matt 9:36). Jesus was able to see each person he ministered to in their unique life situation and would often stop what he was doing to minister to them in a variety of ways. He would often be found “teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom,” but also heal “every disease and every affliction” (Matt 9:35). Jesus loved the unlovely (Luke 13:34; 19:41), the sorrowful (John 11:33-35), and, almost beyond belief, those who would betray and seek to kill him (John 13:1-5). Jesus loved his enemies and prayed for his persecutors (Matt 5:44). He demonstrated an uncommon love for his disciples (John 10). He taught his followers the truth, prayed for their growth in godliness (John 17), and sent them a Helper to lead them into all truth while giving direct personal access to his heavenly Father (Heb 4:14-16). Even today, Jesus empathizes with the suffering of his people, provides access to his Father, and interacts with fallen sinners with mercy and grace. Christian leaders must grow in and model Christlike character.

Spiritually Disciplined

A Christian leader must be spiritually disciplined to be an effective biblical counselor. Paul told Timothy that he should train himself 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” (1 Tim 4:7-8). Robert Smith writes, “Biblical counselors must have a growing relationship with the Lord, must be growing both in

knowledge of and obedience to the Word of God, and must be aware of their potential to sin.”²⁵

Smith encourages that a growing relationship with God is marked by “Reading God’s Word,” “Scripture Memorization,” and “Prayer.”²⁶ One’s relationship with the local church, others, personal relationships, and even oneself is also key indicators of a spiritually disciplined person. Smith writes, “A biblical counselor must see all of life from God’s perspective. No event in the counselor’s life or the counselee’s life is isolated from God.”²⁷

All Christians are in death battle with the flesh, the world, and the devil. It is not always easy to tell who the enemy is, especially when it is often oneself. Yet Scripture is clear that the war for souls involves a counselor’s daily walk with Christ, putting on the armor of God (Eph 6:10-17), killing idolatrous desires (Jas 4:1-2), and denouncing worldly ideas (1 John 2:16). A Christian leader will be best equipped for biblical counseling if he is cultivating a vital prayer life, spending study time in God’s Word, investing in personal spiritual evaluation, and embracing a personal commitment to a local church’s community of believers.²⁸ Looking to Jesus and his Word for promises of comfort and rest will help the weary counselor in the battles he must fight. Robert Kellemen neatly summarizes these ideas:

We need to structure our equipping in biblical counseling to encourage our trainees to disciple themselves so that in humble cooperation with the Holy Spirit the implanted Christlikeness grow. Our biblical counseling training environment should be the greenhouse where these character traits blossom as our trainees cultivate and reflect the inner life of Christ.²⁹

²⁵ Robert Smith, “Spiritual Discipline and the Biblical Counselor,” in *Introduction to Biblical Counseling*, ed. John MacArthur and Wayne Mack (Dallas: Word, 1994), 142.

²⁶ Smith, “Spiritual Discipline and the Biblical Counselor,” 143.

²⁷ Smith, “Spiritual Discipline and the Biblical Counselor,” 152.

²⁸ Jones, Kellen, and Green, *The Gospel for Disordered Lives*, 142.

²⁹ Robert W. Kellemen, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2011), 188.

Spiritual Gifting

No Christian is exempt for the progressive work of sanctification. While all true believers will progress in godliness, some have been gifted by the Holy Spirit to be more effective in certain areas of ministry. John MacArthur emphasizes the vital importance of some spiritual gifts. Gifts such as prophecy, teaching, exhortation, wisdom, knowledge, administration, and mercy are highly valued, but MacArthur helpfully notices that “nearly all the spiritual gifts delineated in the New Testament have usefulness in the counseling ministry.”³⁰ If leaders are going to be well-equipped for biblical counseling, their spiritual gifting will be advantageous to effectively counsel their counselees.

Biblical doctrine and character are required elements in the life of any successful biblical counselor. While helping others, a biblical counselor must guard his own soul and practice personal prudence. A Christian leader endeavoring to be a biblical counselor will be most effective when his efforts are grounded in the character of Christ, regulated by the spiritual disciplines, and empowered with the Spirit’s gifts.

Methodological Foundations for Equipping Leaders

Equipping leaders for biblical counseling requires biblical orthodoxy, godly character, and scriptural methodology. Using biblical methodology, biblical counselors should equip any believer who desires to do biblical counseling. Sometimes believers think they must choose between what they believe is right and what they know will work, but that is a false dichotomy. Biblical teaching and biblical methodology are possible, and Christian leaders must know and practice them together.

Biblical counselors must not only know what the Bible teaches and be a godly person, but they must also practice biblical counseling with biblical ethics. Counseling, like pastoring, can be done in love or in lording. The way something is done is sometimes more important than what is being done. When seeking to minister to people through

³⁰ John MacArthur, “Spirit-Giftedness and Biblical Counseling,” in MacArthur and Mack, *Introduction to Biblical Counseling*, 314.

biblical counseling, the leader must use methods that reflect Christ's character and commandments. The New Testament is full of commands on how to treat one another as Christians. But sometimes, this can be difficult to understand, let alone practice.

Kellemen explains the challenge leaders face when he writes, "We should cultivate an environment where *informal one-another ministry* spontaneously saturates the entire congregation. We also should oversee a ministry where *equipping in formal biblical counseling* provides the entire congregation with access to believers who are competent to counsel. It's never either/or."³¹

A counselor's methodology guides how he moves forward with someone seeking change. The scriptural methodology of biblical counselors is motivated by love for God and others, is grounded in the local church, and is fueled by prayer. These elements will help empower a counselor's methodology to help people change.

Motivated by Love for Others

One of the marks of Christians is the love they have for God and others. The Lord told Christians to love even their enemies (Matt 5:44), and he practiced what he preached (Luke 23:34). Equipping leaders to biblically counsel will help motivate those same leaders to love others. Roger White notes that the command to love others was essential to being a follower of Jesus: "When a tutor of the law asked Jesus which one of the commandments was most important, Jesus responded that the commandments are all summed up in the directive to love God and neighbor (Matt 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-31). The greatest commandment is recognized as central to living Christianly."³²

Leaders who have been equipped for biblical counseling have compassion on people who are experiencing sinful struggles. Edward Welch writes, "Suffering and sin are the sum of human struggles. This means we need one another in our struggle with

³¹ Kellemen, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church*, 253.

³² James Riley Estep, Karen Lynn Estep, and M. Roger White, *Mapping Out Curriculum in Your Church: Cartography for Christian Pilgrims* (Nashville: B & H, 2012), 169.

suffering and in our struggle with sin and temptation.”³³ Welch agrees with the apostle Paul that by “putting on love” (Col 3:12-16) believers equip themselves to respond like Christ to one’s sinful state and the consequences of sin in this world.

Biblical counseling uses the Holy Spirit and the Word of God as a catalyst for heart change to teach believers how to love even when they do not feel like it. Love is a basic principle required in biblical counseling. Adams writes, “Love is the ultimate answer to all the problems of living with which the Christian counselor deals. Love, therefore, is the goal.”³⁴

When a leader shows love to others, people will respond with love to that leader. Love allows a leader to open his life and risk making himself vulnerable to others. When a leader is open and loving, it spreads to others and allows them to also be more transparent.

Grounded in the Local Church

Biblical counseling training emphasizes the importance of the local church. The local church is an institution brought into existence by the Lord Jesus Christ for this age (Matt 28:18-20; Eph 2:19-22). Biblical counseling requires a local church context and functions most effectively in that context.

Kellemen highlights the vital necessity of a community for Christians when he quotes Paul helping “the troubled and confused Colossian Christians” know that they were not alone, but instead were “together ‘as God’s chosen people’ (Colossians 3:12) and ‘as members of one body’ (Colossians 3:15)—the church.”³⁵ Kellemen helpfully clarifies, “Paul includes these words of one-another ministry in the context of growth in

³³ Edward T. Welch, *Side by Side: Walking with Others in Wisdom and Love* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 134.

³⁴ Adams, *The Christian Counselor’s Manual*, 141.

³⁵ Robert W. Kellemen, *Gospel-Centered Counseling: How Christ Changes Lives* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 32.

grace (Colossians 3:1-11) because sanctification is a Christ-centered community journey.”³⁶ The Christ-centered church community practicing biblical counseling provides loving support for individual believers within the context of a local church.

Sin, whether personal or corporate, debilitates the spiritual growth in believers and destroys the progress of the gospel. However, leaders equipped in biblical counseling who are led by the Spirit are supplied with the means to help other struggling sinners with their sin. Equipped biblical counselors can develop loving relationships within and without the church to love and help people suffering from the ravages of sin. Leaders equipped in biblical counseling understand how to address sin scripturally and provide scriptural solutions. Hurting members will benefit from gospel solutions and develop into more productive members of the assembly as churches recognize gifted leaders equipped to do biblical counseling.

When sin and relational problems are not handled biblically, churches become frustrated and dysfunctional.³⁷ Every church has sinful attendees and members who need loving attention and direction from leaders who have been equipped to counsel. When sinful actions and relational problems are not dealt with biblically, disunity wreaks havoc in the body. Adams elucidates the disorder and destruction disunity brings:

Few things are sapping the strength out of the church of Jesus Christ more than the unreconciled state of so many believers. So many Christians have matters deeply embedded in their relationship, like iron wedges forced between themselves and other Christians. They can't walk together because they do not agree. When they should be marching side by side taking men captive for Jesus Christ, instead they are acting like an army that has been routed and scattered, and whose troops in their confusion have begun fighting among themselves. Nothing drains the church of Christ of her strength so much as these unresolved problems, these loose ends among believing Christians that have never been tied up.³⁸

³⁶ Kellemen, *Gospel-Centered Counseling*, 33.

³⁷ Judy Dabler writes, “Conflict in a church contest can be emotionally, relationally, and spiritually devastating. Conflict that is accompanied by crisis, trauma, and grief can, for many people, be the most painful reality they will ever experience.” Judy Dabler, “Biblical Counseling, the Church, and Conflict Resolution,” in Kellemen and Carson, *Biblical Counseling and the Church*, 172.

³⁸ Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual*, 362.

Adams points to the heart of many unresolved problems in a local church. Personal problems are allowed to fester, and people become angry, bitter, and divisive. Unresolved personal issues zap godly energy that could be directed profitably toward the church and disciple making. Adams highlights a problem that biblical counselors can address and work to resolve. As leaders model biblical behavior and teach others to solve relational struggles, pastors are freed to devote themselves to prayer and the Word, and the Great Commission work of the church can aggressively move forward.

Edward T. Welch has written extensively about believers walking “side by side” with others. For Welch, believers are to serve the Lord and his church by sharing one another’s burdens, pleading for the Lord’s direction, and meditating on God’s Word together. Like minded believers walking together in a local assembly can help each other monitor, confront, and resolve the relational sin that so often brings disunity to a local church.³⁹

Biblical counseling equips leaders of the church to deeply apply God’s Word into people’s lives where preaching and teaching may not reach. Methodically helping believers address sin, confess it, and forgive those who have sinned against them furthers the Great Commission of the church and serves church leadership. These counseling efforts encourage the church to love God and to love his image bearers while working together to build his church.

Fueled by Prayer

Equipping leaders in biblical counseling will help leaders understand the importance of the power of prayer. Scripture teaches that prayer alone can achieve incredible things (Jas 5:17-18). Prayer was so important to the early church that the apostles devoted themselves to it (Acts 6:4). Eugene Bradford comments, “Prayer is joined to the ministry of the Word as being of equal importance with it; indeed, prayer is

³⁹ Welch, *Side by Side*, 12.

mentioned first.”⁴⁰ A Christian leader equipped to do biblical counseling will recognize the power of persistent prayer.

Jesus progressively taught on prayer in his ministry. He modeled how to pray in what is called the Lord’s Prayer (Matt 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4). Christians often repeat the parental address, “Our Father” when praying following the Lord’s instruction, which emphasizes the close and familiar relationship God’s children have with him (Matt 6:9). Paul recommends “that in every place the men should pray” (1 Tim 2:8). Many times, prayer is merely appeals or entreaties made to God (Jas 5:13-18).

Sometimes, a counselee struggling with sin spends little time in prayer. The unfortunate reality many biblical counselors deal with is that their counselee is far from God, his Word, and any meaningful prayer life. The counselee has not been blessed by God’s means of grace, and that must change for true biblical change to occur. Fortunately, Jesus made it clear that he delights in instructing believers how to pray (Luke 11:1-3). The biblical counselor must teach the counselee to be like the disciple in Luke 11 who asked Jesus, “teach us to pray” (v. 1a). Like Jesus, leaders must teach and train counselees to experience the grace of prayer. Biblical counselors must be equipped to understand the power of prayer and understand its foundational relationship to biblical counseling ministry.

Resource Foundations for Equipping Leaders

Equipping leaders for biblical counseling requires a foundation of doctrinal orthodoxy, godly character, biblical methodology, and resource familiarity. In the last few decades, the western church has rediscovered the lost ministry of soul care. With the ministry of Adams and others, secular psychology has been eliminated from some churches and the ministry of biblical counseling has rapidly developed. Equipping leaders for

⁴⁰ Eugene Bradford, “Intercessory Prayer: A Ministerial Task,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 22, no. 1 (1959): 15.

biblical counseling should include exposing those leaders to the vast resources being developed in the field of biblical counseling.

An Abridged Church History

In Scripture, the God-like ministry of comforting and counseling is mentioned in Isaiah 9:6 where the Messiah is prophesied to be “Wonderful Counselor” as well as “Mighty God.” In the Garden of Eden, God teaches Adam and Eve in a loving, yet accountable, relationship (Gen 1:26-28). Even when Adam and Eve rebelled, disobeyed, and hid from God, he still loved and pursued them and encouraged confession of their sin (3:1-11). Despite Adam and Eve’s blame shifting, God lovingly spoke truth to them (3:12-13) and upheld that truth with righteous consequences for their sin (3:14-24). Like a good counselor, God did not leave them hopeless, but provided grace, mercy, forgiveness, and a means of eventual victory over sin.

The Old Testament prophets continued this God-like behavior by calling people to repentance and reunion with their Creator (e.g., Deut 30:15, 19; 2 Chron 6:27, 37; 7:14; Isa 55:7; Ezek 18:12). Jesus and his disciples also modeled this ministry mindset (Mark 1:15; Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 2:38; 3:19-20; 2 Cor 7:10). Paul’s writings are most helpful because he proclaimed Christ “the hope of glory,” “warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ” (Col 1:27-28).

The apostolic church and church fathers were besieged by much false doctrine, but they consistently responded with the truth of God’s Word⁴¹ concluding in clarifying church councils. Unfortunately, as the centuries wore on, some church fathers began

⁴¹ Johnson writes that although “the first sophisticated psychologies in the West were developed by Greek philosopher-therapists like Plato, Aristotle and Epicurus . . . the major teachers and writers of the early church and medieval periods were convinced that Scripture and rigorous reflection on it provided the surest route to psychological knowledge.” Eric L. Johnson, “A Brief History of Christians in Psychology,” in Johnson, *Psychology and Christianity*, 11. See also Thomas C. Oden’s four volume work for historical perspectives on pastoral care where he explains how the early church fathers attempted biblical counsel and provide some samples of attempted psychoanalysis in their efforts of soul care. Thomas Oden, *Classical Pastoral Care: Pastoral Counsel* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987).

compromising Scripture with tradition and Roman Catholic dogma, essentially nullifying the practice of biblical counseling in the church.

The Protestant Reformation revived the biblical doctrine of the sufficiency and authority of the Scriptures (c. 1500s). The Puritans logically followed their Reformation forebearers to thoroughly apply Scripture to all of life in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. During difficult times in Europe in the 1630s, many Puritans fled persecution by immigrating to North America to acquire the freedom to live as they believed God instructed them in the Bible. Ken Sarles attests to the Puritan influence regarding soul care: “As far as the English Puritans were concerned, every psychological need could be met, and every imaginable psychological problem could be solved through a direct application of biblical truth.”⁴² Sarles also writes, “The Puritans challenge us today, more than any other generation in the history of the Church, by their absolute commitment to integrity between action and belief.”⁴³

Developing Resources

The revival of biblical counseling in the 1970s inaugurated a plethora of helpful sources such as pastors,⁴⁴ biblical counselors,⁴⁵ Bible-believing churches,⁴⁶

⁴² Ken L. Sarles, “The English Puritans: A Historical Paradigm of Biblical Counseling,” in MacArthur and Mack, *Introduction to Biblical Counseling*, 43.

⁴³ Sarles, “The English Puritans,” 43.

⁴⁴ E.g., Heath Lambert, Deepak Reju, Steve Viars, Rob Green, John MacArthur, Tim Keller, Steve Viars, Jeremy Pierre, Paul Tautges, etc.

⁴⁵ E.g., Dale Johnson, Paul Tripp, Bob Kellemen, David Powlison, Stuart Scott, Brad Hambrick, Jay Adams, etc.

⁴⁶ E.g., Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, DC; Faith Church in Lafayette, IN; The Village Church in Texas; and The Summit Church in Durham, NC.

recovery ministries,⁴⁷ Christian educational institutions,⁴⁸ national conferences,⁴⁹ international organizations,⁵⁰ bloggers,⁵¹ publishers,⁵² counseling training centers,⁵³ accrediting organizations⁵⁴ and even mission organizations.⁵⁵ A growing group of written materials, books, journals, booklets, and websites also provide relevant content. The expansion and ever-increasing resources provide encouraging hope that even better days are ahead for biblical counseling.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated that equipping leaders for biblical counseling requires strong foundations in biblical theology, biblical character, biblical methodology, and relevant biblically based resources. Counselees seek comfort from biblical counselors because they desperately need help. Biblical counselors must facilitate biblical change by being firmly grounded in the Bible and its teachings to equip others in biblical counseling.

⁴⁷ E.g., Twelve Stones Counseling and Retreat Center, Freedom That Lasts Ministries.

⁴⁸ E.g., Baptist Bible College and Theological Seminary, Bob Jones University, Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Faith Bible Seminary, The Master's University and Seminary, Mid-American Baptist Theological Seminary, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Reformed Theological Seminary, Southeastern, Southwestern, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Westminster Theological Seminary.

⁴⁹ E.g., Association of Certified Biblical Counselors Annual Conference, Biblical Counseling Training Conference.

⁵⁰ E.g., The Master's Academy International, Strengthening Ministries Training Institute. Overseas Instruction in Counseling.

⁵¹ E.g., Kevin Carson, Dave Dunham, Julie Ganschow, Brad Hambrick, Charles Hodge, Bob Kellemen, Tim Lane, Lucy Ann Moll, Mark Shaw, Paul Tautges.

⁵² E. g., New Growth Press, Shepherd Press, P & R Publishing, Crossway Publishers.

⁵³ E.g., Association of Biblical Counseling, Association of Biblical Counselors, Biblical Counseling Center, Faith Biblical Counseling Ministries, Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship, Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship.

⁵⁴ E.g., Biblical Counseling Coalition, Christian Counseling and Education Foundation, Institute for Nouthetic Studies, Peacemaker Ministries.

⁵⁵ E.g., Overseas Instruction in Counseling.

CHAPTER 4

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MINISTRY PROJECT

This chapter is a description of the ministry project from preparation to completion. It summarizes the implementation of the ministry project designed to equip leaders of SOS Ministries in Kubamitwe, Uganda, for biblical counseling. The chapter focuses on participant selection, survey dissemination, curriculum development, and an associated “Foundations of Biblical Counseling” course. This chapter was part of the ministry project focusing on foundational information for those who would desire to practice biblical counseling.

Participant Selection

The primary participants for the class were leaders at SOS Ministries, and then any others interested in learning about biblical counseling. Project promotion and recruitment efforts began in early September 2023. From September until November 5, 2023, I employed several promotional tools. I promoted the project through the extremely popular WhatsApp instant messaging and voice-over-IP service owned by Meta that allows users to send audio, picture, location, and video messages for free. I also used targeted emails, special announcements, and personal invitations to individuals with leadership potential at SOS Ministries who I thought would be interested in the course.

Pre-Training Survey

The first goal of the ministry project was to assess the SOS leaders’ perceived competency in biblical counseling through a pre-training survey.¹ Each survey was

¹ See appendix 1.

recorded based on the participant's name and their agreement to participate in the assessment survey. The survey included three sections: (1) demographic information, (2) general inquiries (salvation, church membership, understanding of biblical counseling), and (3) biblical counseling statements with a six-point Likert scale.

To take the course, participants were strongly encouraged to complete the pre-training survey before the first class so that their survey opinions would not be biased by the class sessions. While preparing for the course, I created an online survey utilizing Google Forms. Those who agreed to attend the course received a link for a Counseling Competency Assessment Survey.² Each participant was encouraged to complete the survey as soon as possible and to provide transparent answers, which I promised to keep confidential. Participants responded quickly with almost all participants completing the survey online before the first session. By the second session on November 12, 2023, thirty-four people had already completed the pre-training survey. Only a couple participants did not have access to the electronic link due to lack of access to a smartphone or a computer.

An identical post-training survey was also prepared to compare their understanding of biblical counseling before and after the course. I submitted the form to an Ethics Committee at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary prior to conducting the research and implementing the project. Notification that approval was granted by the Ethics Committee was emailed to me on October 16, 2023.

Curriculum Development

The second goal of the project was to develop a thirteen-lesson curriculum to equip leaders of SOS Ministries for biblical counseling. Having taken three different introductory classes in biblical counseling over the last twenty years inside and outside of educational institutions, I felt I had spent some time contemplating the topic of biblical

² See appendix 1.

counseling and expected little trouble identifying the elements necessary for a foundational course in biblical counseling. In addition, previous biblical counseling courses and aspects of chapters 2 and 3 in this curriculum were combined to make a well-rounded and comprehensive foundational course that could be used in a variety of venues.

The curriculum title “Foundations of Biblical Counseling” was chosen. At least thirteen foundational counseling topics were selected for consideration. The curriculum was designed for someone with little understanding of biblical counseling. Participants were assumed to be unfamiliar with important biblical counseling concepts like the sufficiency of Scripture, the centrality of the heart, the importance and implication of the gospel for people’s sin and suffering, progressive sanctification, counseling methodology, and more. Ideally, this curriculum could be used again in the local church, Community Bible Church of Kubamitwe, or the local pastors’ college, Shepherds Training College.

The first counseling session began on November 5 at 3:30 p.m. and concluded on Sunday, January 14 at 5:30 p.m. Due to the nature of the ministries at SOS Ministries, I chose to combine the thirteen-lesson course into two-hour sessions for seven weeks. The counseling course included fourteen hours of instruction including lectures, class discussions, and question and answer times. Participants came from ministries of SOS (i.e., local church, primary and secondary school, medical clinic, community outreach department, development and maintenance departments, and the pastors’ college). Forty-five individuals from SOS Ministries attended the first session of two lessons on November 5, 2023. Fifty-one individuals from SOS Ministries attended at least one session. An average of thirty-one participants came to the thirteen-lesson course over the seven weeks it was offered. Many of the participants who came to the course sessions were current and future leaders of SOS Ministries as well as members of Community Bible Church of Kubamitwe. The promotion of the biblical counseling course ended when the teaching of the curriculum began.

I recruited an expert panel of experienced pastors and teachers to review the curriculum and provide valuable feedback using an evaluation rubric.³ All three members of the panel had received extensive training in biblical counseling.

The first person on the expert panel is an Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC) certified counselor and part-time instructor in biblical counseling at The Master's University. He also currently serves as senior pastor of Placerita Bible Church in Santa Clarita, California. He holds an MDiv (2005) and DMin (2013) from The Master's Seminary with an emphasis in biblical counseling. He frequently speaks and writes on biblical counseling.

The second person on the expert panel has been a Ugandan missionary for eighteen years and serves as CEO of SOS Ministries. He holds an MDiv (2002) and DMin (2013) from The Master's Seminary with an emphasis in expository preaching. He also serves as senior pastor of Community Bible Church of Kubamitwe and teaches at Shepherds Training College.

The third person on the expert panel is an associate pastor of a large church in Aliso Viejo, California, where he teaches biblical counseling in his church's Bible institute. He holds a master's degree in New Testament from Talbot Theological Seminary, a DEdMin in Leadership from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and is an ACBC certified counselor.

The biblical counseling curriculum was provided to the expert panel in two parts. The first section was provided via email on December 31, 2023. The second part was delivered via email on January 15, 2024, along with the curriculum evaluation rubric. All three panelists reviewed the curriculum with helpful evaluations. All three evaluations were returned to me by January 20, 2024.

I decided to record the audio of each session in case anyone missed a session and wanted to listen to it. I also provided a detailed, printed lecture outline for each

³ See appendix 2.

participant while projecting a discussion outline to help participants follow along in the lecture. Due to my American accent in the Ugandan context, I often reinforced my teaching with multiple means of comprehension. Session participants met on seven Sunday afternoons from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. in a large lecture classroom at Shepherds Training College on the campus of SOS Ministries.

Lessons 1 and 2: “Introduction, History, and Goal of Biblical Counseling”

This session thoroughly introduced the subject of biblical counseling. While many had heard of the subject, few participants had received formal training. The first and second lessons served as a broad introduction focusing on the history, essential definitions, and goal of biblical counseling. I explained the history of biblical counseling certification with the National Association of Certified Counselors (NANC) and the growing avenues of ACBC certified training possibilities. I also highlighted the Christian Counseling and Education Foundation (CCEF), the Biblical Counseling Coalition (BCC), and other biblical counseling ministries.

I presented a brief survey and critique of various secular and integrationist counseling theories to help participants understand different perspectives of counseling. I reviewed the goal of biblical counseling, which is to respond to the difficult experiences a person is having in a way that pleases and glorifies God. I also briefly reviewed the history of soul care while considering the efforts of the church fathers and the Puritans before moving on to contemporary circumstances in the field of biblical counseling. James Dobson, Jay Adams, and other key figures in the contemporary Christian counseling movement were contrasted.

Despite living in the village in Uganda, some people were already familiar with western models of psychiatry and various psychological therapies. Western models of psychology have certainly spread throughout the world. One memorable moment took place on this subject as I made it clear that the biblical counselor had no use for

contemporary psychological theories. Some class members found this shocking as they had assumed psychologists were just like medical doctors who focused on mental illness instead of physical illness.

Lessons 3 and 4: “Theological Basis and Gospel Importance for Biblical Counseling”

The goal of this session was to help participants understand the foundational principles of biblical counseling. The third and fourth lessons focused on the scriptural and theological basis of biblical counseling as well as the vital role of the gospel throughout biblical counseling. I sought to help participants recognize that Christ is the cause and center of all. He is the source of all (Rom 11:36), the sovereign over all (Eph 1:11), and the sustainer of all (Col 1:17). Ultimately, he is the end of all things (Rev 4:11). Our view of God will shape how we respond to life’s circumstances. Believers must be people of confident faith in a sovereign God that gladly submit to the challenges of their lives. Other topics in this session included the centrality of the Bible in biblical counseling, the vital doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture, the necessity of God’s grace and his promises in counseling, and the believer’s responsibility to pursue biblical spiritual maturity (2 Pet 1:2-11).

The scriptural foundation of biblical counseling was explored as I explained the sufficiency of the Scriptures from 2 Peter 1:2-11. I explained how God provided a way for Christians to grow spiritually (vv. 2-4) through the Scriptures and his grace, all believers are responsible for maturing spiritually (vv. 5-9), and they must personally confront God’s appeal for their own spiritual maturity (vv.10-11). I showed the necessity of God’s Word for growth and the great need to accurately explain the meaning of biblical passages. Biblical counselors cannot twist or misapply the Scriptures. They must be diligent students and accurate expositors of the Word.

Lessons 5 and 6: “Qualifications and Posture of a Biblical Counselor”

The goal of this session was to lay personal expectations for biblical counselors. I addressed the biblical qualifications and personal posture that a biblical counselor must possess to be effective with those he seeks to influence. While the qualifications for a pastor may not be required of every biblical counselor (1 Tim 3; 4:16; Titus 1–2), they are a biblical standard that all ministers of God’s Word should strive to reflect. These lessons considered the vital role of a church’s shepherd and members in the acquisition of personal spiritual maturity. Spiritual growth (Col 1:28-29) and equipping the saints (Eph 4:7-16) were carefully explained. I described how biblical counselors were expected to take a humble position of dependence upon God’s Word, prayer, and the local church while working hard (Col 1:29) to do the work of a servant of the Lord.

A church’s pastor is often best equipped to offer biblical counseling because of his position, training, desire, and character. Biblically, the responsibility of discipling members for spiritual growth and equipping the saints falls on his shoulders (Eph 4:12). However, to disciple and equip the saints to biblically deal with their problems, the pastor must be biblically qualified to do so. In his discipling and equipping efforts, the pastor must aim for spiritual growth and maturity. He must work to diligently lead the discipling of all believers in his congregation while proclaiming Christ in humble dependence upon the Lord (Col 1:28-29). I also examined Ephesians 4:7-16 and the necessity of all of God’s gifted leaders equipping the saints for ministry while recognizing that Christ gives spiritual leaders to his body. From the beginning of the church, spiritual leaders (i.e., apostles and prophets) have blessed his church by equipping saints to be mature in the Lord, and they continue to do so.

Finally, I described the stance a biblical counselor must have. A counselor must rely on God’s Word for truth (2 Tim 3:16-17), depend upon God in prayer for true spiritual success, and must cling to God through his church with humility and patience. Anyone can do these things as they work to apply God’s Word to people’s lives.

Lessons 7 and 8: “Progressive Sanctification and Applications for Change”

The seventh and eight lessons provided opportunities for extended discussions on the doctrine and models of progressive sanctification as well as practical applications for helping counselees through the process of biblical change. A believer’s struggle with sin (Gal 5:17; Rom 6:12), the Holy Spirit’s assistance (Eph 1), the Holy Spirit’s work through the Word, and a biblical definition of progressive sanctification were considered along with various unbiblical evangelical models of sanctification. Many Christians develop in a church or Christian movement with a specific model of sanctification, unaware that other models exist. Sometimes a movement’s sanctification model is formed by experience and not Scripture. It was important that the participants had a firm grasp of the necessity and biblical teaching of progressive sanctification.

In addition, discussions on sanctification opened avenues of conversation on how biblical change takes place (2 Cor 3:18; Rom 8:26; Phil 1:6; 2 Pet 3:18) in cooperation with the Holy Spirit and his Word. Rather than depending on oneself for change, believers are to work with God’s Word and his Spirit in humble dependence. I also furnished instructions on how to pursue and address heart issues and how to avoid mere external conformity in sanctification. The class also examined the nature of the heart and the necessity of persistent warfare with sin. We discussed humanity’s attraction for external conformity, the depravity of the human heart (Jer 17:10; Prov 28:26; Luke 6:43-45), and the fruitful evidence of a regenerated heart. As Christians realize the awful problem of sin, they must be willing to look for it, identify it, and eliminate it (1 John 1:9; Rom 8).

Lessons 9 and 10: “Using the Scriptures and Practical Methodology”

The goal of this session was to raise participants’ expectation for the necessary and successful application of the Bible in counseling. The ninth and tenth lessons dealt with the need to progress past presenting problems and to employ the richness of the Bible to

impact the heart. In these lessons I introduced an understandable methodology, plans and goals in the counseling process, establishing a strong relationship with the counselee, and essential elements of the counseling process (e.g., data gathering, humble dependence on God, learning to listen, and note taking). Counseling is an intensely personal part of the discipleship process where one believer comes alongside another to apply biblical instruction and comfort in a way conducive to spiritual growth. Part of this process is approaching counseling with a realistic goal for the time with a counselee as well as a basic plan. Many times, the goal must be simple and easily obtainable as the sin in a person's life is incrementally addressed. I explained that a productive methodology should have a definite application in mind that becomes that person's reality by God's grace.

In the counseling process session, the class looked at gathering data and approaching the process with a biblical understanding. Counselors must realize that only God and his Word can change a person. I also discussed the initial meeting and the evaluation process after the first meeting where a counselor must determine the counselee's spiritual state. I emphasized the tremendous value in gathering written and oral information and learning to listen well. I also reminded them to invest in a quality system of note taking, whether written or electronic, to properly record and remember the events discussed. It is important to inform the counselee of the reasons for notetaking and to express reasonable confidentiality for the counselee. One of the great skills of listening well is gathering data by non-verbal communication and listening to what is not said. This is an important skill all good biblical counselors will develop.

Lessons 11 and 12: "Basic Methodology and Standard Counseling Process"

The goal of this session was to help participants understand counseling methodology. The eleventh and twelfth lessons were practical in nature and presented a basic pattern for biblical counseling. To help the participants form expectations, I explained the steps of a typical counseling session. Counselors should begin each session seeking to

establish a relationship grounded in biblical love for the counselee. In their discussions, counselors should always endeavor to give biblical hope grounded in the gospel. Counselees need to know that their problem can be resolved, that God is for them, and that in Christ are “hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 2:2). Biblical counseling should be a hopeful experience. As the counselor works to change the focus of a counselee’s thinking, the counselor must move them from a self-centered mindset to a God-centered mindset. Their innocent or guilty suffering is not ultimately about them—it is about God and his glory. And we know from Romans 8:29 that God’s ultimate goal is to change them into the image of his Son, Jesus Christ. Therefore, if a trial comes or a consequence of their sin causes a traumatic disaster, believers know that God is working it out for their Christlikeness and his glory.

When providing counsel to a counselee, a counselor must work to be a true friend who will encourage the counselee, challenge, and speak whatever words are biblically necessary (Prov 25:11). Counselors must be clear about the goal of their instruction, the focused use of the Bible, and the assigning of homework. Since understanding and applying the Word of God is the means to change, counselors humbly depend on the Holy Spirit to use his Word to bring about spiritual maturity. Counseling sessions are often mini-teaching sessions, and counselors should embrace the opportunity to teach God’s Word wholeheartedly. Using the Scriptures accurately, passionately, and strategically with a view toward direct application for the counselee is vital. This instruction should then be followed by giving homework directly related to the instruction found in God’s Word. Counselees should work on their problems through their homework until they meet with the counselor again. Counselors must also have a plan for concluding a counseling case while thinking through final steps for following up with a counselee.

Lessons 13: “Last Things: Survey and Response”

The goal of the last session was to briefly survey and respond to what was studied in the sessions. I led participants through a brief review of what had been covered during the course. While the participants had looked at many trees in the forest of biblical counseling, a counselor must have a good understanding of the larger forest. I sought to summarize the course and explain some of the more practical tools counselors could use. I reviewed the goals and the pattern of an initial counseling session, data gathering process from the counselee, a personal interview, planning for meetings, and closing with hope and a plan for the future. Since the participants had not been exposed to many of the practical and helpful counseling forms other ministries have created to help counselors, we spent extended time looking over detailed personal data inventories, personal consent and liability forms, sample counseling homework assignments, relevant verse lists that counselees can memorize, and methods of assessment that can be done when the counseling is finished. To capture the participants’ evaluation of the class, I sent the post-training survey to everyone within one day of the last meeting.

Post-Training Survey

On Sunday, January 14, the post-training survey was distributed electronically to the class participants. Twenty-nine participants responded to the survey during the following week. This survey contained the exact same questions that were asked of the participants in the pre-training survey on November 4, 2023. The survey measured participants’ perceived competency in biblical counseling after participating in the classes. This survey contained a twenty-five-statement survey with a six-point Likert scale and was securely hosted in Google Forms.

After the post-training surveys were completed, numeric values were assigned to the values of the Likert scale. The values 1 to 6 were assigned in ascending order from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree), in the same way as the pre-training survey.

Conclusion

The “Foundations of Biblical Counseling” class was the first step toward introducing biblical counseling at SOS Ministries. The project moved along smoothly with little difficulty despite the timing of the sessions on Sunday afternoons. The planning stage took the most time as research and project chapters were written. The implementation stage was intense but rewarding as the fruit of previous work was revealed. The last stage, post-implementation, was enlightening due to the results given from the pre- and post-training surveys. These results demonstrated growth in the content and knowledge of biblical counseling. There were many positive comments regarding the entire class with thirty participants present for the final session. The thirteen-lesson class provided foundational concepts to equip leaders of SOS Ministries for biblical counseling, which encouraged some to consider additional learning and training.

CHAPTER 5

MINISTRY PROJECT EVALUATION

Sufficiency of Scripture Ministries is committed to equipping leaders for biblical counseling. SOS recognizes that many leaders and local believers desire to know the Scriptures and apply them to their lives. While there is a high view of the Bible in the nominal Christian parts of Uganda, there is often great ignorance about what the Bible says. Animistic solutions to the sin and suffering of life are common. Among the educated, a psychological worldview influenced by western secular education is widely accepted. Yet, young Christians within SOS Ministries are eager to understand how to apply the Scriptures to their lives and ministries. The eager attention and strong attendance during the sessions reminded me of the need for SOS Ministries to equip leaders for biblical counseling and strengthen those leaders in their understanding of the sufficiency and potency of God's Word to address life's problems.

With this project, I intended to equip potential leaders of SOS Ministries for biblical counseling. The announcements and personal invitations to the course brought a positive reaction from many. The timing of the classes was the most difficult aspect for many because it fell on Sunday afternoon before, during, and after Christmas and New Year holidays. Some of the participants were greatly surprised by the differences between biblical counseling and secular psychology, but they progressively grew in understanding once the distinction was clear. Many were excited to learn how to apply the Bible to their lives and their ministry roles.

This chapter includes an evaluation of the project's purpose, goals, strengths, and weaknesses. The final section of this work summarizes my evaluation of the ministry

project. Attention is given to both theological and personal reflections acquired throughout the project. In closing, a brief synopsis completes this evaluation.

Evaluation of the Project Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip leaders of SOS Ministries in Kubamitwe, Uganda, for biblical counseling. Beginning with the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20, God's Word teaches that disciples of Christ are to take the words of Jesus and teach them to others, resulting in more disciples of Christ in all nations. While the Great Commission is often taught to support world-wide evangelization, it also includes thoroughly equipping disciples to battle sin and seek godly change in all people.

This project developed from a need to thoroughly apply God's Word to the sin and suffering of life and to equip leaders at SOS Ministries in biblical counseling. This purpose was shaped out of a realization that missions is often done with a focus on evangelism, yet it takes decades or more for churches and Christians to see comprehensive biblical change in the lives and culture of believers. Introducing and equipping leaders of SOS in biblical counseling influences the culture of the local church and the entire ministry.

I fulfilled the purpose of this project through an introductory course on biblical counseling entitled "Foundations of Biblical Counseling." This course included the development and implementation of a thirteen-lesson course taught in person on seven Sunday afternoons on the campus of SOS Ministries from November 5, 2023, to January 14, 2024. This class introduced leaders of SOS Ministries to many of the essential ideas of biblical counseling such as the sufficiency of Scripture, the centrality of the heart, the importance of the gospel, the qualifications and deportment of a counselor, progressive sanctification, and practical applications to biblically love one another. The course curriculum challenged participants to examine their own need of biblical change as they seek to apply biblical principles to others.

Evaluation of the Project Goals

To maximize the effectiveness of this project, the goals of this project were designed to be biblically helpful and practically relevant. To accomplish its stated purpose, this project focused on three goals that would be effective in equipping leaders of SOS Ministries for biblical counseling. Those three goals will be discussed and evaluated in this section.

Goal 1: Assessment of Perceived Competency

The first goal of this project was to assess the leaders' perceived competency in biblical counseling. To achieve this goal, I created a Counseling Competency Assessment Survey.¹ Before the first class, the survey was administered electronically and received thirty-eight responses, which exceeded my initial goal of twenty responses. The Counseling Competency Assessment Survey identified several areas that would need to be addressed in the curriculum prior to completing the curriculum development.

As I reviewed the surveys, I expected to find ignorance and shortcomings in biblical counseling training as well as little confidence in the participants' competency to counsel others. For example, only a couple participants had received any training in biblical counseling. At least one person had some training in secular psychology. Over 50% of the survey participants did not feel informed or competent to do biblical counseling. Yet at least 50% of the class participants had been members of a local church, and all the participants were able to answer 100% of the survey questions.

The surveys provided a snapshot of the perceived competency in biblical counseling of some of the leaders of SOS. The demographics of the participants were observed through the three general questions at the beginning of the survey. All the participants who completed the survey claimed to be born-again Christians, and a

¹ See appendix 1.

majority were church members. A clear majority of the participants (76.7%) were under the age of 34, indicating that the participants were younger leaders at SOS.

The participants' growth in perceived competency in biblical counseling knowledge was evident in statement 4 of the surveys, "I consider myself informed about biblical counseling." Those who somewhat agreed that they considered themselves informed about biblical counseling grew by 14% between the two surveys, while those who strongly agreed that they were informed grew from 0% to 20%.

Another area of perceived competency growth was Bible knowledge. Statement 5 of the surveys read, "I am skilled at using the Bible to help people change." Initially in the pre-training survey, only 28% of participants somewhat agreed with that statement. In the post-training survey, 48% somewhat agreed, and 7% strongly agreed. Over 20% of the participants indicated that they felt more skilled at using the Bible to help people change. This is of particular interest to this project since it relates to the participants' understanding of the Bible and its applicability to help people with their problems. This shows that the participants were making a connection between the sufficiency of Scripture and trustworthiness and relevancy of the Bible to help people change. This was an encouraging sign of growth in the participants.

The responses to statement 9, "I have received sufficient training in biblical counseling," also indicated a significant shift in the perceived confidence of the participants. In the pre-training survey, 69% disagreed with that statement in some way. However, in the post-training survey, that percentage swung the other direction with 75% indicating that they agreed in some way with that statement. Certainly, the thirteen lessons of biblical counseling training changed the participants' thinking about their perceived competency.

Counselor competency in biblical counseling is not always easy to measure, and sometimes survey statements are worded unsatisfactorily. One example of a statement that I would have worded differently was statement 13: "The Holy Spirit is critical for

effective biblical counseling.” Since this is a true statement, most Christians would never disagree with it. Therefore, the wording of the statement effectively biased its outcome. The evidence from the surveys confirms this as the participants were overwhelmingly in agreement. Most Christians would never say the Holy Spirit is not needed for biblical change. Since some of the survey items needed precision in wording, I decided to revise the original survey statements 9, 10, 13, 18, 21 and 22 on the Revised Counseling Competency Assessment Survey to improve the results if the survey were used again.²

Goal 2: Course Curriculum Development

The second goal was to develop a thirteen-lesson curriculum in biblical counseling designed to equip leaders at SOS Ministries in biblical counseling. The curriculum was developed during my research and writing of chapters 2 and 3, and over the eighteen weeks of course preparation. Significant knowledge was gained in the literature I consulted for this project, especially in chapter 3. While counseling authors tend to have a variety of views on the specifics of counseling methodology, the focus of each biblical counseling model was intentional Bible-saturated, God-glorifying change in people’s lives. The class curriculum promoted these same biblical concepts.

The curriculum was provided to an expert panel for evaluation in two parts. The first section was provided via email on December 31, 2023, and the second part was delivered via email on January 15, 2024, along with the curriculum evaluation rubric.³ Final approval was received on January 21, 2024. The reviewers were asked to recommend changes as with the earlier section and to score the entire curriculum in four categories including biblical faithfulness, scope of curriculum, methodology, and practicality. The reviewers were given about two weeks to return with any suggested revisions or concerns. Once I received the evaluations, I preserved the feedback for a

² See appendix 3.

³ See appendix 2.

future version of the curriculum.

One panel member recommended a greater focus on justification in the curriculum, as this was a frequently misunderstood and often discussed topic in his counseling. Another suggested changes in methodology to include more note taking, fill-in-the-blank answers, and group exercises to engage the participants more. A third reviewer recommended additional supervised training before class participants would be expected to biblically counsel others. At least two of the reviewers encouraged more practical exercises for the participants.

The main critique of the counseling curriculum involved the final practical aspect. Much of my previous personal theological training focused on theological and biblical content, and this curriculum shares that strong doctrinal emphasis. Some reviewers recommended that the later lessons be more practical by including specific counseling examples and case studies. In retrospect, adding practical exercises and case studies throughout the lessons would help the course be more interactive and practical. Even though most of the classes were in a lecture format, I invested significant time in the last session reviewing practical helps and exercises that would help the participants use what they have been learning.

This goal was considered successful when an expert panel of three individuals reviewed the material and scored it at the sufficient or above level according to the categories on a rubric. In general, the reviewers gave the curriculum high marks. Each rubric had eight different items to score. Therefore, with three experts, the total questions to score were twenty-four. Of those twenty-four, sixteen were scored with the highest exemplary mark. The other eight were marked as sufficient. Several recommendations were given to be incorporated into the curriculum, including additional theological content (e.g., justification), practical examples, class discussions, and case studies. This goal was considered successful considering 100% of the responses were at a level of sufficient or above.

The expert panel's input and recommended changes strengthened the curriculum. The curriculum was taught and finished, and class feedback was generally positive. One participant wrote a kind note expressing thankfulness for key theological concepts taught, including the sufficiency and authority of the Scriptures. The curriculum achieved its purpose, and I hope to improve and strengthen it in the years to come.

Goal 3: Participation Evaluation

The third goal was to increase the leaders' perceived competency in biblical counseling by educating leaders of SOS Ministries. I taught the thirteen-lesson curriculum over seven weeks to an average of thirty-one class participants. The sessions were held on Sunday afternoons from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. between November 5, 2023, and January 14, 2024. I administered the Counseling Competency Assessment Survey as a pre- and post-training survey to measure the results of twenty-six participants.⁴ To run the statistical analysis, I inverted the responses to several statements based on the way the question was asked in the survey.⁵ The *t*-test was selected for this analysis as it compares the means of the scores from the pre- and post-training survey, which measured perceived counseling competency among a select group of leaders at SOS Ministries. The goal was considered successful when a *t*-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive, statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-training survey scores ($t_{(25)} = -2.920, p = .00365$) (see table 1). The *t*-test allowed me to objectively measure the difference in biblical knowledge and counseling competency that changed during the course implementation.

⁴ I excluded all participants who did not complete the either the pre- or post-training survey.

⁵ If a survey statement was made in such a way that the desired response would have fallen on the negative side of the Likert scale (numbers 1, 2, or 3), I inverted the response in the Excel spreadsheet. If the participant marked a 6, I changed it to a 1. If the participant marked a 5, I changed it to a 2. If the participant marked a 4, I changed it to a 3. If the participant marked a 3, I changed it to a 4. If the participant marked a 2, I changed it to a 5. If the participant marked a 1, I changed it to a 6. The statements that were reverse scored were 7, 10, and 18.

Table 1. *T*-test: Paired two sample for means

	Pre-Test total	Post-Test total
Mean	86.38461538	94.42307692
Variance	109.4461538	66.57384615
Observations	26	26
Pearson Correlation	-0.122882932	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	25	
t Stat	-2.920304884	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.003653141	
t Critical one-tail	1.708140761	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.007306282	
t Critical two-tail	2.059538553	

Strengths of the Project

Perhaps the project's greatest strength was that it addressed a need within the lives and ministries of leaders at SOS Ministries. The leaders were taught to understand how to wisely apply the Bible to life's problems. The beginning of this project explained some of the serious sin and suffering Ugandans continue to face, and many class participants were eager for biblical solutions to the problems they see every day. However, as evidenced in the survey, many Christians do not regularly engage in counseling others for a variety of reasons, despite their desire to do so. Whether or not a person applies the biblical counseling training in a way that leads to greater faithfulness in discipleship, the participants were trained to counsel others during this project.

A second strength, which was a goal of the project, was to equip SOS Ministries leaders for biblical counseling. I observed several examples of development in the perceived competency of the participants throughout the teaching and class discussions. One particularly memorable event was when a class participant expressed shock in my evaluation of psychology as chaotic, unbiblical, and ineffective. As the class progressed, this person increased in understanding in relation to the nature of biblical counseling and aggressively pursued additional means of learning (e.g., podcasts, websites, and booklets). Others in the class also spoke with this person after the dramatic event in class and were able to confirm her perceived growth in biblical counseling competency.

A third strength of the project was the focus on the sufficiency of Scripture to equip anyone for biblical counseling. As class participants became more aware of the Bible's authority, sufficiency, and applicability to their lives, the vital importance of Scripture was more obvious to many. After the class, one person wrote to me to express how he had come to see that biblical counseling is the only means of really helping people. Only the Word of God applied to people's lives by the Spirit of God can truly change people. For this father, he saw the great help the Bible could be in raising his own children.

The final strength of this project was the interest of this material to the people of SOS Ministries. The class was not offered at a convenient time, and the Christmas and New Year's holidays provided an excuse for people to miss classes. Yet many were interested in the class and the class averaged over thirty participants despite the challenges and lack of aggressive promotion. There was little serious opposition to the theological content, and many good questions were asked, which helped everyone clearly understand the curriculum.

Weaknesses of the Project

Though the project was effective in meeting its goals, some weaknesses were identified. One weakness was the volume of the curriculum material. The curriculum was academic and thorough, involving over one hundred pages of notes. However, it did not fit into thirteen clean teaching units where one lesson was covered for each class. Creating the curriculum with that structure may or may not be possible, but students often appreciate one topic per class rather than overlapping lessons. I tried to alleviate this weakness by briefly reviewing what we covered in previous classes before each new class.

A second weakness was the delayed feedback from the expert panel. I delivered completed portions of the curriculum to the expert panel during the teaching of the curriculum, which gave the panel a few weeks to evaluate the curriculum and provide feedback. However, since some comments were delayed, I could not effectively incorporate them. Two panelists suggested that I include additional exercises or case

studies into the curriculum to give more practical experience. While I agreed that additional case studies would have been a helpful addition to the course, I did not have enough time to incorporate the suggestions into this introductory course.

A third weakness was the structure and reliability of the survey. Even though I sought to assess the perceived biblical counseling competency from multiple angles, I had not created surveys and conducted research in this manner before. While statistics can be enlightening, especially when searching for objective data, I was inexperienced in crafting questions for maximum data gathering. While I learned much in the creation of my survey, discerning when a person truly grows in competency is complex and difficult in this setting. At times, surveys depend on the participant's perception, and it can be difficult to determine substantial change. The understanding I gained from this experience will improve any future research I conduct.

Potential Changes of the Project

The first thing I would consider changing would be adding more instruction on specific counseling issues. For example, I could take one issue and work through it myself and provide another case study where the participants could work on the issue in groups. Even though the course was introductory in nature, both participants and expert panel members mentioned that they wished the course had more practical exercises that discussed specific areas of concern. The course did include numerous practical samples with appendices, but people strongly desire to apply the Scriptures to their lives. In future lectures of this course, I would seek to incorporate a practical exercise in each session to highlight a practical point from the class material.

Second, while this course was largely a lecture-based course in a classroom with detailed notes, I would include some simple articles or practical reading material to be read outside of class. Due to the lack of counseling resources in Uganda, my notes were often lengthy and detailed. My American accent and challenging English vocabulary were likely difficult for some of the Ugandan class participants to understand. Sometimes I

was only able to skim material and encourage participants to read over the details at home. However, near the end of the course, I was able to locate copies of John MacArthur's book, *Our Sufficiency in Christ*.⁶ I gave this book to those who came to the last session because this book has a number of helpful chapters (i.e., "Does God Need a Psychiatrist," "Truth in a World of Theory" on the sufficiency of Scripture, and "Psychological Sanctification" on the power of God's Word) that supported some of the subjects of class lessons.

Third, I would look for help in writing specific and revealing survey questions. While I thought my survey tool was sufficient and was informed by other good examples, I could have improved the quality of the questions by understanding how the entire process would work out in the end.

Theological Reflections

Equipping leaders for biblical counseling is an aspect of a healthy discipleship ministry. As I reflected on the process for this introductory course in biblical counseling, four things have left an impression upon me. First, I was fully convinced of the vital necessity of connecting robust theology with useful methodology. Helping people solve their problems is certainly important, but unless that solution is well-grounded in God's sufficient Word, the proposed solution will not truly solve the problem. In contrast, great theology is ineffective unless it is passionately connected to real-world applications. As I examined various counseling theories and models, I realized that sincere people with strong opinions populate the entire spectrum. Theories and authors were more effective and useful in direct proportion to their ability to accurately understand and apply the Scriptures.

Second, in the preparation of the curriculum, I was more convinced of the biblical teaching of patient, progressive sanctification and particularly its function in biblical counseling. The Holy Spirit applying God's Word to the heart and mind of a

⁶ John F. MacArthur, *Our Sufficiency in Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1998).

person will change that person, but that change will not usually be a quick process.

Third, I realized that the sufficiency of Scripture is a vitally important part of the process of progressive sanctification during counseling. While many believers may intellectually affirm that the Bible is God's Word and is sufficient for life and godliness, animistic concepts of reality or secular psychological ideas constantly challenged my class participants.

Fourth, the process of completing this project has reminded me of the personal nature of one-on-one discipleship. Whether teaching people how to counsel or even counseling people individually, focused attention on the counselee is essential to counseling wisely.

Personal Reflections

I am amazed when I consider all that God has done to provide the resources and support to bring this project to conclusion for equipping SOS Ministries leaders in biblical counseling. I began this process shortly after a significant and surprising financial gift enabled me to afford the school's tuition. And God's grace proved sufficient to sustain me through the trials of completing this project. In the three years it took me to complete this project, my family and I endured a significant ministry transition and an international move in East Africa that challenged the progress of my training. The project consumed untold hours of work as my classes and project wore on. Several times in the last few years during various trials I wondered if I would be able to see the project to completion. Yet, God's grace and provision consistently met me each step of the way when I needed it. I praise God for the benefit of enduring this process and learning from the training and experience I received.

God used the experiences of this project to grow me spiritually, academically, and experientially. Completing this project has been a humbling experience that forced me to depend on the Lord in new ways. My physical endurance was often not sufficient to finish the tasks I needed to accomplish. I also grew academically through the work of

reading, research, and writing papers and this project. The creation of the project will have lasting value as I continue to write and teach in ministry. This project forced me to refine my time management, research, and writing skills in ways I had not previously done.

This project has been fruitful in my own understanding of biblical counseling. I first learned of biblical counseling in the late 1990s as I took a counseling course in seminary. I later audited a counseling class at another seminary during an internship program. While I was interested in the subject, I did not foresee my future training in biblical counseling. As the Lord provided the means and time to study at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, this doctoral project allowed me to read and review many books on new developments in the counseling field. My initial exposure to biblical counseling was from the works of Jay Adams and other like-minded counselors, but now I have grown by reading many new authors and being exposed to new resources.

Conclusion

While the goals of this project have been met, the project's effectiveness is yet to be determined. The class participants were gracious and complementary in their evaluation of the class. My prayer is that the participants will grow in their confidence in God's Word and become more effective biblical counselors. Ultimately, the actions of the class participants will determine whether the class was successful. Ultimately, God is glorified when we accomplish the work he has given us (1 Cor 10:31). It is my prayer that SOS Ministries leaders have been equipped to do biblical counseling to the glory of God.

Many opportunities to equip people to do biblical counseling at SOS Ministries will arise in the future. This project helped lay a biblical foundation that has grounded people in biblical philosophy and methodology. God has been faithful to me from beginning to the end of this project despite many difficulties. "Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen" (Eph 3:20-21).

APPENDIX 1
COUNSELING COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT
SURVEY

The following instrument is the Counseling Competency Assessment Survey (CCAS). The first three general questions are followed by a twenty-two-statement survey with a six-point Likert scale. The purpose of the instrument was to assess the level of theological understanding and perceived competency in biblical counseling by leaders at SOS Ministries.

COUNSELING COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Agreement to Participate

Sufficiency of Scripture (SOS) Ministries exists to strengthen lives and communities through Jesus Christ, and we believe that the best personal and collective strength comes when applying the Scriptures to people's lives. One of the ways that we fulfill this commitment is by training people at SOS to do biblical counseling well. In light of this desire, SOS desires to provide biblical counseling training for those who are in positions of influence within the organization. This survey for SOS related persons will help us assess our current competency to counsel well.

This research is being conducted by Daniel Huffstutler for the purpose of gathering data for an educational ministry project. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential. Your name and your responses will be kept private. Participation is strictly voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time. By completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

Date: _____

Name: _____

Gender: _____

1. Do you consider yourself a Christian?

_____ A. Yes

_____ B. No

2. Are you a CBCK church member?

_____ A. Yes

_____ B. No

3. What is your age in years? _____

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

SD = strongly agree

D = disagree

DS = disagree somewhat

AS = agree somewhat

A = agree

SA = strongly agree

4. I consider myself informed about biblical counseling. SD D DS AS A SA

5. I am skilled at using the Bible to help people change. SD D DS AS A SA

6. People often come to me for help with spiritual problems. SD D DS AS A SA

7. The Bible and psychology complement each other. SD D DS AS A SA

- | | | | | | | |
|---|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 8. I have received sufficient training in biblical counseling. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 9. When counseling another, one should investigate a person's salvation before addressing their behavioral needs. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 10. Pastors are solely responsible for counseling. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 11. Any Christian can be equipped for counseling others. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 12. The goals of counseling are set by the counselee. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 13. The Holy Spirit is critical for effective biblical counseling. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 14. Meeting weekly with a counselee has value in biblical counseling. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 15. Assigning homework to a counselee has value in biblical counseling. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 16. Understanding a person's health history has value in biblical counseling. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 17. Understanding a person's life history has value in biblical counseling. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 18. Building a counselee's self-esteem has value for biblical counseling. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 19. Understanding a counselee's medications has value in biblical counseling. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 20. I can humbly demonstrate God's love to counsees for any given issue without appearing prideful. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 21. I know which questions to ask for any given counseling issue. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 22. I have a strategy for studying and responding to any counseling issue. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 23. I am comfortable counseling someone who is unrepentant about their sin. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 24. I am comfortable counseling someone who has a habitual sin problem. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 25. I am able to ask a person deeper questions than the counselee's presenting (i.e., surface) problem. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |

APPENDIX 2

FOUNDATIONS OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING CURRICULUM EVALUATION

The following evaluation was sent to an expert panel consisting of one CBCK pastor, one pastor with a DEdMin in Leadership, and one pastor who serves as an adjunct professor in the biblical counseling department at The Master's University. This panel evaluated the course material to ensure it is biblically faithful, sufficiently thorough, and practically applicable.

Name of Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

<i>Foundations of Biblical Counseling Curriculum Evaluation</i>					
1 = Insufficient; 2 = Requires attention; 3 = Sufficient; 4 = Exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Biblical Faithfulness					
The content of the curriculum is hermeneutically sound. All Scripture is properly interpreted, explained, and applied.					
The content of the curriculum is theologically sound.					
Scope					
The content of the curriculum sufficiently covers each issue it is designed to address.					
The curriculum sufficiently covers the basics of biblical counseling.					
Methodology					
The curriculum sufficiently addresses counseling methodology.					
The curriculum makes use of various learning approaches such as lecture, discussion, case studies, and homework.					
Practicality					
The curriculum includes opportunities to practice counseling applications.					
At the end of the course, participants will be able to counsel others biblically.					

Please include any additional comments regarding curriculum below:

APPENDIX 3

REVISED COUNSELING COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT FORM

The following instrument is the Revised Counseling Competency Assessment (RCCAF). Four general questions will be followed by a twenty-six-statement survey with a six-point Likert scale. The purpose of the instrument is to assess the present level of theological understanding and perceived competency in biblical counseling by persons connected to SOS Ministries.

REVISED BIBLICAL COUNSELING ASSESSMENT

Agreement to Participate

Sufficiency of Scripture (SOS) Ministries exists to strengthen lives and communities through Jesus Christ, and we believe that the best personal and collective strength comes when applying the Scriptures to people's lives. One of the ways that we fulfill this commitment is by training people at SOS to do biblical counseling well. In light of this desire, SOS desires to provide biblical counseling training for those who are in positions of influence within the organization. This survey for SOS related persons will help us assess our current competency to counsel well.

This research is being conducted by Daniel Huffstutler for the purpose of gathering data for an educational ministry project. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential. Your name and your responses will be kept private. Participation is strictly voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time. By completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

Date: _____

Name: _____

Gender: _____

General Questions:

1. Do you consider yourself a Christian?

_____ A. Yes

_____ B. No

2. Are you a CBCK church member?

_____ A. Yes

_____ B. No

3. What is your age in years? _____

4. How long have you considered yourself a Christian?

Directions: Please mark the answer that best represents your thinking. All the statements ask you to give your opinion using the following scale:

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

- | | | | | | | |
|--|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 5. I consider myself informed about biblical counseling. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 6. I am skilled at using the Bible to help people change. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 7. People often come to me for help with spiritual problems. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 8. The Bible and psychology complement each other. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 9. I have received enough training in biblical counseling to counsel people. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 10. When counseling another, one should inquire into a person's spiritual background before addressing their behavioral needs. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 11. Only pastors are responsible for counseling others. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 12. Any Christian can be equipped for counseling others. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 13. The goals of counseling are set by the counselee. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 14. A Christian can effective spiritual change without divine assistance. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 15. Meeting weekly with a counselee has value in biblical counseling. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 16. Assigning homework to a counselee has value in biblical counseling. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 17. Understanding a person's health history has value in biblical counseling. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 18. Understanding a person's life history has value in biblical counseling. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 19. A counselor should build self-esteem or self-worth in every counselor to maximize value for biblical counseling. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 20. Understanding a counselee's medications has value in biblical counseling. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |

- | | | | | | | |
|---|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 21. I can humbly demonstrate God's love to counselees for any given issue without appearing prideful. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 22. I usually know which questions to ask for most counseling issues. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 23. I usually have a strategy for studying and responding to most counseling issues. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 24. I am comfortable counseling someone who is unrepentant about their sin. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 25. I am comfortable counseling someone who has a habitual sin problem. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 26. I am able to ask a person deeper questions than the counselee's presenting (i.e., surface) problem. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |

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ABSTRACT

EQUIPPING LEADERS OF SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE MINISTRIES IN KUBAMITWE, UGANDA, FOR BIBLICAL COUNSELING

Daniel Carter Huffstutler, DEdMin
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2024
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Stuart W. Scott

This project sought to equip leaders of Sufficiency of Scripture Ministries in Kubamitwe, Uganda, for biblical counseling. Chapter 1 presents the historical and ministry context of Sufficiency of Scripture Ministries and the aims of this project. Chapter 2 provides the exegesis of three passages of Scripture (Col 1:24-29; 1 Cor 2:6-13; Heb 10:19-25) to show that Christian leaders have sufficient God-given resources to counsel biblically. Chapter 3 presents the multitude of available resources for biblical counselors. Chapter 4 describes the project, explaining and describing the content and teaching methodology of the course material. Chapter 5 evaluates the effectiveness of the project by examining the completion of specified goals. This project sought to equip Christians with the confidence and competency to lovingly counsel sinners, sufferers, and saints with biblical truth.

VITA

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EDUCATION

BA, Bob Jones University, 1992
MA, Bob Jones University, 1997
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ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

Director and Faculty, East Africa Baptist School of Theology, Nairobi, Kenya,
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Dean of Administration, Shepherds Training College, Kubamitwe, Uganda,
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MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT

Assistant Pastor, First Baptist Church, Lake Orion, Michigan, 2003-2007
Administrative Assistant, Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, Allen Park,
Michigan, 2007-2009
Cross-Cultural Missionary, Grace Baptist Mission, Allen Park, Michigan
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Church Planter and Pastor, Redeemer Bible Church, Nairobi, Kenya, 2017-
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