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EQUIPPING INMATES AT COLUMBIA CORRECTIONAL
INSTITUTION IN LAKE CITY, FLORIDA,
TO COUNSEL BIBLICALLY

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EQUIPPING INMATES AT COLUMBIA CORRECTIONAL
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PREFACE

This work is the result of a number of people who have been influential in my spiritual journey. I would like to thank Dr. George “Skip” Scipione who taught my first course in biblical counseling and opened up a whole world of practical theology to me.

As my professor at Southern Seminary, Dr. Stuart Scott taught much more than academics; he imparted a passion for godliness that serves as the foundation for any ministry. My supervisor, Dr. John Trentham, sharpened both my thinking and writing. I am very grateful for the time he spent providing me help and guidance.

I would also like to thank my dear friend and mentor, Dr. Jim Newheiser. In addition to teaching me how to counsel, Jim taught me how to think biblically; no one has had a greater impact on my spiritual growth.

A huge measure of gratefulness goes to my wife, Elizabeth. This amazing woman initiated our journey into biblical counseling. She raised and home-schooled our ten blessings from the Lord and has been my closest companion through life as we have sought to honor the Lord and serve Him together. Even after thirty-six years of marriage, every day with her is a joy-filled adventure, every conversation is like poetry, and her passion for Christ still inspires me. Most importantly, I thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who sees fit to use the foolish, the weak, and the lowly (1 Cor 1:26-28). For that, I will be forever grateful. *Soli Deo Gloria!*

Don Roy

Slidell, Louisiana

May 2016

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip prison inmates at Columbia Correctional Institution in Lake City, Florida, to counsel other inmates biblically.

Goals

The project was guided by five goals. The first goal was to assess the inmates' current level of biblical counseling knowledge and how comfortable they are offering biblical counsel. The participants were Christians who were active in chapel programs and approved by the chaplain. The goal was measured by administering a Fundamentals of Biblical Counseling Survey (FBCS) to a minimum of 40 prison inmates.¹ This survey included questions regarding the inmate's understanding of some of the main issues in biblical counseling, such as inerrancy and sufficiency of Scripture, unbiblical presuppositions of psychology, and basic methodology of biblical counseling. This goal was successfully met when at least 40 inmates completed the FBCS and the survey was analyzed, yielding a clearer picture of the understanding of biblical counseling among inmates who are professing Christians.²

The second goal was to develop a twenty-hour biblical counseling course that was aligned with the principles of the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC) and was tailored for prison inmates. The course was designed to be taught over

¹See appendix 1.

²The survey was e-mailed to the prison chaplain who then distributed the survey to all 120 residents of the Faith Dorm. Completion of the survey was voluntary.

a period of five days. This goal was measured by three ACBC certified counselors who utilized a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and how closely the course aligned with the precepts of ACBC.³ The curriculum was also evaluated by two prison chaplains who used a second rubric to evaluate the applicability of the curriculum.⁴ The goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion in both course evaluations met or exceeded the sufficient level.

The third goal was to enlist at least sixteen inmates from Columbia Correctional Institution to attend the course. The goal was measured by counting the number of inmates who attended at least 80 percent of the course. I enlisted the prison chaplain's help as he publicized the course and obtained authorization for the inmates to attend the course. The goal was successfully met when nineteen inmates completed the course.

The fourth goal was to equip 16 participants to provide biblical counseling to fellow inmates. The goal was measured by administering a pre and post-course survey, which measured the inmates' level of knowledge, confidence, and motivation to provide biblical counsel to fellow inmates.⁵ The goal was considered successfully met when a t-test for dependent samples⁶ demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference in the pre and post-course scores. This goal was also measured by an evaluation of role-plays. Because time constraints within the prison would not allow all students to conduct a role-playing scenario, a sample of 5 students simulated a one-on-one counseling session

³See appendix 2.

⁴See appendix 3.

⁵See appendix 4.

⁶Neil J. Salkind, *Statistics for People Who (Think They) Hate Statistics*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008), 189-91.

with another inmate. I used a rubric to evaluate the skills employed during the role-play.⁷ The goal was considered sufficiently met when at least 3 of the 5 students met or exceeded the satisfactory level in all skill areas.

The fifth goal was to revise the curriculum. This goal was measured by the completion of a course evaluation by each of the participants. The evaluation contained both a Likert scale and comment area where the inmates could add comments about both the course content and applicability.⁸ I also evaluated the course using Robert Stake's Model for Evaluation of Educational Programs and Teaching Sessions.⁹ An evaluation form was developed using Stake's Method.¹⁰ The goal was successfully met when all the students and I completed the course evaluations and the curriculum was revised to address weaknesses noted by the participants.

Context

One of the ministries of First Baptist Church of Slidell, Louisiana, is Northshore Biblical Counseling and Training Center (NBCTC). Although NBCTC is incorporated as its own organization, it falls under the authority and is a ministry of FBC Slidell. NBCTC's mission is fourfold: to provide biblical counseling locally, and to teach biblical counseling to members of local churches, prison inmates, and church leaders in other nations.

The focus of this project was to improve the third mission area by developing a biblical counseling course tailored for prison inmates. This course was taught at Columbia Correctional Institution (hereafter referred to as Columbia), which is a Florida State Prison located in Lake City, Florida. The prison holds 1,400 male inmates in the medium

⁷See appendix 5.

⁸See appendix 6.

⁹Lawrence O. Richards and Gary J. Bredfeldt, *Creative Bible Teaching* (Chicago: Moody, 1998), 315.

¹⁰See appendix 7.

to minimum security custody categories.¹¹ Inmates serving at Columbia have been convicted of a number of serious offenses, most of which fall into the categories of drugs, burglary, murder or manslaughter, robbery, and violent personal offenses, such as carjacking and aggravated assault.¹² The length of sentence for each inmate varies significantly—from life imprisonment to a few years. Because of the variation in length of prison sentence, some will apply their training strictly within the prison environment, while others may also desire to continue a counseling ministry after release from prison. The fact that the course follows the precepts of ACBC ensures that inmates have the skills to counsel, whether in or out of prison.

The course was intended for inmates who were already enrolled in the prison's Faith and Character Based Residential Program, commonly referred to as the Faith Dorm. There are 120 men in Columbia's Faith Dorm. The Florida Department of Corrections describes the program:

The Faith and Character Based Residential Program (FCB) is an innovative effort to reduce recidivism and disciplinary infractions in correctional institutions by offering faith and character based programming in a positive environment to inmates committed to inner transformation. This initiative offers inmates a variety of activities and classes (both religious and secular) focused on personal growth and character development. Citizen volunteers are utilized to mentor inmates and volunteers teach inmates in an open public forum. Volunteer programming is rich with positive reinforcement designed to help inmates take well-defined steps toward mature and responsible living.¹³

Inmates are housed in the Faith Dorm for eighteen months and, during that time, are enrolled in a variety of activities and classes. Because of the number of Christian inmates in the Faith Dorm and the eighteen-month turnover, the chaplain assigned to Columbia

¹¹Florida Department of Corrections, "Facility Profile Information," accessed March 6, 2014, <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/facilities/region2/201.html>.

¹²Florida Department of Corrections, "Inmate Population," accessed March 6, 2014, http://www.dc.state.fl.us/pub/annual/1213/stats/im_pop.html.

¹³Florida Department of Corrections, "Faith and Character Based Residential Programs," accessed March 6, 2014, <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/oth/faith/index.html>.

has discussed the possibility of teaching the biblical counseling course to a class of 20 inmates every six months.

The inmates that attended the course had a wide range of Bible knowledge. Some have come to faith within the past few years as a result of the life crises encountered due to their crimes and the ensuing consequences. While some may fear that this is a false “jailhouse conversion,” the chaplain observed their consistency in participating in chapel programs and their desire to learn more of God’s Word. As far as any man can tell, all the students were genuine Christians who desired to mature in the faith. While some of the inmates were new to Christianity, there were also those who knew the Scriptures well. They had been raised in Christian homes, or had been church members (or attendees) years before coming to prison. Whether they were not truly converted prior to their imprisonment, or were true believers who fell into grievous sin was unknown to the chaplain. What was known was that they were faithfully participating in chapel programs and had requested to attend the biblical counseling training.

Inmates are typically interested in biblical counseling training for three main reasons. The first is to understand how to respond biblically to interactions among their fellow inmates, which can be especially stressful due to the close quarters in which they live. It is also stressful because some inmates—and guards—express animosity toward Christians and because most inmates who are Christians are immature in the faith and therefore often behave in an unbiblical manner. The second reason the inmates are interested in the training is to know how to properly relate to their families and how they can make amends in a biblical fashion to people who they have hurt due to their crimes or previous lifestyle. The third reason is to provide biblical counseling to fellow inmates. For the same reasons cited above, other inmates need counsel regarding how to live in a manner that glorifies God.

Rationale

The course material previously used was from the Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship (IBCD). The material was very well organized, approved by the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC), and addressed most issues that people see in counseling and discipleship situations. This material served well in accomplishing the first and second mission areas (provide counseling and teach counseling to individuals and churches). The material for the fourth area (teaching overseas) is accomplished in conjunction with another organization, Overseas Instruction in Counseling (OIC). The material for that area is provided by OIC and is suitable for churches whose cultural context is different from those in the United States. Of all four areas that NBCTC focuses on, however, the one area that needed further development was in the area of teaching prison inmates.

The inmates' reception of the biblical counseling courses at each prison where it had already been taught was always enthusiastic and they uniformly showed an eagerness to both learn the material and apply it within their own environment. This was indicated not only by the degree of class participation, but also by the very positive remarks on course critiques that were solicited at the end of every course. Many also indicated a desire for further training and future certification in counseling.

While the reception was very positive, there were some questions concerning how to apply some of the principles in the prison environment. Because of their past actions and current circumstances, most of the inmates have a history of failed relationships. Understandably then, some of their questions involved issues such as how one can repair and build a marriage from prison when communication is often sporadic and infrequent. Similarly, how does one provide godly leadership to children from the confines of prison? In terms of everyday life, how should an inmate respond to a prison guard who is unjust and mocks or provokes inmates? The concept of forgiving yourself is prevalent among inmates who are remorseful for their crimes—that being the case, how does one biblically handle remorse for past sins? A biblical counseling course tailored to

answer these questions, and dozens like them, was immediately beneficial to the inmates attending the course as well as to other inmates they counsel.

Other aspects of the course that were tailored to inmates addressed some issues with which they deal frequently in prison. For example, Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is highly regarded in most prisons as a means for men to stay sober even after release from prison. The unbiblical presuppositions of AA were addressed along with the biblical approach to putting off drunkenness and drug abuse. Also, the use of psychotropic drugs by the prison medical staff to treat depression and anxiety among the inmates (along with other commonly diagnosed psychological issues) tends to be somewhat routine.¹⁴ The course addressed these, along with other problems and the unbiblical “solutions” commonly used in prisons.

The main aspects of the newly developed course fulfilled the requirements for being an ACBC approved course, but also included applications specifically tailored for prison inmates. This made the course even more beneficial than the previous one. Opportunities for NBCTC to bring this material into prisons continues to expand as we have received interest in this course from three other prisons in Florida. While this project is targeted with a specific institution in mind, the desired result is to have a biblical counseling course that may be used in prisons around the country. My desire is to share this course material with other ACBC Training Centers who would like to teach this course to prison inmates in their local areas.

Definitions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Technical terms are used throughout this project; they are defined below to aid the reader’s understanding of the subject.

¹⁴Personal conversation with inmates at Blackwater River Correctional Facility, February 20, 2013.

Biblical counseling. The Confessional Statement of the Biblical Counseling

Coalition defines this term:

Biblical counseling occurs whenever and wherever God's people engage in conversations that are anchored in Scripture, centered on Christ and the gospel, grounded in sound theology, dependent upon the Holy Spirit and prayer, directed toward sanctification, rooted in the life of the church, founded in love, attentive to heart issues, comprehensive in understanding, thorough in care, practical and relevant, and oriented toward outreach.¹⁵

Sufficiency of Scripture. The Sufficiency of Scripture is best explained by the implications of this doctrine:

The inspired and inerrant Scriptures, rightfully interpreted and carefully applied, offer us God's comprehensive wisdom. We learn to understand who God is, who we are, the problems we face, how people change, and God's provision for change in the gospel. . . . No other source of knowledge thoroughly equips us to counsel in ways that transform the human heart. . . . The wisdom given by God in His Word is distinctive and robust. He comprehensively addresses the sin and suffering of all people in all situations.¹⁶

Psychotherapy. In *Current Psychotherapies*, Raymond Corsini defines psychotherapy:

A formal process of interaction between two parties...for the purpose of amelioration of distress in one of the two parties relative to any or all of the following areas of disability or malfunction: cognitive functions (disorders of thinking), affective functions (suffering or emotional discomforts), or behavioral functions (inadequacy of behavior), with the therapist have some theory of personality's origins, development, maintenance and change along with some method of treatment logically related to the theory.¹⁷

The limitation to this project was that this material was taught in a prison environment, therefore the timing of the course as determined by the prison chaplain and was limited to a five-day period of teaching five hours a day.

The first delimitation was that this course was taught to inmates at Columbia Correctional Institution who are enrolled in the Faith Based Dorm program. Students

¹⁵James MacDonald, ed., "The Confessional Statement of the Biblical Counseling Coalition," in *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2013), 438.

¹⁶MacDonald, "The Confessional Statement," 430.

¹⁷Raymond Corsini and Danny Wedding, eds., *Current Psychotherapies*, 5th ed. (Itasca, IL: F. E. Peacock, 1995), 1.

volunteered for the class and were approved to participate by the prison chaplain. The second delimitation was that it did not include marriage and parenting counseling, but did focus on general principles of biblical counseling and specific areas that tend to affect individuals as opposed to married couples. Examples included forgiveness and how to counsel for cases of depression, anger, loneliness, fear, and anxiety.

Research Methodology

The research methodology for this project included the use of a Fundamentals of Biblical Counseling Survey (FBCS), a pre and post-course survey, an instructor evaluation, and an evaluation rubric.¹⁸ Four goals determined the effectiveness of this project. The first goal was to assess the inmates' current level of biblical counseling knowledge and how comfortable they were offering biblical counsel by administering the FBCS. The survey included questions regarding their understanding of biblical sufficiency as opposed to the value of psychology and whether or not the Bible addresses specific issues, such as depression and anger. It also included a list of potential counseling topics they could rank order, as well as an open-ended question regarding topics they desired to see included in the course. Three months before the beginning of course development, the FBCS was sent to the prison chaplain who then distributed the survey to all 120 inmates in the Faith Dorm. Since the participants included non-Christians, the survey includes demographic information that enabled segregation of the data for later analysis. The completed surveys were returned and used to help shape course development. This goal was successfully met when at least 40 inmates completed the FBCS and the survey was analyzed.

¹⁸All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project. With the exception of the Instructor Course Evaluation (appendix 7), I created all instruments and they were reviewed by Michael Wilder.

The second goal was to develop a twenty-hour biblical counseling course tailored for prison inmates. The course consisted of twenty one-hour sessions dealing with topics such as the difference between the precepts of psychology and biblical counseling, methodology of biblical counseling, the process of sanctification, biblical peacemaking, how the physical body and one's upbringing can affect an individual, and how to address specific issues such as depression, anger, and worry. The course included lecture, student interaction, case studies, and role-play. The curriculum was submitted to three ACBC certified counselors who used a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and faithfulness to the precepts of ACBC.¹⁹ The course content was also submitted to two prison chaplains who used a different rubric to evaluate how pertinent the material was to prison inmates.²⁰ The goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion in both course evaluations met or exceeded the sufficient level. If less than 90 percent of the rubric had been scored at sufficient or above, the feedback would have been used to modify the curriculum, after which the material would be submitted again to the panel of experts for evaluation. However, on the first iteration, at least 90 percent of the indicators on the rubric were scored at sufficient or above, at which time the second goal was considered successfully met.

The third goal was to equip 16 participants to provide biblical counseling to fellow inmates. This was accomplished by teaching the material during the course of five consecutive days. The goal was measured in two ways. The first was with a pre and post-course survey. During the first hour of the course, a pre-course survey was administered to all the participants.²¹ In order to keep the surveys anonymous, each participant

¹⁹See appendix 3.

²⁰See appendix 4.

²¹See appendix 2.

identified himself on the survey with a unique four-digit number of his own choosing. To be included in this group, the participants had to attend a minimum of eighteen hours of the twenty-hour course.

The pre-course survey sought to determine two things about each participant. First, it assessed understanding of the sufficiency of Scripture in addressing all problems of life. This section included questions regarding the problems with psychology and the sufficiency of Scripture. Second, the survey assessed the inmates' understanding of how to counsel others. This section included questions regarding the process of sanctification, biblical peacemaking, and dealing with issues such as anger, worry, and temptation. On the final day of the course, the inmates completed a post-course survey that was the same as the pre-course survey. The goal was considered successfully met when a t-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference in the pre and post-course scores. A t-test compared the means from each group of scores from the pre and post-course survey and was used to ensure the difference in score was not due to chance, but that actual learning occurred.²²

The second way this goal was measured was by the inmates conducting counseling role-play. The day after the course was completed, five inmates were selected to simulate a one-on-one counseling session with other students. I developed a rubric to evaluate the skills employed during the role-play.²³ The rubric included factors such as accurate use of Scripture, appropriate degree of encouragement and exhortation, and attempts to discover heart issues. The goal was considered sufficiently met when at least 4 of the 5 students met or exceeded the satisfactory level in all areas.

The fourth goal was to revise the curriculum. This goal was measured in two ways. First, each student was given an evaluation survey at the beginning of the course.

²²Salkind, *Statistics*, 189-91.

²³See appendix 5.

The survey contained both a Likert scale and a comment area where the inmates could add remarks about both the course content and applicability.²⁴ There was a line for each of the twenty lessons as well as one for the course as a whole. The survey was collected at the end of the final day of the course. This goal was also measured by my own evaluation, using Robert Stake's Model for Evaluation of Educational Programs and Teaching Sessions.²⁵ Using this model, I evaluated expected versus actual learning antecedents (how familiar the inmates were with Scripture), expected versus actual learning transactions (how well the lesson plan and teaching format worked), and the expected versus actual learning outcomes (how well the inmates learned the material). The goal was successfully met when the instructor and all students completed the course evaluations and the curriculum was revised to address the weaknesses noted by the participants.

²⁴See appendix 6.

²⁵Richards and Bredfeldt, *Creative Bible Teaching*, 315.

CHAPTER 2

THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR BELIEVERS COUNSELING ONE ANOTHER

In the Great Commission, Jesus commands his followers to “make disciples of all nations” (Matt 28:19). In *Equipping Counselors for Your Church*, Robert Kelleman indicates that biblical counseling is a means to fulfilling that command: “We should think of biblical counseling as synonymous with comprehensive personal discipleship.”¹ So then, just as all believers are called to make disciples, so too are all believers called to encourage and counsel one another. In order to provide that encouragement and counsel, believers must turn to the Scriptures as their sole, authoritative, and sufficient resource to help one another live a life pleasing to God. The Scriptures contain all that Christians need to know as they struggle against sin and respond to suffering in a godly way. While many in the field of psychology try to offer insight in dealing with life’s issues, many of the presuppositions upon which it is based are unbiblical and therefore do not contain lasting answers. On the other hand, Scripture does have everything “that pertains to life and godliness” (2 Pet 1:3), and God has enabled believers, through the Holy Spirit, to respond to biblical counsel and grow in spiritual maturity.

The Bible Teaches That All Believers Are Able to Counsel One Another

Christians are called to live in community and help one another grow in holiness. Ephesians 4:11-12 tells that it is the saints who are to do “the work of the ministry;” to build up the body of Christ. These verses highlight the fact that all believers, not just pastors or elders, should be able to counsel and encourage one another toward

¹Robert Kelleman, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2011), 35.

greater maturity in Christ. This section now explores three other passages that show how all believers are called to counsel and encourage one another.

Stirring One Another to Good Works: Hebrews 10:24-25

In Hebrews 10:24-25, the author instructs believers to meet regularly for the purpose of stirring one another up “to love and good works,” and to encourage one another in putting off sin (vv. 25-26). In his commentary on Hebrews, F. F. Bruce writes, “Christian faith and witness will flourish the more vigorously in an atmosphere of Christian fellowship.”² However, the command here is not simply to meet together for the purpose of enjoying one another’s company. The Greek word *paroxymos* is translated as “stir up” in the ESV and “provoke” in the AV, ASV, and other versions. Bruce writes that this word, “is a strong one; it appears in one other place in the New Testament, and there in a very different way, of the ‘sharp contention’ that broke out between Paul and Barnabas when they could not agree on taking Mark with them.”³ While the usage of the word “provoke” usually carries a negative connotation, the positive use of it here is “in the sense of being stimulated in the lives of Christians by the considerateness and example of other members of their fellowship.”⁴ In other words, when believers spend time with one another, they are encouraged by the teaching, counsel, and good example of others and thus helped to become more godly.

Certainly, the “love and good works” mentioned in this passage include practical concerns and tangible means of help to believers in need, but the “stirring up” implies active concern for one another in a spiritual sense as well. William Lane

²F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 253.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

describes the gathering being commanded as “the place or occasion for mutual encouragement and exhortation.”⁵ Lane points out that the admonition in Hebrews 10:25 to encourage one another is similar to the admonition of 3:13 to “exhort one another every day.” Lane explains that the verb used here, *parakalein*, “includes the notion of warning and reproof as well as encouragement, with the implication that reproof should be given in a loving way.”⁶ Jay Adams also comments that in Hebrews 3:13 and Hebrews 10:24-25 “Paul urged all Christians to nouthetic confrontation.”⁷ So while this passage is an appeal to continue gathering regularly as the body of Christ, the purpose of gathering is to exhort, admonish, and encourage each other in such a way that one’s walk with Christ deepens. It is noteworthy that this instruction to exhort, admonish, and encourage is not directed to church leaders, but to everyone in the assembly (3:19).

**Able to Instruct One Another:
Romans 15:1-2, 14**

The second passage that shows that all believers are called to counsel and encourage one another is Romans 15:1-2, 14. In verse 1 of this passage, Paul encourages the strong believers to “bear with the failings of the weak” and to build others up. In verse 14, he tells them he is convinced that they “are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another.” Like the passage in Hebrews, the instruction is not aimed at church leaders, but is given to all believers at Rome. Commenting on this passage, Jay Adams remarks, “Paul pictures Christians meeting in nouthetic confrontation as normal every-day activity . . . nouthetic activity is a work in which all of God’s people

⁵William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 47b (Dallas: Word, 1991), 289.

⁶Ibid., 290.

⁷Jay Adams, *Competent to Counsel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 252.

may participate.”⁸ When writing about who pastors should train as biblical counselors, Robert Kelleman points out,

Based upon the surrounding context (Rom. 16:1-16), Paul’s addressees are members of small house churches spread throughout the city and dotting the countryside of Rome. These men and women, converted Jews and Greeks, slaves and free, Paul considers competent to counsel.⁹

His initial instruction is to the “strong” who are instructed to “bear with the failings of the weak.” Thomas Schreiner explains,

The sense is akin to Gal 6:2, where Paul calls on believers to bear (*bastazete*) each other’s burdens, which does not mean to “endure” each other as a burden, but to help each other with the things that oppress us. Similarly, the thought here is that the “strong” should come to the aid of the “weak” and help them with their deficiencies.¹⁰

In terms of providing counsel and encouragement—or as Schreiner puts it, helping them with their deficiencies—verses 2-7 provide both the context and the way by which one is able to do this. The context is that encouragement should be provided for both the good of one’s neighbor (v. 2) and for the glory of God (v. 6), using the Scriptures as the guide (v. 4), through the power of God (v. 5), and because of what Christ has done (vv. 3, 7). These four points serve as a framework for biblical counseling and provide overarching guidance concerning the ways and means of counseling.

In addition to this instruction to his readers, Paul notes his confidence in their ability to help the weak when he describes them in verse 14 as “full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another.” While these are strong sentiments, Paul was not intimating that each individual member of the Roman church was a sort of “super-saint.” Schreiner points out that when Paul uses terms like “full of goodness” and “filled with all knowledge,” his words are not flattery, but instead “he is probably

⁸Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 42.

⁹Kelleman, *Equipping Counselors*, 184.

¹⁰Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 746.

thinking of the community as a whole.”¹¹ Moo writes, “There is no reason to think that Paul is insincere in what he says of them here. Through trusted co-workers (e.g., Prisca and Aquila; cf. 16:3), Paul had access to good information about the Roman Christian community.”¹² The information he had was enough to convince him that the church as a whole had sufficient knowledge and compassion to disciple one another. The Greek word translated as “instruct,” *nouthetein*, has a broad meaning in this case and can encompass all aspects of what is normally involved with biblical counseling. Usually, people seeking counsel need instruction and encouragement, but at other times they may instead need admonition. According to Schreiner, “one does not have to decide between pastoral admonition and correction or rebuke. The term is a general one.”¹³ Shown in this passage is the ability of believers within the local the body of Christ to encourage, exhort, and instruct one another.

Restore One Another: Galatians 6:1-2

The third passage that shows all believers are called to counsel and encourage one another is Galatians 6:1-2. As in the previously cited passages, Paul addresses this instruction to all believers as opposed to church leaders only. In this passage, he instructs believers to help others who fall into sin or experience difficulty. Paul Tripp emphasizes,

Each of us has been called by God to be his instruments of change in the lives of others. . . . Being an instrument of change means speaking the truth in love. With the gospel as our comfort and call, we can help people see themselves in God’s Word and lead them to repentance.¹⁴

¹¹Schreiner, *Romans*, 765.

¹²Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 887.

¹³Schreiner, *Romans*, 746.

¹⁴Paul Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2002), 272-73.

In verse 1, he speaks of those “caught in any transgression.” Paul seems to be encouraging compassion more than condemnation for sin as he speaks of those who were “caught” in transgression. Richard Longenecker writes that the Greek word Paul uses here “appears in the passive and so suggests being ‘overtaken’ or ‘entrapped’ by something.”¹⁵ When people engage in biblical counseling, compassion is called for because the initial assumption is that people truly desire to walk in a manner that pleases God, but they are currently struggling with their sinful nature in a way described in Romans 7. Longenecker also expresses that Paul’s language indicates that this will not be a unique event. Commenting on the grammatical structure used in this verse, he writes there is “the suggestion in the use of the third class ‘future more probable’ conditional construction that such a circumstance will almost certainly take place.”¹⁶

In this verse, the charge to those “who are spiritual,” that is, “those whose lives give evidence of the fruit of the Spirit,”¹⁷ is to gently restore those who have fallen into sin. This restoration is to be done in a spirit of humility, realizing that all believers are vulnerable to the temptations of sin. This gentle and humble attitude is encompassed by the word *katartizo*, translated as “restore.” “Elsewhere in the New Testament (cf. Matt 4:21; Mark 1:19) this same word is used for the mending or overhauling of fishnets. It was also part of the medical vocabulary of ancient Greece, where it meant ‘to set a fractured or dislocated bone.’”¹⁸ The intent is to correct sin and gently restore the brother to the unity of the church body and to usefulness for the kingdom of God.

¹⁵Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 41 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 272.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 273.

¹⁷Timothy George, *Galatians*, New American Commentary, vol. 30 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 410.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 411.

Besides restoring those who have fallen into sin, Paul instructs the Galatians to “bear one another’s burdens.” George explains, “The word for ‘burden’ (*baros*) means literally ‘a heavy weight or stone’ someone is required to carry for a long distance. Figuratively it came to mean any oppressive ordeal or hardship that was difficult to bear.”¹⁹ In this verse, one sees the need to help those who struggle with health problems, family troubles, financial distress, or a host of issues that have nothing to do with sinful behavior. Fellow believers suffer in a world under the curse of Adam’s sin, and the charge in verse 2 is for the body of Christ to come alongside one another to help bear their burdens. This help may be in the physical realm for many (i.e., those with physical limitations or in financial distress), but it certainly also includes scriptural counsel and godly encouragement as well.

Hebrews 10:24-25, Romans 15:1-2, 14, and Galatians 6:1-2 serve to emphasize the truth from Ephesians 4:11-12—it is the saints who are to do “the work of the ministry,” to build up the body of Christ. Believers are instructed to meet regularly in order to encourage and exhort one another, are told to bear with weaker brothers, and to restore those who are caught in transgression. In summary, all believers should be able to counsel one another using Scripture, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to exhort and encourage one another.

Scripture Is Sufficient for Counseling People in All Situations

So while the Bible teaches to exhort, counsel, and encourage one another, does the Bible also teach that it is sufficient in itself for this task? Some would maintain that while Scripture is helpful, one must also make use of psychology to help people with issues of the soul. However, an examination of two passages of Scripture should be

¹⁹George, *Galatians*, 413.

proof enough that Scripture alone is sufficient to address all aspects of the mind, will, and emotions as believers walk through life.

The first passage is 2 Peter 1:3-7. Verse 3 says that God's "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." Douglas Moo points out that "spiritual maturity begins with God's provision. It is 'his divine power' that has given to us Christians all that we need both for new spiritual life and for 'godliness.'"²⁰ The "divine power" Peter mentions is described in Romans as the very gospel itself, as Paul writes, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Rom 1:16). When counseling fellow believers, one must always start by ensuring a clear understanding of what God has done—he has given believers a new nature (2 Cor 5:17), and the Holy Spirit himself dwells within them (1 Cor 6:19).

God Grants Understanding

One of the significant changes that comes about as a result of God's divine power working in the lives of individuals is the ability to understand and embrace Scripture. First Corinthians 2:12-14 says,

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. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

Understanding what it means to live a godly life, and what that looks like, can only come through knowing Scripture. However, while even unbelievers may know what the Scriptures say, 1 Corinthians 2 teaches that the ability to understand the Scriptures is granted through his divine power.

While God's divine power has granted salvation, which then gives the ability

²⁰Douglas Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, New International Version Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 41.

to understand Scripture, it gives even more—as Peter writes, it gives us “*all* things that pertain to life and godliness.” Peter also writes that believers gain “all things,” through the “the knowledge of him.” Moo states, “‘Knowledge’ refers to an intimate and informed relationship that is the product of conversion to the gospel.”²¹ While this knowledge is experiential as one is changed in conversion, it must also be what Moo calls an “informed relationship,” which can only come through the Scriptures as God’s revelation of himself to his people. The Scriptures, then, are the means by which God has provided “*all* things” in life; this is how one comes to know more about God and learns to live in a manner that is godly and glorifies him. Since Scripture pertains to all things in life, they are sufficient for counseling one another regardless of one’s circumstances.

Is Psychology Helpful?

One may argue that this idea of scriptural sufficiency can be taken too far. Scripture is obviously not sufficient as an engineering handbook or medical reference guide. Do those things not “pertain to life”? In the area of counseling, this argument actually gains traction in some circles when the discussion focuses on whether or not knowledge of psychology is necessary to truly understand how to help people live life in a mentally healthy manner. Biblical counselors eagerly look to the medical community when issues are genuinely medical in nature. The Confessional Statement of the Biblical Counseling Coalition states,

We recognize the complexity of the relationship between the body and soul (Genesis 2:7). Because of this, we seek to remain sensitive to physical factors and organic issues that affect people’s lives. In our desire to help people comprehensively, we seek to apply God’s Word to people’s lives amid bodily strengths and weaknesses. We encourage a thorough assessment and sound treatment for any suspected physical problem.²²

The problem is that an issue can only be said to be medical in nature when there is pathology involved, which can include blood tests, MRIs, CAT scans, or other

²¹Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 42.

²²MacDonald, “The Confessional Statement,” 436.

medical tests. Psychotherapy, however, deals with issues that are not truly medical in nature (e.g., no pathology involved). As an example, Charles Hodges, a medical doctor board certified in Family Medicine and Geriatrics, quotes the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Disorders: “No laboratory findings that are diagnostic of a Major Depressive Episode have been identified.” Hodges then comments, “The key to the quote is the word ‘diagnostic.’ There are tests that could be said to be suggestive but to this day there are none that have been validated as diagnostic.”²³ Similarly, Ed Welch states, “At this time, there is no such thing as a consistent, verifiable chemical imbalance or neuroanatomical abnormality among the psychiatric diagnoses. Blood tests and brain scans are not even used in making a psychiatric diagnosis.”²⁴ Instead of addressing issues that are truly medical in nature then, psychotherapy uses subjective diagnoses in an attempt to achieve a similarly subjective outcome of helping people to become “mentally healthy.”

So, unlike medical science, the area into which the psychologist delves is the very same realm as the biblical counselor. Raymond Corsisni, author of *Current Psychotherapies*, basically equates psychotherapy and counseling: “Counseling and psychotherapy are the same qualitatively; they differ only quantitatively. There is nothing that a psychotherapist does that a counselor does not do.”²⁵ Furthermore, Corsini defines psychotherapy as a process for “the amelioration of distress” in the areas of

cognitive functions (disorders of thinking), affective functions (suffering or emotional discomforts), or behavioral functions (inadequacy of behavior), with the therapist having some theory of personality’s origin, development, maintenance and change along with some method of treatment logically related to the theory.²⁶

²³Charles D. Hodges, *Good Mood Bad Mood* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd, 2012), 24-25.

²⁴Edward T. Welch, *Blame it on the Brain?* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1998), 106.

²⁵Raymond Corsini and Danny Wedding, eds., *Current Psychotherapies*, 5th ed. (Itasca, IL: F. E. Peacock, 1995), 2.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 1.

None of these areas involve dealing with a medically diagnosed problem, but instead with ways people think, deal with suffering, and behave—areas which can only be properly addressed biblically.

It is important to note that in the definition cited, the psychotherapist's treatment, or counsel, naturally aligns with his theory of "personality's origin, development, and maintenance." However, as will be discussed next, the theories upon which psychology is based are in direct contrast to what Scripture teaches, resulting in the treatment being equally unscriptural. For example, Freud argues that "perhaps the sense of guilt of mankind as a whole, *which is the ultimate source of religion and morality*, was acquired in the beginnings of history through the Oedipus complex."²⁷ B. F. Skinner states,

Human nature as self-consciousness was not located inside the organism, inside the mind, inside the brain, in a free will, or in God. Human nature was nothing more or less than behavior, verbal and otherwise, controlled by evolutionary history and the contingencies of the environment.²⁸

Like Freud and Skinner, Adler based his theories upon the idea that man is simply a highly evolved animal:

There are certain species that cannot exist without close contact with their kind. Man belongs to these. Nature has not fitted him to survive singlehanded. . . . It seems that men formed herds exactly like other herding animals simply because this was necessary in order to preserve existence.²⁹

While these are only three examples, these three men are significant in the field of psychology and one will search in vain for a secular psychologist who bases his theories in biblical thought. According to John Street, "All psychological textbooks since [Freud's]

²⁷Sigmund Freud, *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis* (New York: Perma Giants, 1949), 291, emphasis added.

²⁸Daniel Bjork, *B. F. Skinner, A Life* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 1997), 194.

²⁹Rudolf Dreikurs, *Fundamentals of Adlerian Psychology* (Chicago: Alfred Adler Institute, 1950), 1-2.

time, graduate and otherwise, espouse that man is an evolved animal.”³⁰ One must conclude then, that since psychological theories are based on unscriptural presuppositions and cannot provide satisfactory answers when it comes to issues of the soul. David Powlison writes, “Secular therapists describe troubled people so vividly! Their desire to help is so palpable! But their answers and solutions are always so disappointing.”³¹ To find answers that do not disappoint, one must turn to Scripture. The real goal in helping people is not merely “the amelioration of distress” as Corsini puts it, but helping people think biblically in order to respond to life situations in a godly way.

Counseling and Discipleship

Biblical counseling and discipleship are often equated because the goal of both is to help a person grow in spiritual maturity through application of Scripture in one’s life. The main difference is that biblical counseling often occurs in more intense situations than normal discipleship, which is more ongoing in everyday life. Steve Viars and Rob Green write, “In our view, formal counseling is required when struggles of sin and suffering reach a point of crisis, but informal counseling occurs *all the time*.”³² Essentially, instead of using the terms “counseling” and discipleship,” Viars and Green call it “formal counseling” and “informal counseling.” They continue,

God desires that we have a ministry that is effective both when things are going well and when sin and suffering have penetrated the camp. . . . When the wheels come off, there must be a counseling ministry available to help people return to a functional and vibrant part of the body of Christ (Galatians 6:1-5), When the wheels

³⁰John F. MacArthur, Wayne A. Mack, and The Master's College Faculty, *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 37.

³¹David Powlison, “How Does Scripture Teach Us to Redeem Psychology?,” *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 26, no. 3 (2012): 19.

³²Rob Green and Steve Viars, “The Biblical Counseling Ministry of the Local Church,” in *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, ed. James MacDonald (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2013), 225, emphasis original.

are shaking, there should be personal ministries to help folks tighten the lug nuts. When the wheels are solid, there should be ministry to others.³³

Robert Smith puts it a similar way:

Biblical counseling is simply an extension of discipling. There is no sharp distinction between the two. Discipling might be described as teaching basic Christian principles to a believer, whereas counseling is using those principles to deal with specific situations in a person's life.³⁴

Finally, William Goode makes a distinction between the two by saying that counseling is sometimes needed in order for discipleship to occur: "The greatest threat to the process of discipleship is the believer who is overtaken by sin . . . there can be no discipling if there is no plan to help the disciple who gets into trouble."³⁵

How People Grow in Godliness

Going back to 2 Peter 1, the Apostle tells his readers in verse 4 that believers become partakers of "the divine nature." Peter is saying that "believers will share in the divine nature in that they will be morally perfected; they will share in the moral excellence that belongs to God."³⁶ However, this moral excellence does not occur instantaneously. The promises of verse 4—escaping the corruption of the world and partaking in the divine nature—are part of a process. Schreiner writes, "Certainly the process will reach its consummation in the future, for only then will all of God's promises be fulfilled. Believers will not be morally perfected until Christ returns. Nevertheless, it is doubtful that Peter referred *only* to the future."³⁷ This process of growing in moral excellence is described in verses 5 through 8.

³³Green and Viars, "The Biblical Counseling Ministry," 231.

³⁴Robert Smith, "Spiritual Discipline and the Biblical Counselor," in *Counseling*, 93.

³⁵William Goode, "Biblical Counseling and the Local Church," in *Counseling*, 222.

³⁶Thomas Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 294.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 295, emphasis original.

While the process of growing in godliness can only begin by God's grace (vv. 3-4), God also calls his people to respond by making "every effort" in that growth process (vv. 5-7). The two aspects of growth are inextricable—one does not sit by idly, waiting for God to merely change him, but at the same time one cannot change unless God is at work. Schreiner succinctly writes, "The indicative of God's gift precedes and undergirds the imperative that calls for human exertion."³⁸ In verses 5-7, Peter encourages his readers to grow in faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, and love. Although Peter lists a number of virtues toward which the believer should apply effort, the aspect of knowledge is most pertinent concerning the topic of scriptural sufficiency; it is through the study of Scripture that one understands how to live a life pleasing to God.

Commenting on the idea of knowledge, Moo believes that even the placement of the word within Peter's list of virtues is significant:

Since it comes in the middle of this list rather than at its beginning, it probably does not refer to that basic, intimate knowledge of God that defines who we are in Christ (cf. vv. 2 and 3). Here, it most likely refers specifically to the ability to discern God's will and orient one's life in accordance with that will.³⁹

Schreiner agrees, writing, "Peter probably referred to the knowledge of God's will and ways that are necessary for every Christian."⁴⁰ As already argued, knowledge of God's will only comes by studying the Scriptures. Even an accurate understanding of other virtues can only be achieved through studying the Scriptures. For instance, how one grows in steadfastness can only be properly understood when one reads about God's steadfast love toward his people. Similarly, what it means to love is best understood by studying 1 Corinthians 13.

³⁸Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 296.

³⁹Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 45.

⁴⁰Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 299.

In studying 2 Peter 1:3-7, the point to be drawn out is that God has granted new life to believers with the ability to embrace the scriptures. Additionally, it is through the knowledge of him (and that knowledge comes through the scriptures) by which one can understand how to deal with all things in life in a godly manner. If Scripture tells Christians how to deal with all things in life, it is certainly sufficient for counseling people in all situations.

Scripture Is Both Profitable and Sufficient

Another passage that supports the sufficiency of Scripture is 2 Timothy 3:16-17. Paul's first emphasis is on the divine origin of Scripture. The fact that Scripture comes from God naturally leads to believe it is both valuable and useful. William Mounce explains these two verses: "Although never stated, the assumption is that because Scripture comes from God, it is therefore true, and because it is true, it is therefore profitable."⁴¹ Though, is profitability equated with sufficiency? Something can certainly be profitable yet insufficient for an entire task. When repairing a motor, screwdrivers and wrenches are profitable, yet seldom sufficient—other tools are needed to complete the repair. Similarly, many Christians argue that Scripture is useful in counseling people, but psychology is a necessary supplement to fully understand and truly help them.

The argument, however, fails in the same way the analogy used to illustrate it falls short. Screwdrivers and wrenches each have very different purposes; while they often supplement one another in a given task, one tool is not superior to the other. In this case, however, psychology and Scripture are both operating in the same area, for supposedly the same purpose—the care of the soul—yet with very different approaches. They are very different tools both being used for the purpose of soul care. John Street highlights this problem:

⁴¹William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Bible Commentary, vol. 46 (Dallas: Word, 2000), 563.

For over a century, graduate schools and seminaries have trained an army of pastoral students in a variety of psychologies under the label “pastoral counseling” . . . and the principles of psychology are presented as though they were on the same authoritative level as Scripture and compete for jurisdiction as the sole authority in determining the well-being of souls.⁴²

However, as Paul described in 2 Timothy 3:16, Scripture is God-breathed and is therefore immeasurably superior to any philosophy man can develop. Scripture thus trumps anything that contradicts it. Paul does not say that Scripture is inspired and, “oh, by the way,” it also happens to be useful in some areas. Rather, its source and absolute perfection necessarily render it completely helpful. Mounce writes, “Often these two options are discussed as if they were mutually exclusive: the passage discusses either the inspiration of Scripture or its utility. . . . This is unnecessary; utility of Scripture flows out of its inspiration.”⁴³

In the rest of the passage Paul lists specific areas for which Scripture is profitable: teaching, reproving, correcting, and training. These areas entail the essence of how biblical counselors interact with fellow believers when it comes to counseling. Mounce explains,

Scripture comes from God and is true; therefore it provides the content and direction necessary for Timothy, Christian leaders, and by implication all Christians to be fully equipped to do every good work, among which are teaching, reproving, correcting, and training in righteousness.⁴⁴

Whether one is struggling with depression, anger, marital conflict, or any other difficulty, Scripture is sufficient to address the cause of any issue that is not truly organic in nature. In any situation, Scripture addresses the way to live “in righteousness.”

Continuing to verse 17, Paul emphasizes the completeness, or the sufficiency, of what is provided by the Scriptures. The Greek word *exartizo*, translated as “equipped” in the ESV, actually has a much stronger connotation than the English word implies. The

⁴²John Street, “Why Biblical Counseling and Not Psychology?,” in *Counseling*, 32.

⁴³Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 570.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 570-71.

NIV captures the meaning more fully by using “thoroughly equipped.” Mounce clarifies, “The perfect form of this verb, the fact that it is in perfect tense, and its connection to *pan*, ‘every,’ all emphasize the completeness of Scripture’s preparation. Timothy and all Christians can find in Scripture everything necessary to do good works.”⁴⁵

The wording in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 makes it clear that Scripture is sufficient to counsel people. It is God-breathed, which tells that it is authoritative and useful. Paul specifies that Scripture is useful for teaching, reproving, correcting, and training in righteousness. Since people are helped through any counseling situation through one or more of these four actions, this passage provides a comprehensive picture of counseling. Referring to this passage in *How to Help People Change*, Jay Adams writes, “These words to Timothy contain a clear outline of the process all Christian counselors must follow if they would help people change in ways that please God.”⁴⁶

Only the Word of God Should Be Used in Counseling

While the Bible teaches that all believers are equipped to counsel others and Scripture is sufficient for counseling in all situations, many Christians have the idea that the field of psychology provides needed insight to help people and only those trained in psychology are truly qualified to counsel. Contrasting views on this idea have emerged in much of the church.

Can Psychology Be Accepted as General Revelation?

Proponents of psychology typically maintain that their theories and approaches are valid because they are based in science and therefore fall into the category of general revelation—truisms of the way God normally operates in the world, discoverable by

⁴⁵Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 571.

⁴⁶Jay Adams, *How to Help People Change: The Four-Step Biblical Process*, The Jay Adams Library (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 10.

believers and non-believers alike. Christian psychotherapists Mark McMinn and Clark Campbell tell that Christian theology and science “rely on different external standards: special revelation for the theologian and general revelation for the scientist. But to the Christian, both are legitimate forms of revelation so we need not fear either the methods or findings of science.”⁴⁷

The issue, however, is whether or not psychology, particularly psychotherapy, can even be considered legitimate science. For example, as McMinn and Campbell explain what they consider scientific support behind the psychological principles, they present results of research that show the factors which lead to improvement in a client’s condition. Of all the factors, only 15 percent can be attributed to psychotherapy.⁴⁸ The rest (85 percent) is attributed simply to relationships, hope (expectancy), and other factors such as intelligence, faith, and support from a religious community—all of which are present in a greater degree in biblical counseling than in any other type of counseling. Even within that 15 percent attributed to psychotherapy, the type of psychotherapy seems to be irrelevant as they include “progressive relaxation, hypnosis, biofeedback, transference interpretation, dream analysis”⁴⁹ and others and “there is little evidence that one model of psychotherapy is superior to another.”⁵⁰ Rather than proving the value of psychotherapy, their own research seems to refute its value.

Apart from their own contradictory finding, another problem with the approach of McMinn and Campbell is that psychology is not a hard science. In the hard sciences, theorems and laws are derived from repeated and recreatable experimentation using the

⁴⁷Mark McMinn and Clark Campbell, *Integrative Psychotherapy: Toward a Comprehensive Christian Approach* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007), 57.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 66.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 70.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 60.

scientific method. Instead, the field of psychology, unlike the fields of hard science such as physics and chemistry, is based on a set of presuppositions that are purely theoretical and unprovable. John MacArthur writes,

Most advocates of psychology simply assume that psychology is a true science. But it is not. It is a pseudo-science, the most recent of several human inventions designed to explain, diagnose, and treat behavioral problems without dealing with moral and spiritual issues.⁵¹

MacArthur later quotes a *Time* magazine article entitled “Psychiatry on the Couch” that states, “Psychiatrists themselves acknowledge that their profession often smacks of modern alchemy full of jargon, obfuscation and mystification, but precious little real knowledge.”⁵²

As mentioned, one of the underlying presuppositions within psychology is that man is merely an advanced animal. In contrast to this thought, Scripture teaches clearly that man is a created being, made in the image of God (Gen 1:26-27) and is therefore accountable to God in every area of life. Psychology also teaches that, morally speaking, man is either inherently good, or at worst a blank slate. Adler, for example, taught that “people are neither ‘good’ nor ‘bad.’”⁵³ The Bible, on the other hand, tells that man is inherently a sinner, prone to evil (Rom 3:10-18, 23). Another psychological precept is that man is autonomous and able to solve his own problems. Carl Rogers developed the person-centered approach, which

is based on the premise that the human being is basically a trustworthy organism, capable of evaluating the outer and inner situation, understanding herself in its context, making constructive choices as to the next steps in life, and acting on those choices.⁵⁴

⁵¹John MacArthur, “Rediscovering Biblical Counseling,” in *Counseling*, 10.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 11.

⁵³Corsini and Wedding, *Current Psychotherapies*, 56.

⁵⁴Carl Rogers, *Carl Rogers on Personal Power* (New York: Dell, 1977), 15.

Scripture, however, clearly teaches that man is not a “trustworthy organism,” but instead that hearts are deceitful (Jer 17:9), and people are dependent on Christ for any good thing (John 15:5).

Psychology is also harmful in that it excuses sin either by blame-shifting, pointing to biological determinism, or denying the concept of fixed moral values. For instance, Rogers teaches that the therapist should have “unconditional positive regard” for the client as he comes “to whatever insights and resolutions are personally meaningful.”⁵⁵ Scripture firmly contradicts the idea of relative morality by teaching that God is the ultimate law-giver and standard of righteousness and that man’s own sense of right and wrong cannot be trusted (Prov 14:12; Is 55:8-9).

Risks of Relying on Secular Ideas

One might ask whether or not there is anything within the field of psychology that has value for the believer. David Powlison notes three aspects of psychology that are good:

Secular researchers and clinicians know reams of significant facts about people and problems, about strengths and weaknesses. . . . Secular theories seek to answer crucial questions and address hard problems. . . . Secular therapies often embody helpful skills in knowing, in loving, and in speaking so as to catch the ear of strugglers.⁵⁶

Powlison points out that the good aspects are mainly methodological—observations regarding the way people behave, addressing some important questions, and speaking in a caring manner. However, while psychology can ask some good questions, Powlison points out that they can provide no answers:

When theoreticians set out to interpret precious facts and to answer important questions, their theories stumble precisely because they do not reckon with the reality of God, or the active presence of sin, or the meaning of suffering, or the

⁵⁵Corsini and Wedding, *Current Psychotherapies*, 129.

⁵⁶Powlison, “How Does Scripture Teach Us?,” 19.

omnipresence of judgment, or the invasion of mercies in the present ministry of Christ.⁵⁷

They “stumble,” as Powlison puts it, because they are based on secular reasoning and God clearly warns concerning the importance of relying on his ways as opposed to man’s ways.

One of the clearest warnings is in Jeremiah 17:5-8 where God sternly warns against trusting in man as opposed to trusting in him. In his commentary on this passage, Jack Lundbom writes that while it may have applied to Josiah’s ill-fated battle with Pharaoh Neco, “this psalm of general trust could apply to anyone.”⁵⁸ In this case, the trust is that God’s Word contains all that Christians need to understand, and therefore to counsel others in how to deal with all issues of the human heart. Commenting on this passage, J. Andrew Dearman suggests,

Perhaps another way to hear these words of Jeremiah for today is to see the increasing secularization of society as a judgment rooted in the hubris of the human heart. Most versions of secularization in the West (myths of progress and technological security) are all ultimately foolish attempts at self-deification . . . humankind will find that it does not possess the key to its own salvation.⁵⁹

The “hubris of the human heart” in this case is the idea that psychology possesses insight into the human heart that the Bible does not.

In the area of psychotherapy, psychologists have proposed over 250 approaches, or philosophies, in an attempt to explain why people struggle with various issues and how to counsel people in their struggles.⁶⁰ The multitude of approaches is indicative of their confusion and ineffectiveness. Biblical counseling, on the other hand, proposes an approach, based not on vain philosophies of men, but on the truth of Scripture alone which enables a believer to be “complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:17).

⁵⁷ Powlison, “How Does Scripture Teach Us?,” 19.

⁵⁸ Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, The Anchor Bible, vol. 21a (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 785.

⁵⁹ J. Andrew Dearman, *Jeremiah/Lamentations*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 179-80.

⁶⁰ Jim Newheiser, “What is Biblical Counseling? Part 1,” in *Care and Discipleship Handbook* (Escondido, CA: Institute for Care and Discipleship, 2013), 1.

Believers Are Able to Respond to Biblical Counsel Because They Have the Holy Spirit

If Christians are to counsel one another using the Scriptures, how should they expect those who are being counseled to respond? Scripture shows that believers are enabled to accept counsel and mature in faith because they have the Holy Spirit indwelling them. The difference that the Holy Spirit makes in the life of the believer is shown in the way Paul contrasts the natural versus the spiritual in 1 Corinthians 2:13-15. In verse 13, he tells the Corinthians that the words he has been speaking to them are true wisdom, as opposed to what the world calls wisdom, which in God's sight is foolishness (1 Cor 1:20). In verse 14, Paul goes on to contrast the inability of the unsaved to accept God's wisdom with the ability of believers to both understand and accept it.

God at Work in Sanctification

In his commentary on 1 Corinthians, Craig Blomberg explains this contrast. Referring first to “the natural person” in verse 14, he writes,

This is a person in his ordinary, unredeemed state of earthly existence, which he inherited from the Fall. Such a person “does not accept” Christian truths. This phrase makes it clear that the “understanding” described in verse 14b is not primarily cognitive but volitional.⁶¹

In other words, the unsaved person rejects the truths of Christ, not merely because he does not understand them, but because he does not want to obey them. Blomberg continues his comments concerning the spiritual person:

Conversely, the “spiritual man” (v. 15a) simply refers to the person *with* the Spirit, and hence, to any Christian (cf. 12:13). “Makes judgment” 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.⁶²

What Blomberg describes—the believer's “ability to bring God's perspective to bear on every aspect of life”—is precisely what the biblical counselor endeavors to

⁶¹Craig Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 64-65

⁶²*Ibid.*, 64-65, emphasis original.

accomplish. That being said, one cannot stop with merely understanding God's perspective; it is imperative that the person who claims the name of Christ conforms his life to that understanding. The apostle John equates belief and obedience when he wrote, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him" (John 3:36). The good news is that as Paul writes that the natural man does not understand or "accept the things of the Spirit of God," he is necessarily implying that the spiritual man does. Blomberg explains, "The 'understanding' these unbelievers 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."⁶³ The converse, then, is also true in that the true believer will have a willingness to obey (1 John 2:3).

This same kind of thought regarding the believer's ability to obey is seen when Paul writes to the Philippians: "it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Phil 2:13). The emphasis here is that while Paul admonished them in the previous verse to exert themselves in their Christian walk, God is the one who "provides both the will and the ability to accomplish 'his good purpose.'"⁶⁴ This confidence that God is working in the life of the believer was stated earlier in the same book when Paul tells his readers, "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" (Phil 1:6). Though Paul stresses God's work in the life of the believer, the epistle to the Philippians certainly does not lack in exhortation to put forth effort into being godly. Besides Philippians 2:12, Paul tells them to be humble (2:2-4), not to grumble (2:14), and to "strain forward to what lies ahead" (3:13-17). So at the same time Paul exhorts his readers, he also encourages them with the confidence that they will continue to mature in the faith since it is God himself

⁶³Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 67, emphasis original.

⁶⁴Frank Thielman, *Philippians*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 38.

who saved them by his grace, and who will also bring his “good work” to completion.

Since God is at work in the life of the believer, spiritual growth is certain, but this is not to say that the Christian life does not require effort or that it will be without temptations or failures along the way. Both counselors and counselees must understand this in order to avoid discouragement and trust that God is at work, despite the fact that Christians still wrestle with sin. Paul warns and commands believers to not allow sin to “reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions” (Rom 6:12), and to “cast off the works of darkness” (Rom 13:12). This warning would not be necessary if the threat of failure was not real. Paul tells the Galatians that there will be a struggle against holiness because the desires of the Spirit and flesh are in contrast to one another, “to keep you from doing the things you want to do” (Gal 5:17). Again, this is a real, not a hypothetical, struggle. Writing about this struggle, Douglas Moo comments,

This does not mean that Christians do not struggle with sin. Paul makes this abundantly clear—for instance, Gal 6:1—and implicitly—by the amount of time he spends scolding Christians in his letters!—that believers are not delivered from the influence of sin. While “transferred” into the new realm, ruled by Christ and righteousness, believers are still prone to obey those past masters, sin and flesh.⁶⁵

The good news is that believers are no longer enslaved to the “past masters” (Rom 6:14). However, as Moo points out, the temptation to be subject to their influence is ever-present.

The Believer at Work in Sanctification

Like Paul, the apostle John confirms that there is an ongoing struggle with sin, yet his purpose in confirming this struggle is actually to provide hope. John states in a straightforward manner, “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8). Here, John is addressing believers and is specifically teaching against the heresy of perfectionism—that believers can live without sin. Among the intended recipients of John’s letter were those who held a gnostic view. Stephen Smalley

⁶⁵Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 449.

writes, “These Christians did not need ‘purification from every sin’ because, they said, they were without sin.”⁶⁶ In contrast to this teaching, John asserts that even after salvation believers will sin. The hopeful part is that God has provided for both the forgiveness of sins and the ability to resist sin. Verse 9 speaks to the assurance of forgiveness when one confesses sin, and in the next two chapters, John writes about the assurance of overcoming sin.

Although the struggle with sin is real, the counselor can be encouraged when he understands that Scripture promises believers will make progress as they make the effort to grow in holiness. John goes on to say in chapter 3 that those who are in Christ will overcome sin: “No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him” (1 John 3:6). While both the ESV and NIV use the phrase “keeps on sinning,” other versions, such as the NAS and AV simply say “does not sin.” Scholars differ over the accuracy of each translation, but after taking the different approaches into consideration, Smalley summarizes the meaning of verse 6:

(a) Both halves of this [verse] imply the opposite of what is actually stated. Thus John is also affirming that those who do not live in Jesus are (constantly) sinful; and those who do not sin habitually *have* both seen and known God personally. (b) The “impeccability” which John is discussing in this section must be regarded theologically as a divine *gift*, rather than a reward. It is the result of God’s work in the believer . . . and depends on the appropriation by the Christian of the spiritual resources which are in God through Jesus.⁶⁷

Thus the counselor can be encouraged and assured that as long as the counselee is a genuine believer, he will grow spiritually. Coming alongside the one in need of help, the counselor encourages him with the Scripture, or as Smalley puts it, “the spiritual resources which are in God through Christ.” In doing that, the counselor can have confidence that change will occur, because when the counselee grasps the truth of Scripture, he will be able to resist temptation and put off sin since even the ability to do that is “a divine gift.”

⁶⁶Stephen S. Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 51 (Waco: Word, 1984), 28.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 165, emphasis original.

As believers counsel others then, one can expect those being counseled to respond to the biblical guidance that is shared with them. Because they are “spiritual” they will have a desire—a desire that comes from God himself—as well as the ability to change. Even though believers have both the desire and ability to change, counselors must demonstrate patience, knowing that there may be some failures as a person struggles to change his thinking, put off sin, and put on godly behavior. Change is a process and the increasing ability to overcome sin (sanctification) is just as much a result of God’s grace as is forgiveness of sin (justification). Thielman writes, “It is a work that God alone accomplishes, but the notion that it is not yet complete shows that it involves a progressive transformation of the lives of believers.”⁶⁸ Change should be expected of true Christians because God is at work through the Holy Spirit who dwells within them (1 Cor 6:19).

Conclusion

Followers of Christ are called to encourage and counsel one another. In doing so, Christians must turn to the Scriptures as the sole, authoritative, and sufficient resource to help one another live a life that is pleasing to God. The Scriptures contain all that believers need to know as they struggle against sin and respond to suffering in a godly way. While some would claim that psychology offers the church insight in dealing with life’s issues, the fact that it is based upon unbiblical presuppositions renders it unreliable and unsuitable for the believer. The encouraging aspect regarding the sin and suffering with which Christians deal is that God has given the Holy Spirit to those who are his, enabling them to respond to counsel and grow in spiritual maturity.

⁶⁸Thielman, *Philippians*, 38.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES RELATED TO TEACHING INMATES TO COUNSEL OTHER INMATES

While all believers are encouraged to counsel and disciple one another, one place in which counsel and encouragement are especially needed is inside prisons. Many prison inmates have become believers in Christ. These new believers live in harsh conditions that are an inherent part of prison life. As they seek to mature in Christ, the only help normally offered comes from the viewpoint of psychology. However, like any other believer, they have the Scriptures to which they can turn, and again, like other believers, they can then counsel others with the same truth that enables all Christians to grow in Christ. Because of the unique culture that exists within the prison system, Christian inmates are often times in an even better position to counsel other inmates than are volunteers from outside prison.

Inmates Counseling Inmates

The prison environment results in a unique counseling situation. While many people come to faith in Christ while in prison, they face challenges to spiritual growth that people outside of prison never see. Although their inner man is renewed by the Spirit of God, they continue to live in the harsh environment that a prison setting presents for the duration of their sentence. The administrative staff of most prisons provide opportunities for self-improvement, but anything state-sponsored is based in the same humanistic philosophies of psychiatry. For example, the Florida Department of Corrections offers substance abuse treatment based on the concept of Therapeutic Communities, described by the National Institute of Health as “a social-psychological form of treatment for

addictions and related problems.”¹ Additionally, Florida’s reentry program, Think For Change (T4C), is based on cognitive behavioral theory.² The good news, though, is that prisons welcome faith-based volunteers who can present biblical truth. While volunteers can be effective in sharing biblical truth, the people in the best position to help and counsel inmates are other inmates who have studied the Scriptures and are more mature in the faith.

Harsh Realities of Prison Life

While in prison, inmates are constantly exposed to harsh treatment and a very restrictive, controlled lifestyle. This harsh treatment sometimes comes from guards who must maintain tight control due to the nature of the men in prison, and frequently from other inmates, many of whom are selfish and aggressive. Unlike people in most other walks of life, inmates can never escape the stressful environment in which they live. Additionally, boredom and purposelessness are constant factors of daily life. One inmate describes daily life in prison this way:

A sense of impending danger is always with you; you must be careful to move around people rather than against or through them, but with care and reasonable sense you can move safely through them. For me, and many like me in prison, violence is not the major problem; the major problem is monotony. It is the dull sameness of prison life, its idleness and boredom that grinds me down. Nothing matters; everything is inconsequential other than when you will be freed and how to make time pass until then. But boredom, time-slowness boredom, interrupted by occasional bursts of fear and anger, is the governing reality of life in prison.³

The inmate who wrote this goes on to describe a typical day in prison in which he is exposed to constant noise from 6:00 A.M. until 11:30 P.M., shares a small cell with another inmate (which includes a toilet without privacy), and has a standard thirty minute

¹*Treatment of Adolescents with Substance Use Disorders*, Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) Series 32 (Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration, 1999), chap. 5.

²“Florida Department of Corrections Annual Report Fiscal Year 2012-2013” (Tallahassee, FL: Florida Department of Corrections, December 2013), 25.

³Norval Morris, “The Contemporary Prison,” in *The Oxford History of the Prison*, ed. Norval Morris and David J. Rothman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 228.

wait in line for “dull and lifeless food.”⁴ In a typical day, inmates are locked in their cells at least four times a day for “count,” during which time every inmate in the prison is accounted for. In the afternoons, most inmates either work in a furniture factory or tailor shop or attend a literacy, GED, or computer class. The industry in which the inmates can work and the classes they can attend vary among different prisons and are typically voluntary. While these classes help the time to pass, they are often of short duration and do little to mitigate the sense of repetitiveness, purposelessness, and boredom.

In addition to the monotonous routine, “there are the hard-to-avoid confrontations with some of the guards—leading to tickets and segregation and loss of ‘good time.’”⁵ For some offenses, there are also times when the prison is in “lockdown,” where the inmates are confined to their cells for twenty four hours a day, sometimes for weeks at a time. Prison guards are often harsh, particularly in maximum security prisons where many inmates are unruly and violent. The vast majority of prison guards, more commonly referred to as Correctional Officers (COs), are professional and only as strict as the situation requires, but the reality is that they “report to work each day in an environment of guarded hostility.”⁶ In their places of work, COs necessarily maintain tight control by punishing the smallest infraction of the rules. As a result, however, inmates tend to be fearful of being subject to what they often consider arbitrary and unwarranted punishment.⁷

Living with Daily Stress

Although correctional officers can occasionally be a cause of concern,

⁴Morris, “The Contemporary Prison,” 230.

⁵Ibid., 235.

⁶Lennie Spitale, *Prison Ministry: Understanding Prison Culture Inside and Out* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002), 60.

⁷Various inmates, discussion of prison life, personal interview, August 2014.

potential harm from other inmates is an ever-present source of stress. While “most prisoners do their time without being victimized,” “fights are not uncommon” and inmates must follow certain tenets of prison culture in order to avoid violence, such as “never ‘rat’ on another prisoner, always keep your distance from staff, ‘do your own time.’”⁸ Most inmates try to stay away from trouble, particularly when they are holding out hope for an early, or at least an on-time, release from their prison sentence. However,

the reality is that spontaneous danger can erupt at any moment. The older, wiser prisoner can usually spot the early warning signs of a potentially volatile situation and try to avoid it. Unfortunately, there are other times when trouble just comes to you that has little to do with your ability to correct. . . . The prison environment is a powder keg occupied by matches that can spark unexpectedly.⁹

The fact that inmates live in this powder keg results in “the ever-lurking presence of fear”¹⁰ as a part of daily life.

Other people are not the only source of stress for inmates. When the reality of being in prison sets in, an entire range of negative emotions comes cascading upon them. One of the common emotions is insecurity regarding existing relationships. This insecurity is not without merit since “80 percent of those who are married when they enter prison are divorced within the first year.”¹¹ Over time, visits from children, friends, and relatives inevitably become fewer and often times cease entirely. To cope with this, “some prisoners choose to shut themselves down emotionally.”¹² As much as they try to shut down, however, loneliness sets in for most, if not all, inmates as they spend time in prison. “Loneliness is a cold wind that blows in the corridors of an inmate’s life. Sometimes it

⁸Morris, “The Contemporary Prison,” 236.

⁹Spitale, *Prison Ministry*, 62.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹*Ibid.*, 7.

¹²*Ibid.*, 9.

seems to howl, at other times it just whispers, but it never entirely goes away.”¹³

The overall stress and an inmate’s inability to do anything about his circumstances result in another common emotion—anger. “If there is a normative emotion behind the walls, it is anger. The vast majority of people in prison struggle with problems of anger.”¹⁴ For most, anger was a problem well before they arrived in prison that was eventually expressed in a violent way, resulting in their incarceration. Whether or not anger was a problem before incarceration, the underlying stressors of daily life in prison serve to make it something that most every inmate struggles to keep under control.

A number of other negative factors (poor food quality, lack of access to any amenities, etc.) add to the fact that prison is a harsh, stressful environment from which the inmates have no possibility of reprieve. For many, this is the situation in which they will live out the years of their sentence, and for others, this is the environment in which they will spend the rest of their lives. However, the gospel is being shared openly in essentially every prison in the country. Through these ministries and God’s grace, a number of inmates come to a genuine faith in Christ and, as disciples of Christ, they must then learn to glorify God in their response to stress and suffering.

Seeing Incarceration from God’s Perspective

When an inmate becomes a Christian his circumstances do not change. One of the things that does change is his perspective regarding God’s control of, and purpose for, his life. The main change in perspective that must occur is shifting from a temporal to an eternal perspective. In *Suffering*, Paul Tripp states, “Most people, regardless of their theology, live day to day without any sense of their eternal destiny.”¹⁵ As people develop

¹³Spitale, *Prison Ministry*, 40.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁵Paul David Tripp, *Suffering: Eternity Makes a Difference* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2001), 2.

an eternal perspective, they realize that in God's sovereign design "the weakness, the trials, and the suffering are not some divine mistake, but crucial parts of God's plan."¹⁶

It may certainly be difficult for an inmate to see how his incarceration is part of God's plan, particularly when he considers the fact that his circumstance is due to his own sin. However, when he looks at Romans 8:28-29 he realizes his present circumstances are not beyond God's sovereign control: "And we know that for those who love God 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 8:28-29). Having an eternal perspective helps him to see that the stress and suffering in prison has purpose and leads a Christian inmate to be conformed to the image of Christ. Jerry Bridges writes, "We can be sure that the development of a beautiful Christlike character will not occur in our lives without adversity."¹⁷ Nevertheless, in order for this development to happen, he must respond to adversity in a biblical manner.

These stressful situations are merely a few examples of a plethora of difficulties faced by Christian inmates. Inmates must be taught how to respond to stress and adversity in a way that glorifies God and deepens their own spiritual walk with him. Unfortunately, while most prisons have programs intended to help inmates deal with the difficulties they face, these programs are often completely unbiblical.

Unbiblical "Help" Provided in Prison

Virtually every prison offers programs that can help an inmate who desires to change. Dennis Shere's description of the Louisiana State Prison (typically known as Angola) holds true for essentially all prisons: "The prison staff works hard to identify and control the predators, all the while giving increasing opportunity to the inmates who

¹⁶Tripp, *Suffering*, 9.

¹⁷Jerry Bridges, *Trusting God* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2008), 186.

genuinely try to fit in.”¹⁸ “Fitting in” means following the rules and working cooperatively with other inmates. The opportunities provided to those inmates include working in whatever trades the prison engages in or participating in academic courses offered at the prison. The courses offered are voluntary and aimed at inmates who want to improve themselves and change their behavior such that they can fit in with free society. Completing these courses provides some evidence to a parole or release board that the inmate is truly applying himself to learning how to cope with life in a way that will keep him from criminal behavior in the future.

Houses of Healing

Among the courses commonly offered is *Houses of Healing*, developed by Robin Casarjian. With over 130,000 copies in print, between five and fifty copies of the book have been placed “in most every prison library in the United States.”¹⁹ The book is used individually, in small groups, and as a facilitator-led class. The purpose of the course is to offer “guidance on how to manage stress and transform some of the anger and frustration that is innate to prison life.”²⁰ Its focus is on “personal growth or emotional and spiritual healing.”²¹ Unfortunately, the course is based on a variation of Freudian ideas which includes knowing the “greater Self” and realizing that “we each have many ‘sub-personalities,’ separate aspects of our being, each with distinct goals and characteristics that developed in order to cope with the life circumstances we find ourselves in.”²² According to Casarjian, wrong behavior is a result of getting unconsciously

¹⁸Dennis Shere, *Cain’s Redemption* (Chicago: Northfield, 2005), 41.

¹⁹Robin Casarjian, *Houses of Healing* (Boston: Lionheart, 1995), 258.

²⁰*Ibid.*, viii.

²¹*Ibid.*, ix.

²²*Ibid.*, 13.

stuck in a “false-self.” Personal growth comes from awareness of this dynamic and instead aligning with the “greater Self.” Casarjian writes, “When we are aligned with our Self we are aware of a fundamental goodness within—a goodness that is undiluted.”²³

The course is replete with unbiblical concepts. Besides the idea of knowing the greater Self, other concepts include the necessity of bolstering self-esteem and the inherent goodness of each person. The process of growth includes healing of memories and re-parenting the Inner Child “who never got its basic needs met.”²⁴ This concept is key to Casarjian’s teaching, because “the wounded inner child is at the core of perhaps all addictions and addictive behavior.”²⁵ Other key factors of growth involve relaxation techniques, Eastern-style meditation, and self-forgiveness. Casarjian considers self-forgiveness so important that she calls it “the heart of the healing process and, in my opinion, the only sure deterrent to crime.”²⁶ The course goes into great detail regarding the concept of forgiveness, but none of its elements are biblical. While Casarjian’s teaching on forgiveness does entail accepting responsibility for one’s actions, the main tenet is deciding to view others in a different light: “You *decide* that even though you definitely can’t see any light in this person with your physical eyes, you are going to assume that there is a wise, reasonable, fundamentally good person inside him.”²⁷ Although the course seems to help many inmates live a more self-controlled life, there is no mention of sin or the need for a Savior. Some people may in fact become better citizens by adhering to these techniques, but none of the teaching is biblical and none of it has

²³Casarjian, *Houses of Healing*, 19.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 30.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 43.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 157.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 202, emphasis original.

eternal value. Inmates will simply become more self-controlled citizens on the broad path to destruction (Matt 7:13).

Alcoholics Anonymous

One other program offered universally across prisons is Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and its sister program, Narcotics Anonymous (NA). “Statistics indicate that 66% of people entering prison are alcohol or drug abusers.”²⁸ Because drugs and alcohol are such common factors in crime, all prisons encourage the formation of AA and NA groups among inmates. Unfortunately, like the *Houses of Healing* course, the tenets of AA are simply unbiblical. The main problem with AA is its Universalist approach to God. According to *Alcoholics Anonymous*, or what AA members call the “The Big Book,” “When, therefore, we speak to you of God, we mean your own conception of God.”²⁹ In the twelve steps of AA, step 3 is “Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as *we understood Him*.”³⁰ However one conceives of a Higher Power, then, is purported as being effective for recovery with AA; whether one thinks in terms of Buddhism, Islam, Shintoism, or Christianity—all are the same for the purposes of recovery from alcoholism. Chuck Sigler summarizes the unscriptural aspect of this thought: “The AA distinction between religion and spirituality fails to separate a Christian expression of religion from a non-Christian one, and a biblical sense of spirituality from a nonbiblical one.”³¹ AA may offer some temporal help, but nothing of eternal value.

Another major problem with AA is that there is no understanding of sin. Instead of calling drunkenness sin, AA calls it alcoholism and labels it as a sickness. Even the

²⁸Casarjian, *Houses of Healing*, 7.

²⁹*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th ed. (New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 2001), 47.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 59, emphasis original.

³¹Chuck Sigler, “Religious Alcoholics; Anonymous Spirituality: Engaging Those Who Succeed through AA,” *Journal of Biblical Counseling* # (Summer 2007): 36.

evil that others do to people is a matter of sickness rather than sin. The AA Big Book states,

We realized that the people who wronged us were perhaps spiritually sick. Though we did not like their symptoms and the way they disturbed us, they, like ourselves were sick too. We asked God to help us show them the same tolerance, pity, and patience that we would cheerfully grant a sick friend.³²

Steps 4 and 10 of the twelve steps involve taking a “moral inventory” or a “personal inventory,” but what is revealed is not sin. Instead, individuals in AA see “handicaps,” “defects,” and “mistakes.”³³ While step 8 is to make amends to those one has harmed, the understanding of repentance and forgiveness is shallow and unbiblical. In his critique of AA, Christopher Wisdom writes,

AA’s views of the alcoholic’s spiritual state and of his responsibility for his alcoholism are manifestly contradictory to Scripture. It holds that the alcoholic on the one hand can initiate personal relationships of reconciliation with God and his fellow man, while maintaining on the other hand that he is not responsible for his drunkenness or any actions that proceed from it.³⁴

This faulty view of the need for repentance and forgiveness, however, is to be expected if one has an incomplete understanding of sin.

Other problems with AA are perhaps more subtle. One issue is that AA groups take the place of the church for mutual encouragement: “Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. . . . Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity.”³⁵ The view that one’s AA group is the primary means of encouragement is in contrast to the command in Hebrews 10:24-25 where believers are told not to forsake gathering together for the purpose of mutual encouragement and edification. Also in contrast to the church, the evangelistic message is

³²*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 67.

³³*Ibid.*, 70, 72, 84.

³⁴Christopher Wisdom, “Alcoholics Anonymous: A Biblical Critique of AA’s View of God, Man, Sin, and Hope,” *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 8, no. 2 (1986): 50.

³⁵*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 562, 563.

not the gospel, but AA. Step 12 is essentially to reach out to “carry this message to other alcoholics! . . . Life will take on new meaning. To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up around you.”³⁶ The Big Book goes on to describe how to seek out and help people become a part of AA. Although the desire to help others who struggle with drunkenness is commendable, if one offers AA instead of the gospel, the help is merely temporal. The unbiblical programs may help many to live a life that is outwardly in conformity to society’s standards, but only the Word of God can enable one to live a new life that is pleasing to God and has eternal significance.

How Inmates Can Change Biblically

Many inmates do change as a result of these worldly programs. Many become more self-controlled and live an alcohol and drug-free life. The problem is the lack of a real, inward change which can only come through the gospel. Many inmates are incarcerated due to drug or alcohol-related crimes. Although AA has helped many people remain sober, one could suggest that AA methods result in sobriety which improves a person’s life circumstances, but does not produce an inward change that deals with issues of the heart for the glory of God. As mentioned, a biblical approach to change is given by Jay Adams who lays out a four-step process for change in *How to Help People Change*.³⁷ Taking his process from 2 Timothy 3:15-17, Adams writes that change necessitates (1) teaching God’s standards, (2) conviction of sin, (3) correction and repentance, and (4) training in righteousness. It involves an in-depth study of God’s Word in relation to the sins one must put-off, and an enabling by the Holy Spirit to live a new life for the glory of God.

³⁶*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 89.

³⁷Jay Adams, *How to Help People Change* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 13.

A Biblical Alternative to AA

In *The Heart of Addiction*, Mark Shaw writes extensively on putting off addictive behavior and uses this same four-step process that Adams teaches. He writes, “Addiction is not a disease. Addiction is a ‘sin nature’ problem.”³⁸ Similarly, Ed Welch says in *Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave*, “When you look at it closely, drunkenness is a lordship problem. Who is your master, God or your desires?”³⁹ The sin nature problem can only be addressed by becoming a new creature in Christ (2 Cor 5:17). Additionally, change is not a matter of “recovery” but “transformation” (Rom 12:2). Shaw writes, “If you identify yourself as a Christian substance abuser or addict who has had a heart change yet you find yourself struggling with an addiction, then you are in need of a complete ‘transformation’ and not just a ‘recovery’ of your ‘old self.’”⁴⁰ Both Shaw and Welch write extensively about how to help people who are caught up in the sin of drug and alcohol abuse, and they do so with compassion and practical steps toward leading a life that glorifies God. This is the kind of help inmates really need—the kind that points them to a living, practical, and eternal relationship with Christ.

In the first of the four-step process, Shaw, like Adams, teaches God’s standards regarding sin: “Substance abusers cannot play the role of victim because it is one’s sin choice to have the desire for drunkenness which is idolatry.”⁴¹ He teaches the biblical perspective of the sinful heart’s desire to please self, and helps one see that substance abuse is not a disease, but is a sinful choice that one makes. The fact that the issue is sin and not disease is actually good news since one can repent and turn away from sin, but is helpless in the face of disease. In the second step, Shaw helps one see the reproof that

³⁸Mark E. Shaw, *The Heart of Addiction: A Biblical Perspective* (Bemidji, MN: Focus, 2008), 15.

³⁹Edward T. Welch, *Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave: Finding Hope in the Power of the Gospel*, Resources for Changing Lives (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2001), 23.

⁴⁰Shaw, *The Heart of Addiction*, 18.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 82.

inmates are already suffering. Other sinful behavior that follows along with substance abuse—lying, stealing, immorality, etc.—results in broken relationships and, specifically for inmates, incarceration as punishment for crimes they have committed. An inmate’s incarceration is at least part of God’s reproof for his actions. One must accept full responsibility for these actions and commit to putting them off. The third step is correction, and here Shaw teaches how one can learn to think biblically about substance abuse: “God has taught us that the middle step of ‘renewing the mind’ is essential for the new, righteous ‘addiction’ to be healthy, beneficial to you, and glorifying to God.”⁴² Shaw calls this renewal getting a “new and improved ‘Bible-brain’” where one learns to “think new thoughts that agree with God’s thoughts.”⁴³ The fourth step Shaw teaches is training in righteousness, which is focused on learning what biblical behavior is and “putting on” that behavior through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Unlike AA, the biblical approach to sobriety encompasses a complete change through a relationship with Christ, such that those who were once given to drunkenness or drug abuse can say, “That was me, but now I’m washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of my God” (1 Cor 6:11).

Dealing with Heart Issues

Just as drugs and alcohol are not the only issues inmates deal with, so too does biblical change go beyond those particular sins. Whether the issue is anger, loneliness, bitterness, or any other sin with which inmates must deal, biblical solutions are the only lasting ones and the only ones that carry eternal significance. As mentioned, anger is cited as a common problem among inmates and real change can only occur if approached biblically. In *Uprooting Anger*, Robert Jones remarks how many inmates come from

⁴²Shaw, *The Heart of Addiction*, 152.

⁴³Ibid.

troubled backgrounds and “blame anger on past childhood mistreatment. This might include traumatic crises, such as physical beatings or sexual molestation.”⁴⁴ The Bible recognizes hardships and suffering and teaches believers to have compassion for those who endure such things. However, “provocations are not causes”⁴⁵ and one cannot blame angry behavior on outward circumstances. Rather, “sinful anger arises from the sinful beliefs and motives that reign in the unbeliever and remain in the Christian.”⁴⁶ Christian inmates must be taught how to get at the root of their anger and respond biblically. Dealing with anger will usually involve repentance for sinful beliefs and biblical forgiveness toward those who have offended them.

To get at the root of their anger, inmates must begin by looking at their own sinful heart since “the heart of all sin—including sinful anger—is the human heart.”⁴⁷ Robert Jones writes, “To change anger in your heart, you must recognize and uproot your sinful beliefs and motives, and replace them with godly ones.”⁴⁸ This process can be difficult for anyone, and one could argue is especially difficult for prison inmates because of the incessant stress with which they live. Often times, all an inmate desires is an hour of solitude, or to have some small amenity, and anger rises within his heart when those things are withheld. Jones, however, points out, “It is possible to desire a good or legitimate object *too much*. The problem lies not in wanting something but in wanting it too badly.”⁴⁹ This basic thought process is true in regard to any sin with which inmates must deal. Their approach to putting off sin must be based solidly in the Bible as opposed

⁴⁴Robert D. Jones, *Uprooting Anger* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2005), 46.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 47.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 48.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*

⁴⁸*Ibid.*

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 51, emphasis original.

to what may be taught in a secular anger management class. Only then will they attain peace with God regardless of their outward circumstances and, even more importantly, only then will they be able glorify God in the sight of others (Matt 5:16).

In regard to the fear that most inmates live with, one must understand God's sovereignty over all circumstances in everyone's life, even in the way people relate to each other. When it was time for the Jewish temple to be rebuilt, "the Lord moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia" to make provision (Ezra 1:1). When Daniel sought a way to eat only clean food, "God had caused the official to show favor and sympathy to Daniel" (Dan 1:9). God did the same thing years later when he moved King Darius's heart as well (Ezra 6:22). There are countless examples in Scripture where God either prompts people to action, or restrains them from it. This is just as true today for correctional officers or inmates in prison. By understanding God's sovereignty over every circumstance, one can learn to fight fear by trusting God. In *Trusting God*, Bridges writes, "Confidence in God's sovereignty in the lives of people should also keep us from becoming resentful and bitter when we are treated unjustly or maliciously by others. . . . God never allows people to make decisions about us that undermine His plan for us."⁵⁰ Dealing biblically with fear then, is based on a decision to trust that God is in control and that he has a good purpose for all he does, including the way one is treated by others.

Similarly, an inmate can deal with loneliness by trusting in God. In Jeremiah 17, God states that whoever trusts in man will eventually be disappointed (vv. 5-6), but if God's people place their trust completely in him, they will never be disappointed (vv. 7-8). The Psalms are full of encouragement in regard to God's faithfulness to his people which is contrasted with even the closest of human relationships: "For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me in" (Ps 27:10). The cure for loneliness is

⁵⁰Bridges, *Trusting God*, 72.

finding a rich relationship with God himself and, by extension, with fellow believers in prison (1 John 4:19-21).

Inmates Counseling Inmates

Biblical approaches to change must be taught to prison inmates. As discussed in chapter 2, biblical counseling is synonymous with intense, focused discipleship, particularly when believers are struggling with sin or suffering. While all people need to be taught and discipled, this is especially true of prison inmates. Those who proclaim to be Christians in prison are either brand new in their faith or have never learned to walk properly in it, and their opportunities for godly fellowship are often very limited. Additionally, they are surrounded by ungodly influences, whether it be from unsaved inmates or from the unbiblical self-improvement courses mentioned. Given that biblical approaches to change must be taught, who will bring the teaching?

One common source of teaching is volunteers from outside the prison who lead worship services, conduct Bible studies with inmates, and evangelize. Most prisons encourage this kind of volunteerism and prison ministry is often very fruitful. Lenny Spitale, a former prison inmate who has been involved in prison ministry for over twenty years, states, “I do not know of any more fertile ground for the gospel in all of the United States than our jails and prisons.”⁵¹ This fertile ground accounts for the success of ministries such as Prison Fellowship (started by Charles Colson) that “has a presence in every prison in the United States.”⁵² Similarly, Kairos Prison Ministry International, which provides Bible-based weekend retreats and follow-up mentoring, has a presence in over 400 institutions.⁵³ These ministries are in addition to local churches and individual

⁵¹Spitale, *Prison Ministry*, 190.

⁵²John Perry, *God Behind Bars* (Nashville: W Publishing, 2006), 6.

⁵³Kairos Prison Ministry International, “Kairos History,” accessed February 3, 2015, <http://kpmifoundation.org/about-us/kairos-history/>.

volunteers who minister to inmates at various prisons. As effective as these volunteers are in sharing the gospel, conducting in-depth discipleship is more difficult due to the unique nature of ministering to those in prison. Although some volunteers are former inmates, most have never been in prison and have a limited understanding of prison life. Additionally, since the volunteers are not inmates themselves, their contact is necessarily limited to monthly or weekly visits to the prisons, with each visit lasting a few hours at the most. However, true discipleship requires being involved in one another's lives, and no one is more involved in an inmate's life on a daily, continual basis than another inmate. In the prison environment then, inmates are in the best position to disciple other inmates because of both proximity and cultural understanding.

Knowing the Culture

Prison culture differs so drastically from life outside of prison that only another inmate can fully understand it. Besides the factors that make for a harsh environment, issues that are part of daily life outside of prison simply do not exist in prison. For instance, inmates live in a world where there are no cars and everyone walks, but running is not allowed. The scenery everywhere is gray cement accented by metal bars and barbed wire. There are no stores, banks, shopping malls, or restaurants. Everyone wears the same clothes and all incoming and outgoing mail is opened and searched. "Big Brother is a reality; your every step and position, every hour of the day, is known and monitored."⁵⁴ These living conditions contribute to creating an environment which is difficult for those outside of prison to relate to. Most people who have never served time in prison simply fail to realize that prison culture "is as different as that of any foreign country."⁵⁵

If one accepts the premise that prison is in some ways like a foreign country, he can glean much from the way missionaries operate in foreign cultures. Among those

⁵⁴Spitale, *Prison Ministry*, vii.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*

involved in foreign missions, there is much discussion regarding the importance of indigenous teachers. In this comparison, inmates can be considered analogous to indigenous people, commonly termed “nationals.” David Sills writes, “There is a strong argument that the nationals would be better teachers for their own people. After all, the nationals have the language and culture, which renders them better equipped for the task of training in many respects.”⁵⁶ He continues, “Nationals can do evangelism and discipleship in culturally appropriate ways.”⁵⁷ Sills goes on to say that using missionaries as opposed to locals is not a purely either/or choice. The best answer to this is more in line with Paul’s admonition in 2 Timothy 2:2: “And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” Following this pattern, one could conclude that the best way to evangelize and disciple inmates is to intensely teach some of the inmates, who then reach out to others throughout the prison.

Just as inmates can disciple other inmates most effectively because they are part of the same culture, so too are they in the best position to disciple other inmates due to the fact that they live together and are constantly in one another’s lives. This is certainly the example seen in Scripture as the apostles followed Jesus day in and day out for three years. They heard him teach, watched him perform miracles, and had personal conversations with him. Similarly, Timothy and Titus were referred to many times as Paul’s companions (2 Cor 1:19; Phil 1:1; Gal 2:1; 2 Cor 8:23). One can safely assume from these references that they spent a great deal of time with Paul as he travelled, evangelized, and ministered to the various churches. A clear application is the importance of an inmate who is a new believer to have the opportunity of spending time with another, more mature, believer.

⁵⁶Michael David Sills, *Reaching and Teaching: A Call to Great Commission Obedience* (Chicago: Moody, 2010), 67.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 69.

While outside volunteers can share and teach glorious truths of the gospel, the truths become more palpable to incarcerated believers when they see them lived out in the daily life of another inmate. As Jay Adams puts it, “To learn behavior in its parts has its place, but to see it in operation as a *whole person* performs it is even more essential. In its parts, dissected and analyzed, behavior often becomes theoretical and impractical.”⁵⁸ Seeing how a Christian inmate handles stress from a lockdown or from being targeted by an aggressive inmate has much more impact than merely being told what should be done. One inmate writes of the impact a Christian witness has in prison: “Everybody watches everybody else here—they’re looking to see whether you’re a fake, whether you say one thing and do another. People here can tell when you’re living right or not. Everybody’s watching when you say you’re a Christian.”⁵⁹ Whether the emphasis is evangelism toward unbelievers or discipleship toward believers, actually living out what one professes has a significant impact in prison. When inmates “begin to see the difference in men committed to Jesus . . . they begin to become more open to hearing what the Bible says about God.”⁶⁰ Biblical instruction must form the context and the reason for living a certain way, but experiencing how others live out the Scriptures helps the ideas become real and concrete.

In a discipleship relationship, spending time together is also essential because heart issues most often arise in the little, everyday activities of life. In the process of experiencing everyday life together, it may be that an inmate who is discipling another sees an area in the person’s life that needs correction, or the inmate being disciplined may become aware of something of which he wants to learn more. Paul Tripp writes about sanctification in daily life, saying that God “heals our spiritual blindness most often in everyday moments of growing awareness and progressive conviction. . . . He calls us,

⁵⁸Jay Adams, *The Christian Counselor’s Manual* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973), 337.

⁵⁹Shere, *Cain’s Redemption*, 157.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*

wherever we are, to help each other pursue a life of faith.”⁶¹ Also, whereas a weekly Bible study or mentoring session with a volunteer may deal with one or two specific issues that an inmate needs help with, a fellow inmate experiences the need for change that becomes evident as circumstances unfold in daily life together. It is also in daily life together where uncontrolled anger is manifested, sinful desires are aroused, or tragedy befalls people. It is in the midst of these routine trials that counseling, along with intense discipleship, is needed. Powlison explains, “Change is a lifelong process, it won’t be over until we are in the presence of the Lord.”⁶² In other words, there will always be areas of growth that need some nurturing and, oftentimes, those areas only become apparent to people living together in close proximity. On this side of eternity, spiritual and personal growth is a never-ending part of the Christian walk, and inmates in a discipling relationship can help one another grow together. Powlison states, “Jesus says, ‘Become a disciple.’ In other words, sign on for life learning.”⁶³ Spending time together allows Christian inmates to continually find and cultivate new areas of growth as they walk together toward holiness, even while in prison.

A Successful Model of Training Inmate Disciplers

A ministry that has successfully used the model of training a small number of inmates who, in turn, teach others, is Prison Fellowship Ministry.⁶⁴ Early on, Prison Fellowship Ministry defined its goal as taking “Christian leaders out of prison to receive intensive discipleship training so that, upon their return to prison, they could disciple and impact the lives of other Christian inmates to build the church of Jesus Christ on the

⁶¹Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change*, Resources for Changing Lives (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2002), 237.

⁶²Ibid., 239.

⁶³David Powlison, *Speaking Truth in Love* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2005), 35.

⁶⁴Perry, *God Behind Bars*.

inside.”⁶⁵ In 1990, the Institute for Religious Research published a study on Prison Fellowship, reporting that the program led to a lower recidivism and was meeting its objectives “by helping a significant number of prisoners become productive members of society.”⁶⁶ While the Prison Fellowship seminar presents topics that vary from how to survive in prison to how to share their faith, every topic is based upon Scripture and “points them toward Jesus Christ as the only source of answers and the strength to hold on to them.”⁶⁷ Although Prison Fellowship Ministry does not train biblical counselors, the idea that prison inmates have successfully discipled other inmates supports the idea that they would also be credible counselors.

Angola Prison

A unique example of inmates ministering to inmates occurs in the Louisiana State Penitentiary, popularly known as Angola. It is unique because its warden, Burl Cain, stresses the importance of what he calls “moral rehabilitation.” Regarding the effort to transform criminals, Cain states, “I realized that I could teach them to read and write, could help them learn skills and a trade—but without moral rehabilitation, I would only be creating a smarter criminal.”⁶⁸ Although Angola offers standard GED classes and opportunities to learn productive skills, the centerpiece of its programs is the in-house seminary program. In 1997, at the request of Warden Cain, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary hired a full-time professor to teach seminary courses at the prison that lead to accredited academic degrees. Since then, hundreds of inmates have graduated with either an associate’s degree or bachelor’s degree in theology. Over 80 percent of

⁶⁵Perry, *God Behind Bars*, 56.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 62.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 88.

⁶⁸Shere, *Cain’s Redemption*, 34.

inmates in Angola are serving a life sentence, and Cain's philosophy is to share the gospel and equip inmates to do the same. As a result of this philosophy, Angola boasts 26 churches, all headed by inmate pastors and elders, operating throughout the prison.⁶⁹

Members of the prison churches are active at Angola. Most inmates live in dorm rooms of about 60 men rather than in one or two-man cells which are reserved for more troublesome inmates. The believers who live in the dorms regularly "visit the cell block and talk to those in lockdown about their faith."⁷⁰ Angola even sends inmates to other prisons as missionaries. "Missionary inmates are trained, as any pastor would be, in counseling and can help the inmates when troubles arise."⁷¹ They are sent by twos and serve for two years as they evangelize and organize Bible studies. The central thought process is that inmates are most effective at reaching other inmates for the gospel.

Warden Cain comments,

The most effective teaching comes from the inmate-pastors as they preach every Sunday morning to the men with whom they live day-in and day-out. . . . They, in turn, equip the men in their congregations to reach out and minister to other men in the prison. That's how real change occurs in the lives of so many inmates here."⁷²

With a total prison population of over 5,000 men, "Burl Cain believes that as many as two thousand men have become committed followers of Jesus."⁷³ Like Prison Fellowship Ministry, the way inmates serve as pastors and elders to other inmates supports the idea that inmates can successfully minister to their fellow inmates as biblical counselors.

The Need for Biblical Counseling in Prison

Whereas many prisons have a strong emphasis on evangelism, few have any emphasis at all on biblical counseling. Given that there is normally at least a small

⁶⁹Burl Cain, inmate ministry at Angola, interview with author, September 23, 2013.

⁷⁰Shere, *Cain's Redemption*, 170.

⁷¹Ibid., 81.

⁷²Cain, interview.

⁷³Shere, *Cain's Redemption*, 180.

Christian population in most prisons, and that those believers struggle with all the difficulties of their past life and current life in prison, it follows that there is a need for counseling that is truly Scripture-based. If one accepts the premise that inmates are best suited to minister to other inmates, the most effective means of bringing biblical counseling to prisons is by training inmates to counsel others biblically.

CHAPTER 4

DETAILS AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The development and teaching of this course was motivated by the realization that biblical discipleship is rare in many prisons. Additionally, while material is readily available to teach biblical counseling, the uniqueness of the prison environment calls for content that is tailored to the challenges that Christian inmates face. After reviewing the biblical basis of discipleship in chapter 2 and the personal, cultural, and theological issues often faced in prison, I developed a course to meet the need for a biblical approach to dealing with sin and suffering in prison.

Intent of the Project

The desired outcome of the project was to equip a group of inmates at Columbia Correctional Institution to counsel other inmates biblically. Since there is no organized church at Columbia, these inmates would form an informal group of believers at the prison who understand how to deal with prison life in a way that glorifies God and who would then be able to help other believers do the same. They would be able to encourage one another and counsel fellow Christian inmates who are struggling with various issues. The evaluation of the project goals are discussed in detail within chapter 5.

Course Development

The overall course development consisted of a survey period, an analysis of the survey results, course development, and finally, course evaluation and revision.

Survey Period

Before starting this project, I had already taught a biblical counseling course in four different prisons. The course I had been teaching was developed by the Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship (IBCD) and meets the academic requirements for certification with the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC). It was through teaching at the various prisons that I realized some of the material was not pertinent to the prison environment and other topics I was not addressing would be very helpful. Since prison inmates cannot become ACBC certified,¹ I was not constrained by the academic requirements of ACBC certification, but could focus more on simply tailoring the material for inmates. However, all the material in the new course was aligned with the precepts of ACBC; I simply took the liberty of omitting some content that would normally be required in a certifying course.

Even within the unique culture of prison, most of IBCD's course was still pertinent since biblically-based material is applicable regardless of culture. However, in order to tailor a course, I needed to gauge the common beliefs inmates have regarding psychology, Scripture, and their ability to counsel others. I also needed to know specific counseling topics that inmates wanted to have addressed in the course.

To determine what these beliefs and desires were, I designed the Fundamentals of Biblical Counseling Survey (FBCS)² and asked the prison chaplain to administer the survey to at least 20 inmates who were part of the Faith Dorm. After I e-mailed the FBCS to the chaplain, he printed enough copies for everyone, and asked for volunteers to complete the survey. To simplify the process for the chaplain, I designed the survey so that a person from any faith group would be able to complete it. The chaplain mailed me

¹Heath Lambert, Executive Director of the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors, telephone interview, October 24, 2013. The main reason inmates cannot be certified is that every ACBC counselor must be a member in good standing of a local church; in the vast majority of cases, this is not possible with prison inmates.

²See appendix 1.

39 completed surveys, 29 of which were completed by inmates who identified themselves as Christians and 10 who identified themselves as part of another religious group.

In analyzing the survey, I separated the answers of Christians from those of the non-Christians since the course would be targeted specifically for inmates who identify themselves as Christians. The survey results are displayed in tables 1 and 2. At the end of the survey, inmates were asked to list other topics they would like to learn about, including addiction, substance abuse, relationships, self-forgiveness, hopelessness, why some people do not change, despondency, testing of faith, marriage, and helping children.

Table 1. FBCS survey answers for questions 4 to 19

Question	Answer Averages
4. The Sacred Writings of my faith contain answers to all of life's issues.	5.0
5. Psychology is valuable in helping us solve the root cause of life's problems.	4.1
6. Psychological theories come from solid scientific research.	3.6
7. I would recommend AA, NA, and similar groups as the best way to deal with addiction.	4.4
8. The Sacred Writings of my faith teach me how to deal with depression.	4.4
9. The Sacred Writings of my faith teach me how to deal with anger.	5.0
10. The Sacred Writings of my faith teach me how to deal with worry.	5.3
11. I am comfortable helping others grow spiritually.	5.3
12. I am comfortable helping others understand how to apply my faith to specific issues in life.	4.9
13. I have a hard time forgiving people who have hurt me.	3.5
14. When I have conflict with someone, I ask forgiveness for what I did wrong.	4.8
15. I have trouble forgiving myself.	4.0
16. A counselor should not develop a friendship with people he counsels in order to remain objective.	2.6
17. I would like to learn how to help others grow in my faith.	5.1
18. The main purpose of counseling is to help a person deal with a difficult situation.	4.9
19. Sacred Writings are more useful for providing comfort than solutions for life's problems.	2.7

Note. Answers range from "strongly disagree" =1 to "strongly agree" = 6

Table 2: FBCS survey answers for questions 20 to 24

20. How often do you read the Sacred Writings of your faith?				
Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Only to Study	Never
76%	14%	1%	0.3%	0%
21. If a friend was struggling with depression, I would recommend he visit a				
Psychologist	Medical Doctor	Pastor	Friend	None
45%	0%	41%	52%	0%
22. Depression is mainly caused by				
Bad circumstances	Making poor choices	Chemical imbalance in the brain	Wrong understanding of God	
21%	24%	38%	1%	
23. If someone is angry most of the time, it is mainly because of				
Bad circumstances	Being treated wrongly by others	Chemical imbalance in the brain	Wrong understanding of God	
21%	1%	34%	31%	
24. If you were to attend counseling training, which of the following issues would you most like to learn about?				
Anger	Worry	Fear	Depression	Temptation
21%	17%	17%	1%	28%

Note. Participants could select more than one answer for each question. The most frequently selected answers are in bold print.

Analyzing Survey Results

The FBCS results indicated that this group of inmates reflected the beliefs I would expect from most Christians who have not been exposed to biblical counseling training. Although they had a high regard for Scripture (questions 4, 8-10, 19), they also had a moderate regard for psychology (questions 5, 6) and believed that brain chemistry is the main cause of depression and anger (questions 22, 23). The survey also indicated that while the inmates already felt comfortable doing discipleship, they wanted to learn more about helping others grow in faith (questions 11, 17).

A little more than half of the course dealt with specific issues in biblical counseling and that was the part that I was particularly interested in tailoring to the prison environment. A surprising result from the survey was that only 1 percent listed

“depression” as one of the subjects they most wanted to learn about (question 24) but in question 25, which was open, respondents wrote in “hopelessness” and “despondency” as subjects they wanted to learn about. From my reading and informal discussions with inmates, I knew that depression was a common problem in prison so, given the wording of question 24, I interpreted the result to mean that depression should still be addressed, since hopelessness and despondency can be synonymous with depression. While depression is still something to be addressed, the survey revealed that other issues such as anger, temptation, fear, and worry are even more concerning for most inmates. Respondents also indicated a desire to learn about marriage and dealing with children, but that is addressed in IBCD’s marriage and family counseling material. Modifying that course for application within prisons will be a follow-on project for another time.

Course Development

Since I was used to teaching IBCD’s Care and Discipleship Course, I began with that material and simply made modifications.³ One of the specific changes made to IBCD’s course included combining lessons on fear, worry, and anxiety (lesson 13). The approach to counseling people with fear, worry, and anxiety, and the pertinent scriptural passages one would use to help people overcome these issues, are all similar in many ways. By combining these into one lesson, I was still able to address how to deal with all these problems, while also gaining time to present other material. I also condensed some of the introductory material and eliminated a lesson on “The Influences of Nature and Nurture,” choosing instead to incorporate that discussion within other lessons. As I taught lessons on how to counsel for specific issues, I simply included a discussion of how one’s natural born tendencies along with the way one was raised can influence how a believer struggles with the specific issue being covered.

³Permission was obtained from IBCD to make modifications for the purpose of this project. See appendix 10.

Two other parts of the course that needed modification were the types of homework assignments counselors assign to counselees and how church accountability differs inside of prison. The resources available to inmates as homework in conjunction with counseling are very limited (i.e., no computers or internet) so the methodology discussion needed to take into account the fact that a counselor could not simply recommend a book or article to read unless it happened to be in the prison library. (lessons 5-7). The section on church accountability needed to consider the fact that there is no church structure at Columbia, as is the case in most prisons. We had to discuss how the process of confronting a brother in sin as described in Matthew 18 would work within a prison. Instead of having an official church discipline process, it would have to be an informal process where, if a brother continued to be unrepentant, he would simply be recognized as an unbeliever. There can be no official exclusion, so the difference would be mainly in attitude, where the believers would relate to him in an evangelistic way as opposed to being considered part of the Christian fellowship (lesson 17).

New material I added included a session on “Getting to Heart Issues” since inmates are commonly offered courses such as anger management, which teach them how to control external behavior without dealing with heart issues (lesson 4). I also included a specific session dealing with forgiveness and how to deal with their past, both of which address the false notion of “forgiving oneself” as opposed to learning how to rejoice in God’s forgiveness (lessons 14-15). Many inmates come from troubled backgrounds and need to be taught how to forgive the evil that was done to them, as well as learning how to ask forgiveness for the evil they have done to others. Lastly, I added lessons that explain biblical concepts of how to relate to authority (lesson 19) and how to deal with injustice (lesson 20). Inmates obviously need to learn how to submit to governmental authority even when they disagree or, under the present circumstances, the authority can seem arbitrary and harsh. Also, many inmates believe their sentences are overly harsh given that wildly different prison sentences are often handed down to different people for

similar crimes. Learning to see God's sovereign will at work in their lives, even when circumstances seem unjust, can be life-changing for many inmates.

The last addition to the course was to include five role-play scenarios. The intention was to conduct twenty hours of instruction followed by a half-day of role-play where inmates would assume the role of a counselor and counselee, putting into practice the things they learned. Each time of role-play was followed by a time of discussion where the other students shared their observations and I offered constructive critiques of the way in which the session was conducted.

Course Summary

The following section is a very brief summary of the twenty lessons and the role-play scenarios the inmates used to simulate how they would counsel other inmates.⁴

Lesson 1: The Need for Biblical Counseling

Lesson 1 covered the popularity of secular psychology within the church, the emergence of the biblical counseling movement, and the harmful errors of psychology.

Lesson 2: What Is Biblical Counseling?

This lesson explained the key concepts of biblical counseling, which include being God-centered, founded on sound theology, based upon the sufficiency of Scripture, aiming at the heart issues, being gentle and compassionate, and ultimately being God's work.

Lesson 3: The Process of Biblical Change

Lesson 3 explained the process of biblical sanctification. It emphasized the necessity of the gospel, the believer's union with Christ, and how it is the gospel that both

⁴Donald Roy, *Introduction to Biblical Counseling* (Slidell, LA: Northshore Biblical Counseling and Training Center, 2015). Appendix 9 contains more detail regarding each lesson.

motivates and enables change. At the same time, believers are required to exert effort in the sanctification process by obeying the commands of Scripture.

Lesson 4: Addressing Heart Issues

The focus of lesson 4 was to help participants see that the real problem in any counseling situation is the heart. Sinful worship leads to idolatrous lusts, which are anything that becomes more important to the person than trusting and pleasing God. The lesson included understanding how to recognize idolatrous lusts and how to grow in worshipping God alone.

Lessons 5 to 7: Key Elements of Biblical Counseling

These three lessons explained one methodology of counseling using Wayne Mack's methodology of involvement, investigation, interpretation, instruction, intention, implementation, and integration.

Lessons 8 to 9: Temptation

These two lessons discussed the way a person can deal with temptation using David's sin as described in 2 Samuel 11 as a case study. It included teaching on how to avoid falling into sin, how to counsel someone struggling with temptation, and how God's grace restores those who confess, repent, and forsake their sin.

Lessons 10 and 11: Anger

These two lessons explained the elements, dangers, and biblical warnings concerning anger. It then detailed sinful heart issues that cause anger. The lessons also included how to overcome anger biblically and how to counsel an angry person.

Lesson 12: Dealing with Depression

This lesson covered what depression is, the approach psychologists typically take when treating people who are depressed, and the reasons people get depressed. It

then covered how to counsel a depressed person and what kind of homework assignments to give someone being counseled.

Lesson 13: Worry and Fear

Lesson 13 covered the causes of worry and fear and the ways in which they are sinful. It then covered the biblical reasons a believer should not worry or be fearful, with an emphasis on how and why one can trust God in every area of life. Like all lessons in this part of the course, it included a section on how to counsel someone who is fearful or who worries excessively.

Lesson 14: Forgiveness

This lesson first explained what forgiveness is, then how God forgives. It then explained the biblical commands to forgive others and what the Christian's attitude must be like in order to forgive. It next discussed the transaction of forgiveness and the reason that forgiving oneself is not a biblical concept.

Lesson 15: Putting Your Past in Its Place

Lesson 15 walked through Steve Viar's book by the same title. It explained how one's past is influential but not determinative and categorizes the past into four areas: when the person suffered but was innocent and responded either well (by forgiving) or poorly (by sinning in response), and when the person was guilty and again either responded well (by seeking forgiveness) or poorly (by sinning more). It then covered how to deal with actions of the past in each of the four categories.

Lessons 16 and 17: Peacemaking

Lessons 16 and 17 covered the precepts in Ken Sande's *The Peacemaker*. It included an explanation of the various ways people deal with conflict and a detailed discussion of how to properly seek forgiveness. It also included a section on how to practice peacemaking with those who are being offensive, including how inmates can

follow the process of church discipline as described in Matthew 18, even without having a church structure.

Lesson 18: Growth through Suffering

The material in this lesson covered the theology of suffering, explaining that suffering is normative in a fallen world. It then covered the way God uses trials to mature believers and how to deal with suffering in a way that helps them mature in Christ and glorify God.

Lesson 19: Relating to Authority

This lesson was adapted from one taught by Joseph Propri of the Biblical Counseling Institute (BCI) in Garrettsville, Ohio. It explained the need for authority and the biblical response to authority, whether or not that authority is acting in a just manner. It included teaching on how to make an appeal and how to discern the rare instances in which one must not obey human authority.

Lesson 20: Dealing with Injustice

Like the previous lesson, this one was also adapted from BCI's material and taught how to deal with injustice. In the case of prison inmates, the injustice may involve an innocent person being convicted, a lengthy sentence that seems out of proportion to the crime committed, or a continual refusal of parole despite exemplary behavior in prison. It used Joseph as a case study, as well as Paul's frequent imprisonments, stressing God's sovereignty even when life seems unjust.

Role Play Scenarios

The final section of the course consisted of five role-play scenarios where the inmates practiced counseling with a fellow inmate who was acting out each scenario. The counselee in each scenario was a professing Christian. The scenarios included an inmate who was depressed at facing his long sentence, one who continually displayed anger, and

a third who was greatly wronged by a fellow inmate who was now seeking forgiveness. The fourth scenario was a relatively new inmate who was very worried about his personal future as well as that of his family, and the final scenario was an inmate who killed two young girls in a drunk driving accident and struggled with “forgiving himself.”

Conclusion

In both iterations of the course, the inmates were enthusiastic and actively participated in discussions. Despite the schedule anomalies, we were able to cover all the material each time. A certificate of completion was given to the attendees at the end of the course. It is important to note that in prison, receiving a certificate of completion is important for inmates since it documents to a potential parole or clemency board the fact that they are actively working to improve themselves while in prison.

The role plays conducted at the end of each course went surprisingly well. The inmates entered into the scenario and, while some of the counsel occasionally reflected a lack of understanding of some of the material, all the inmates showed compassion and demonstrated a solid grasp of the basics of biblical counseling.

Course Evaluation and Revision

After the first draft of the course was completed, I mailed or e-mailed copies of it to three ACBC certified counselors and two prison chaplains. As described in chapter 1, the ACBC counselors used the ACBC rubric (see appendix 2) to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and faithfulness of the course to the precepts of ACBC. The prison chaplains used the Prison Chaplain Rubric (see appendix 3) to evaluate how pertinent the material was to prison inmates. According to all five evaluators, 90 percent of the evaluation criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level. Not having spent a great deal of time in prison ministry, I was concerned that the role-play scenarios might not be considered realistic, but was assured by the two chaplains who evaluated the course, plus two others with whom I had shared the material, that they were completely

appropriate. The ACBC evaluators shared some helpful suggestions concerning diagrams and examples, but they were all minor suggestions. After receiving feedback from all five evaluators, I made minor revisions then finalized the format.

Teaching the Course

The course was taught in two iterations, which was necessary in order to have the minimum number of students (16) set forth in the third goal for the project. The two iterations were conducted four weeks apart.

Course Iteration 1

Working with the senior prison chaplain at Columbia Correctional Institution, I came to the prison and taught the course Monday, August 3, through Saturday August 8. I scheduled it for six days because my previous experience showed that the class can routinely be delayed due to the afternoon “count.” At Columbia, the inmates are physically counted eight times a day as a security measure and are normally required to be in their cells while the count is being conducted. If the count does not add up correctly, a recount is immediately conducted. Each count can take up to an hour which, the previous year I was there, happened more often than not. In turn, the count reduced the available class time each day. I requested a six-day class this year as opposed to a five-day class to mitigate that problem. As it turned out, this time the inmates were usually allowed to remain in class during the count which eased the schedule and allowed for plenty of class discussion. This was not the case for every day of the course, but it was for most days, which increased available class time.

Meeting one of the goals of the project required having a minimum of 16 students. However, when the class started only 7 first-time attendees were present (1 had attended the original course the previous year). The chaplain later explained to me that there had been a major turnover in the chaplain staff (he had been there only a month and the assistant chaplain only eight months) and the course had not been promoted—someone

had merely posted a sign-up sheet in the Faith Dorm with no mention of it during chapel or at other gatherings. I taught the course that week, but mentioned my dilemma to the chaplain. Looking through the material, he became very enthusiastic about the course and promised me I would have at least 20 students if I could return the following month. As there are professing Christians in sections of the prison other than the Faith Dorm, he planned to open the course to all Christians and promote it throughout the prison.

The classroom time went well and the inmates were enthusiastic about the material. We held the course in an area called “the loft,” an elevated area open to view by the correctional officers who monitor the entire five-wing dormitory. Because computers are not allowed in the prison, the format was lecture, but I made it as interactive as I could in order to maintain interest. I requested that the inmates be allowed to remain in class during the afternoon count, but due to some communication and administrative issues, this did not occur until Thursday and Friday. Since I scheduled the entire course for six days, this did not impact the course in any way. The extra time we had on Thursday and Friday enabled extra discussion, which helped me gain more insight into prison life. Before starting the course, I administered the Pre and Post-Course Survey (see appendix 4) to gauge their base understanding of the precepts of biblical counseling. I also handed out a course critique to each student (see appendix 6) and asked them to complete it after each session so that they could make any comments while the material was still fresh in their mind.

On Monday, I covered what biblical counseling is, why we need it, and the process of biblical sanctification. The class was interactive with good discussion throughout the day. On Tuesday, we covered the methods of biblical counseling. Comments for both days included that this was “relevant to prison life” and they now understand “it is important to know the Scriptures so we know how to counsel our fellow inmates.” Wednesday and Thursday were mainly spent covering specific issues such as dealing with the past, worry, forgiveness, and anger. Discussion went well all week, but

these days were especially lively because the inmates thought the topics were extremely relevant. Comments included, “Anger is a common problem here in prison,” dealing with the past “is a common problem we have in prison,” and “people in prison worry and fear all the time.”

The topics on Friday were biblical peacemaking, suffering, relating to authority, and dealing with injustice. While the discussion was more subdued, the comments included “It shows us how to deal with injustice within the prison,” the topic “Relating to Authority” “is a good example to help some of the guys that are getting ready to get out and face the real world,” and “the way we live through our suffering produces endurance in which we glorify God.” Saturday consisted of the role-play scenarios which went surprisingly well. The inmates entered into their parts as counselee and counselor with enthusiasm and realism and they commented that the scenarios were realistic and pertinent to the prison environment. Overall, the “counselors” provided some good counsel, although one of them completely misunderstood the lesson on anger. I asked for feedback from all the inmates before providing mine and found that everyone was kind and encouraging, even as they pointed out areas that needed improvement.

At the conclusion, some of the inmates indicated a desire for further training and asked for teaching on specific topics (finance, marriage, substance abuse) at some time in the future. I administered the same Pre and Post-Course Survey (see appendix 4) that I did before the class in order to see the way their understanding of biblical counseling had changed as a result of the course. The analysis of those results is discussed in chapter 5.

Course Iteration 2

In preparation for the second iteration, I made some minor changes to the workbook. The inmates from the first course had asked for a list of recommended reading material, so I added a “recommended reading” list at the end of each chapter in the workbook. Northshore Biblical Counseling and Training Center (NBCTC) also purchased

most of the recommended books and donated them to the prison chapel library. I returned to the prison August 31 to September 4 to teach it again, and this time 12 students attended the full course. Because the second course was taught in the education building where the inmates remain in class for every afternoon count, I only needed five days to cover the material and conduct role-play. As seems to be typical in prisons, the schedule did not go as planned. While the inmates who attended the first course iteration were all part of the Faith Dorm, the inmates for this iteration were from five different dorms. An inmate must be listed on a “call-out” sheet in order to leave the dorm, which requires coordination between a number of people within the prison administration.

It is not uncommon in any prison for communication problems to occur in this process. We had that problem on this visit and, as a result, only half of the 24 inmates who signed up showed up for the first day of class. Although most of the inmates showed up on the second day, some of them missed part of the course due to conflicting “call-outs” for medical or dental appointments that could not be rescheduled. While 18 inmates attended much of the course, only 12 attended the entire course and completed the post-course survey. Before starting the course, I administered the Pre and Post-Course Survey and handed out the course critique to each student.

The classroom time with this group was very similar to the previous group, but there were some noticeable differences. In the Faith Dorm, the inmates are enrolled in an eighteen-month program that consists of a number of courses. Most of the inmates there are intent on completing the entire program in order to demonstrate their desire to change to a parole or clemency board. All of them had several years remaining before their sentence was completed and some had life sentences. Additionally, they are all active in Bible study and chapel programs, and live with other inmates who are doing the same. During the course I taught, they all seemed very interested and intent on understanding the material. This group, however, came from the general prison population. They were all professing Christians, but their level of involvement in Bible study or chapel programs

varied greatly. While some had long prison sentences remaining, a small number were scheduled for release within the next twelve months. Of the 18 who attended the course, I identified 6 or 7 who were serious about learning the material; the rest seemed to be casual regarding the course.

Despite the differences in the groups, we had good discussions throughout the week and most of the students seems appreciative of the material. Comments from the course critiques included, “This is a session that is very important in my own life,” “a lesson that I needed very badly,” and “helped me a lot to understand that God is in control no matter what we go through, he’s working in our lives to shape us the way he wants us to be.”

Like the first group, the role-playing went well with both parties entering their respective roles with enthusiasm. Most of the “counselors” tried to probe around heart issues and everyone tried to apply appropriate portions of Scripture. While some needed to explain more as opposed to “dispensing” the verses, the overall direction of counseling was to point them to a closer relationship with Christ. Also like the first group, the class feedback after each session was congenial and constructive and some of the students asked about further training. At the end of the course, I administered the Pre and Post-Course Survey and collected the course critiques.

Since people in both groups asked about further training, I did make some provision for that. I live almost 500 miles from Columbia Correctional institution, so coming back to provide training is difficult. However, NBCTC donated ten different books related to biblical counseling as well as a copy of IBCD’s Care and Discipleship Course on DVD to the prison chapel library. The senior chaplain was enthusiastic about this material, so any inmate who desires more training will be able to avail himself of this material.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

This project sought to train prison inmates at Columbia Correctional Institution to counsel other inmates biblically. These men would be able to provide a biblical perspective to the sin and suffering fellow Christian inmates are experiencing. This chapter seeks to assess the effectiveness of the project and ascertain how inmates at this institution, and at others, would benefit by a revised curriculum. This chapter also analyzes lessons learned from the project that can be applied to future courses.

Evaluation of the Project Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip prison inmates at Columbia Correctional Institution in Lake City, Florida, to counsel other inmates biblically. Although much time was spent in preparing the course, the actual instruction was given in two separate courses to two different groups of inmates. The first session was held August 3-8, 2015, and the second session was held August 31-September 4, 2015.

Eight students attended the first session, 1 of whom had attended a similar course a year prior. For the other 7 students, this was their first time being exposed to biblical counseling teaching. Of the 8 students, 2 expressed a desire for further training in biblical counseling, but all the students indicated a desire to counsel others. To facilitate further training, NBCTC purchased a set of DVDs and workbooks produced by the Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship and donated them to the prison library.

For the second session, 12 students completed the entire course. A number of others attended most of the course but missed at least one full day due to various schedule conflicts. In this class, 3 students expressed interest in further training and, like the

previous class, everyone indicated a desire to counsel others. Two of these students will be leaving prison within the next six months and indicated they would like to pursue certification as biblical counselors after release from prison.

Statistically, the survey scores resulted in an increase in the mean of 10.7 with a confidence level of 95.6 percent. This signifies that the teaching of biblical counseling to the select group of median adults made a statistically significant difference resulting in the increase of their biblical counseling knowledge ($t_{(g)}=4.38$, $p<.0002$).¹

Evaluation of Project Goals

The first goal was to assess inmates the level of biblical counseling knowledge and how comfortable they were with offering biblical counsel. The participants in the first group were Christians who are active in chapel programs and residents of the prison's Faith Dorm. The goal was measured by administering a Fundamentals of Biblical Counseling Survey (FBCS) to a minimum of 20 prison inmates.² This goal was successfully met when 39 inmates completed the FBCS, 29 of whom were professing Christians, and the surveys were mailed back to me. The surveys were then analyzed, yielding a clearer picture of the current understanding of biblical counseling among inmates who are professing Christians. A detailed analysis is provided in the next section, but in general, they showed a lack of understanding of the precepts of biblical counseling. For instance, they are just as likely to see a psychiatrist as a pastor for depression, they lacked a biblical understanding of forgiveness, and many believed that chemical imbalances in the brain are the cause of depression and anger.

The second goal was to develop a twenty-hour biblical counseling course that is aligned with the principles of the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC)

¹See appendix 8.

²See appendix 1.

and is tailored for prison inmates. The course was taught over a period of six days during the first session, and over five days during the second session. This curriculum was evaluated by three ACBC certified counselors and two prison chaplains. Each group was given a rubric by which to evaluate the curriculum.³ The goal would be successfully met when all the evaluations were returned with a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion meet or exceed the sufficient level. The goal was met in that essentially 100 percent of the evaluations were graded as either “sufficient” or “exemplary.”⁴ As a result of the comments provided, I added some concrete examples to three of the lessons. No other changes were made to the course material I submitted.

The third goal was to enlist at least sixteen inmates from Columbia Correctional Institution to attend the course. The goal was measured by counting the number of inmates who attended at least 80 percent of the course. I enlisted the prison chaplain’s help as he publicized the course and obtained authorization for the inmates to attend the course. The goal was successfully met since nineteen inmates completed the course.

The fourth goal was to equip sixteen participants to provide biblical counseling to fellow inmates. The goal was measured by administering a pre and post-course survey,⁵ and was successfully met as a *t*-test for dependent samples⁶ demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference in the pre and post-course scores. This goal was also measured by an evaluation of role-plays. Five students from each class simulated a one-on-one counseling session with another inmate. Using a rubric designed for evaluating

³See appendix 3.

⁴One mark was below the “satisfactory” level, so the actual percentage was 99.9 percent.

⁵See appendix 4.

⁶Neil J. Salkind, *Statistics for People Who (Think They) Hate Statistics*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008), 189-91.

each role-play,⁷ the goal was sufficiently met when at least 8 of the 10 students met or exceeded the satisfactory level in all skill areas.⁸

The fifth goal was to revise the curriculum. This goal was measured by the completion of a course evaluation by each of the participants. The evaluation contained both a Likert scale and comment area where the inmates could add comments about both the course content and applicability.⁹ I also evaluated the course using Robert Stake's Model for Evaluation of Educational Programs and Teaching Sessions.¹⁰ The goal was successfully met since all the students and I completed the course evaluations. Minor revisions were suggested and incorporated into the curriculum. Besides typographical errors, the only change made was the addition of a recommended reading section after each lesson. Other suggestions made were along the lines of additional topics such as addiction, finances, and marriage, which will all be part of a subsequent course.

Reviewing the Process

After receiving the completed Fundamentals of Biblical Counseling Surveys, I analyzed the results in order to help shape the course content. Some interesting results stood out. My assumption has always been that people in prison who are active in their Christian faith came to a saving knowledge of Christ after they were sent to prison. While I did not ask that specific question, the survey did reveal that the average age of the inmates was forty-nine years old and the average length of time they claim to have been actively participating in their faith was twenty-seven years. This indicates that many

⁷See appendix 5.

⁸The original goal stated a success criteria for 3 out of 5 students since the original plan was to hold only one course. Since two courses were taught, I modified the success criteria to require at least 6 out of 10 meeting or exceeding the satisfactory level in all skill areas.

⁹See appendix 6.

¹⁰Lawrence O. Richards and Gary J. Bredfeldt, *Creative Bible Teaching* (Chicago: Moody, 1998), 315.

were believers before being sent to prison.¹¹ As was shown in table 1, results indicated a belief that the Bible does contain answers to all of life's issues (5.0) but also an acceptance (though less) that psychology addresses root causes of life's problems (4.1). Forgiveness was an area that was shown to need emphasis with many stating they have a hard time forgiving people (3.5) and "forgiving themselves" (4.0). As was shown in table 2, the survey also indicated that 45 percent would refer someone to a psychologist for depression while 41 percent would refer them to a pastor. Regarding the cause of issues, 38 percent indicated the cause of depression was due to chemical imbalance and 34 percent said anger had the same cause. For both depression and anger, 21 percent said the cause was due to circumstances. From the list of specific issues to be addressed, 28 percent indicated temptation as the issue they would most like to be addressed, followed by anger (21 percent), then worry and fear (both at 17 percent). The final question was a write-in question concerning other topics they would like to learn about. The topics from that list included "why people don't change," "relationships," "self-forgiveness," "marriage," and "addictions/drugs." In modifying the course, all of the issues were addressed with the exception of marriage and addictions since those two topics will be addressed in a follow-on course. Even though they were not addressed in whole, however, many aspects of marriage and addictions are addressed throughout the course.

Upon receipt of all the curriculum evaluations, I reviewed the course material and made minor changes. One ACBC evaluator marked one area as "requires attention," suggesting that one of the role play scenarios include a scenario with an inmate who is close to leaving prison. Given that the other evaluators, including the prison chaplains, evaluated the role play scenarios as "sufficient" or "exemplary," and the fact that 75 percent of the inmates have a life sentence, I chose not to make any changes for the

¹¹Informal surveys during class substantiated this conclusion. During class, when I asked how many were believers before coming to prison, the great majority raised their hands. In the first session, only 1 out of 8 students said he became a Christian after coming to prison and in the second session, only 3 out of 8 indicated the same.

present. However, I thought this was a good suggestion and will look to implement that suggestion in future courses, particularly when I know that a number of the students have shorter sentences. Other suggested changes were minor, including the incorporation of more diagrams. I then modified the material as suggested by the evaluators.

As mentioned, the course was taught in two sessions, one during the first week of August, and the second during the first week of September. The effectiveness of the course was measured by the pre and post-course survey. The results of the pre and post survey scores are shown in figure 1.

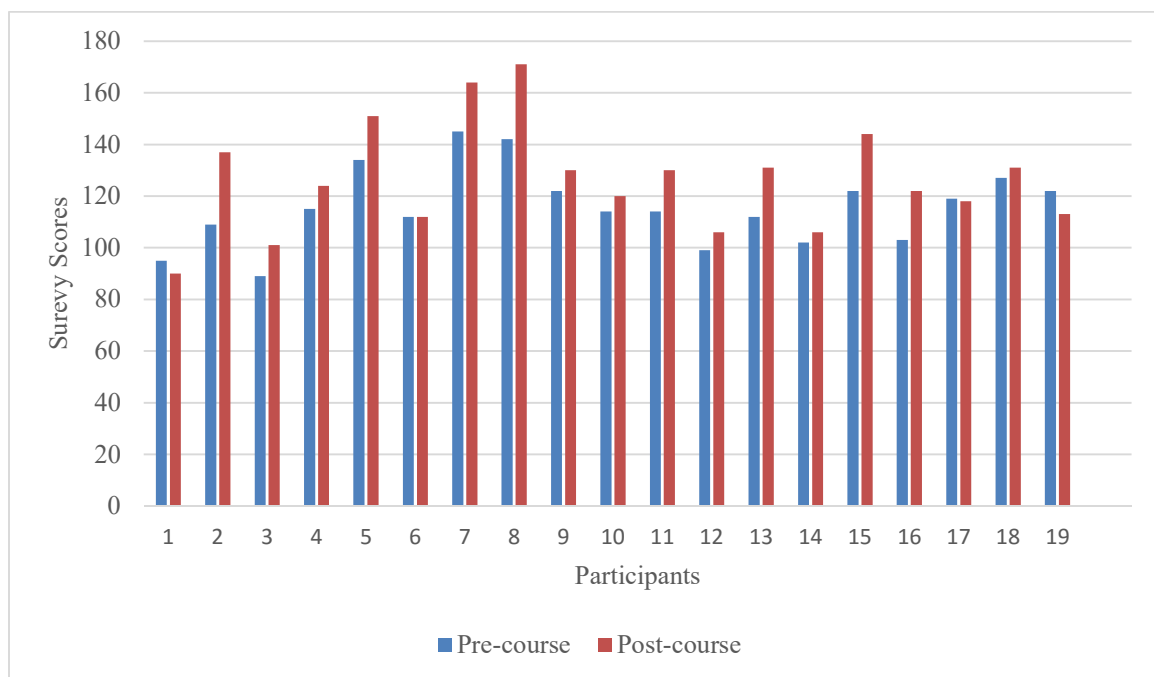


Figure 1. Pre- and post-course survey results

I conducted a statistical analysis and concluded that this goal was successful due to the overall positive statistical difference indicated by a *t*-test, meaning that overall, the students increased their knowledge of biblical counseling. Even with this result, however, there were some areas of concern with a number of students. Instead of their scores increasing after the course, three students (students 1, 17, and 19) had a lower

score after the course. Student 6 showed no change and three other students (students 12, 14, and 18) had a very minor increase of seven points or less.

What was even more disconcerting was the results of some of the individual questions. The pre and post-course survey consisted of 33 questions, answered with a six-point Likert scale. As part of my analysis, I calculated the average score of all 19 students for each of the 33 questions. The expectation was that the average of every one of the questions would increase slightly when comparing the post with the pre-course survey results. Instead, the average of 10 of the 33 questions, almost a full third of the questions, actually decreased slightly. Some of this may be explained by poor wording and this is most likely the case for at least a few of the questions. For example, one statement was “God wants me to be happy in life.” During the course, I emphasized that God is more concerned about holiness than happiness, but also pointed out that true peace and joy in life comes from a right relationship with God as one walks in obedience. My expectation was that the average would move toward the “strongly disagree” end of the scale, but the opposite was true. In hindsight, I would say that was a poorly worded statement which is probably true for some of the other statements as well.

On the other hand, other questions were much more clearly stated and the results seemed to indicate that I did not communicate the course material well. For example, one of the statements was “Only trained experts should counsel others.” Another statement was “If I don’t feel like forgiving someone, it’s hypocritical to forgive him.” The average of both of these questions moved more in the “strongly agree” end of the scale when it should have moved the other way. This was disconcerting because one of the main points of the course was that all believers can and should provide biblical counsel to one another. We also spent two entire lessons on forgiveness, emphasizing that Scripture clearly tells that believers are commanded to forgive one another, regardless of how we feel about it. A number of other questions were similar to this in the sense that they

address a major point of the course, yet the average of the answers moved in the opposite direction from what I had expected.

At the end of each session, we spent a day conducting the role play scenarios. The inmates fully entered into the scenarios with the “counselee” acting out his role in a convincing manner and the “counselor” offering a biblical approach to each of the issues presented. In the first session, 4 of the 5 counselors successfully counseled, receiving “sufficient” or “exemplary” grades in all areas. In one case, the counselor misapplied much of what was taught, emphasizing techniques over heart issues. We held a class discussion after each scenario emphasizing what each counselor did well and where improvement was needed. When discussing where improvement was needed, everyone was gentle and supportive in their approach and we reviewed the lesson areas from the course where the theological basis and biblical counseling approach was covered for the given scenario. The results for the second session were similar, where one student did not attempt to address the heart issue, but overall, every student referred to Scripture, was compassionate, and emphasized God’s love and sovereignty in the lives of their counselee.

Strengths of the Project

There were four main strengths of this project. The first was the amount of coordination conducted during the course of the year prior to the actual class, the second was the material used, the third was the flexibility in the schedule, and the fourth was the eagerness of the students to learn the material.

Teaching in a prison requires a great deal of coordination which can often be a challenge. Columbia Correctional Institution is a seven hour drive from my home and I taught a similar course there in August 2014. This prison was selected as the site for the project because after the course in 2014, the senior prison chaplain committed to assist me by administering the surveys and scheduling the required time for the modified course the following year. The chaplain did administer the Fundamentals of Biblical Counseling Survey to inmates in the Faith Dorm and promptly mailed them back to me. In the spring

of 2015, the senior chaplain left his position for another one within the prison, and the assistant chaplain became my new point of contact. Coordination became more challenging at that point because of the assistant chaplain's workload and, although the course was scheduled, it was not promoted well. I still considered coordination to be a strength, however, because after teaching the course in August 2015, the new senior chaplain who had just been recently hired committed to scheduling another class within a month of the first one. This worked well, allowing me to have a total of 19 students between the two classes.

Another strength was the material used. Since it was important that the material be aligned with the precepts of ACBC, I started with an established curriculum and modified it to make it more pertinent for prison inmates. I had taught the original material a number of times, so I knew it was scripturally sound and was comfortable teaching it. The material I added came from my doctoral program course work, a book that addressed how to deal with past issues, and another biblical counseling ministry that addressed the prison environment. The reaction to the material was consistently positive and enthusiastically received.

A third strength of the project was the actual scheduling of the course. The course was designed to be covered in about twenty-five hours which included five hours for role-play. Having taught inside prisons a number of times before, I anticipated that much of the class time would be taken up by the afternoon count where all the inmates in the prison are counted to ensure none have escaped and the inmates are normally confined to their cells while this is being done. To compensate for this time (typically about one hour), I requested a total of six days (Monday through Saturday) for the first session in August. As mentioned, I asked the chaplain if the inmates could be counted while in class as opposed to being in their cells. Although it was approved by the assistant warden, this did not happen for the first three days of the course because of a lack of communication within the prison administration. It was allowed for the final three days. However, because

the course was scheduled for six days, class time turned out to be sufficient. The second course was conducted in the prison's education building where the afternoon count is always conducted in the classroom. Because of that, I scheduled the course for five days instead of six and the amount of time available to teach was more than sufficient.

A fourth strength of the project was the attitude of the students. In my experience, Christian inmates are uniformly grateful and enthusiastic when someone from "the outside" comes to the prison to teach a course. While most of them are active in Bible studies and chapel attendance, in-depth theological study is rare. Unlike believers on the outside who can access Christian teaching and material from a number of sources, inmates are limited to what is available in the prison. They have no access to the internet, no money with which to purchase books, and certainly no ability to attend or visit different churches. There is no church structure in the prison and Bible studies are usually led by other inmates, some of whom have questionable theology. Similarly, chapel services are normally conducted by volunteers from outside the prison and, according to both the chaplains and many inmates, the depth and quality of the teaching varies greatly. Given this environment, the students were very enthusiastic regarding the material, participated in class discussions, and many expressed a desire for more training.

Weaknesses of the Project

The main weakness of the project was that I did not adequately evaluate my audience. The first three times I taught the original material in different prisons was as an elective for inmates enrolled in a seminary curriculum. In this case, the inmates all had at least a high school education or had passed the GED. They were used to college-level material as they had already completed a number of courses within their seminary program. Also, because they were in seminary, there was a fairly sound theological understanding and consistency among the students. In this project, however, students came from the general population of the prison. The only requirement was, since this was a Bible-based course, that they were professing Christians. As a result, the education level varied widely.

Two of the students held a master's degree, but most of the students had no college at all. It is unknown how many had completed high school or had passed the GED, but since the prison conducts regular classes to help inmates pass the GED, it can be assumed that at least some of the students who participated in the course had not completed high school. I had not taken into consideration this aspect and some of my teaching may have been too academic for a number of the students. To improve future courses, I will request information from the chaplain regarding education level of the students. The material itself would not need to change; this information would simply enable me to engage the students at the appropriate level.

Another weakness of the project was the crafting of some of the pre and post-course survey questions. This weakness is partially related to the first weakness because a few of the questions may have been difficult for some of the students to understand. I think the vocabulary was understandable, but many of the questions attempted to capture a change that was too vaguely nuanced. This vagueness was most likely the case for at least some of the questions where the scores decreased instead of increasing on the post-course survey.

An example of a question that was most likely too nuanced was question 8: "Christian psychologists can accurately combine biblical truth with psychology." While this should have been one of the major lessons from the course, the overall answer indicated that the students learned the opposite of what I was trying to teach. This may have been due to wording the question poorly since I acknowledged some areas of truth in the field of psychology. During the course, I stated that psychology has legitimacy in areas that include valid pathology, such as with patients who have Alzheimer's disease or a traumatic brain injury. Additionally, I stated that psychologists can make valid observations of behavior even if their theories of causation are false. I then went on to teach the false presuppositions of secular psychology and its inadequacy to deal with life issues that are actually issues of the heart. The question may have been confusing because

of the way I presented the material, pointing out the legitimate areas of psychology in addition to the illegitimate applications. I may have caused confusion with other questions as well where I attempted to emphasize a point but also wanted to present both sides of the issue. The survey would have been improved if I had sent it to others for review and discussion; in particular the survey would have benefitted from prison chaplains reviewing the questions.

A third weakness of the project was a lack of accountability for class attendance. Once again, since in past courses inmates were enrolled in a seminary program, the inmates themselves had a process in place to track class attendance and were very careful to do so accurately. When I taught a course in 2014 that was not part of a seminary curriculum, the Faith Dorm librarian tracked attendance and provided me a completed list at the end of the course. During this project, however, there was no process in place to track attendance. The first class was small and it was easy to note whether or not an individual was present. The second class, however, was much larger and I did not think to put a process in place to track attendance. I administered the pre-course survey on the first and second days when people attended their first session, and administered the post-course survey to all who were present on the last day. For the purposes of analysis, I only included the surveys of those for whom I had both the pre and post-course surveys. The problem was that some of the inmates missed part of the course and I do not know how much of the course each person who completed the surveys missed, if any. Also, at the end of these courses I simply issued the certificates to those who I knew were there most of the time. To correct for this weakness, I will have my own attendance tracking in place for future courses. Additionally, I will only issue certificates of completion for those students who have attended at least 80 percent of the course (this allows for missing one day).

A fourth weakness is that I did not conduct a pilot program. Given the uniqueness of the prison environment, it would have been beneficial to teach a group of

inmates early in the process as a study group. In this way, I could have assessed how well they understood the survey questions, discussed changes to the surveys, and then after teaching the course, assessed how well they learned the material. After having learned more about my audience and whether or not the survey instruments I had designed actually achieved their purpose, I could then have modified the surveys to obtain more accurate results as well as the curriculum to ensure better understanding.

Student Feedback

While the inmates shared both strengths and weaknesses of the course, the overall sentiments were overwhelmingly positive. On the course critique, both the material and the instructor were rated on a five-point Likert scale. The average score of the 19 students was 4.22 for the material and 4.24 for the instructor. The material was marked either as a “4” or “5” 89.3 percent of the time and the instructor was rated as a “4” or “5” 93.8 percent of the time. There were no marks below a three.

In addition to the Likert scale, there was a section where students could add any comments. Some of the comments included

This class has re-ignited my interest in studying the Bible and trying to be a better Christian.

I myself love this program and I wish I could do it again or continue with this course. I wish I could become a full Christian counselor; that way I [could] help others that really need the help.

I am convinced in Jesus Christ that this course will help me help others and will strengthen my walk.

I really liked this course; helped me a lot to understand that God is in control no matter what we go through; he’s working in our lives to shape us the way he wants us to be. I also liked the material because it is specific in how to deal with different types of problems in a biblical way.

Many of the inmates also indicated that the material was pertinent to their circumstances, adding comments such as

This is good for prison life.

People in prison worry and fear all the time.

Temptation is different in prison than outside, but still, temptation is all around us, anywhere.

Anger is a common problem in prison.

Depression [is] another common problem in prison; you have to learn to overcome depression.

While the students were very positive, they did note some areas that needed improvement. The last half of the course was spent discussing how to deal with specific issues such as depression, anger, and biblical peacemaking. A few of the students noted a need for specific examples and the need to add more “excitement” to the material. This is a point well taken, especially in the prison environment. Since computers are not allowed inside the prison, visual aids, such as PowerPoint cannot be used. The delivery method is mainly lecture, along with encouraging as much class discussion as is practicable. A white board was available, which I used extensively while teaching. To improve the course, I added a very short case study in lessons 11 through 20 which will be covered as a class discussion. Because the role plays actually lasted a much shorter time than scheduled, adding the individual case studies should not impact my ability to cover all the material.

Another minor addition that came from the course critiques was the addition of recommended reading for each topic. A few students from the August course requested a recommended reading list in the course critiques. To accommodate that change, I added a list of one to three books at the end of each chapter. If the topic was covered over two lessons instead of just one, as in the case of temptation and anger, I included the list of books at the end of the second lesson as an aside, NBCTC also donated most of the recommended books to the prison library in order to give the inmates access to those resources.

What I Would Do Differently

As mentioned, there were some problems with both the Fundamentals of Biblical Counseling Survey and the pre and post-course surveys. If I were to complete this project again, I would request other counselors and prison chaplains to help me form

the questions. Input from others would have better ensured that the questions were direct, less nuanced, and actually measuring what I was attempting to measure.

A second change I would make is to work with a prison closer to my home. In my previous experience working in prisons, I found that the chaplain was often hard to communicate with. Prison chaplains usually have a high workload and work with numerous volunteers, so were frequently slow to return phone calls or reply to e-mails. Since the chaplain at Columbia committed to helping me on the project, I was confident that he would communicate with me so I focused my efforts on that prison despite the distance from my home. Because of the chaplain's commitment to the project and the enthusiasm of the new chaplain, the coordination went well overall. In retrospect, however, I could have paid a personal visit to the chaplains at some of the prisons much closer to my home. This would have enabled even better coordination but even more importantly, the ability for follow-on visits. While at Columbia, several inmates asked when I could come back to conduct follow-on courses. While walking through the prison yard, inmates who attended my class in 2014 also asked for more teaching. Because of the travel and lodging issues, however, I could not commit to a return visit. Had I been working with one of the prisons closer to home (there are at least three within a two or three hour drive), I could easily commit to regular visits rather than a one-time course. My plan for future prison ministry is to focus on the closer prisons in order to have regular contact with the inmates who are interested in learning to counsel.

A third change I would make is to better analyze my audience before coming to teach. My tendency was to simply think of the students as prison inmates and not differentiate them in any other way. However, I have come to understand that, just like on the outside, inmates vary greatly in education level and theological perspectives. While most inmates tend to have a lower level of education, that is not uniformly true. In the past, I often had a class of students who were all working on college-level courses, some of whom had already completed undergraduate or graduate level education. This average

level of education is obviously much different from a class where few have completed high school, which is closer to what I had this time. To rectify this, I can obtain demographic information from the chaplain prior to the class. This information can provide both the education level and the denominational association of the inmates. Additionally, the chaplains are usually very familiar with each of the inmates who are active in chapel programs and would be able to provide insight into their maturity as believers. All of this would allow me to tailor my presentation to the education level and theological slant of my audience.

Along with better analyzing my audience, a fourth change I would make would be to conduct a pilot program. This would help me to analyze if my survey questions were understandable and if I was even asking the right questions based on what I was trying to learn from it. A pilot program would have also enabled me to interact with inmates to learn if the material was appropriate and helpful. Having the curriculum reviewed by ACBC counselors and prison chaplains was very helpful, but hearing directly from a group of inmates would have made the course even better.

A fifth change I would make would be to improve the delivery. Typically, the reviews I receive as an instructor are very positive both on the written critique forms and informally when students speak with me. However, by the end of a five-day lecture series, boredom tends to creep in. Since I cannot add visual aids such as video or PowerPoint, I need to make my delivery more interesting, particularly in the last two days of the course. I can do this by facilitating more class discussion and getting the students to contribute how they would apply the biblical principles we have been learning to the topic at hand. Although I encourage class participation, I need to structure and facilitate more of it in the second half of the course. As mentioned, I have added short case studies for the specific topics being taught and will use those to ensure students are engaged in each session.

Theological Reflections

In Matthew 25, Jesus spoke of commendation and condemnation in the end times. Among the actions for which the righteous were commended was “I was in prison, and you came to me” (v. 36). The righteous were somewhat perplexed and asked, “When did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?” (v. 39). The King, of course, answered, “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me” (v. 40). The unrighteous, on the other hand were condemned for not doing the same. Similarly, the writer of Hebrews encouraged his readers to “remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body” (Heb 13:3). In both of these passages, Christians are told to reach out to believers in prison. Just as God encouraged Paul to go to Corinth, telling him “I have many in this city who are my people” (Acts 18:10), so does he have many of his people in prison. Unfortunately, these are more often than not “sheep without a shepherd” (Mark 6:34) that lack in solid biblical teaching and discipleship. Most inmates who profess Christ claim to have been Christians before they committed their crimes. While some have certainly made false professions, never having turned away from their sins (Matt 7:21-23), many are also sheep who have lost their way and need a better grasp of what Christ has done for them and how they can, in turn, live for Him.

This course has helped the believers at Columbia Correctional Institution better understand the sanctification process, enabling them to grow more mature in Christ and help others do the same. It has also helped them better understand repentance and reconciliation for the crimes they committed, and learn how to let their light shine in the very dark place that is prison.

Personal Reflection

Teaching in prison is always rewarding because of the inmates’ enthusiasm. As they see the truths of Scripture applied to daily life, they are both convicted in their own hearts and excited to have an understanding with which they can help other inmates. On

more than one occasion, an inmate came to me and said, “Last night, I used what you taught with my cellmate. It helped.” Those kind of statements alone are a true reward for any labor.

Preparing and teaching this material helped me significantly in my own counseling. Reviewing the biblical truths behind the counseling and the specific ways one can address particular issues enables me to become a better counselor. While I have been a student of this material for a number of years, being a teacher forces me to immerse myself in the Scriptures more than ever and to think through the counseling and discipleship applications more thoroughly. “Blessed” with a poor memory, repetition does wonders for me.

As always, teaching biblical counseling shows my own need for greater personal sanctification. Much of the teaching is personally convicting and I am always urged on to greater maturity in Christ in a number of areas.

Since the proper application of Scripture comes from the proper understanding of Scripture (orthodoxy yields orthopraxy), this course also challenged me to improve my ability to clearly state doctrinal truths, backed by solid exegesis. Many prison inmates are immersed in false doctrine, whether it is prosperity gospel, perfectionism, or extreme versions of charismatic and Arminian theology. It is important that I am able to present a very brief overview of biblical hermeneutics as well as being able to scripturally address specific false doctrines.

Conducting this project also increased my burden for bringing scripturally sound teaching to prisons across the country. The numerous pleas to “come back and teach more” are both encouraging and heart-rending. They are encouraging because seeing the hunger for biblical truth motivates me to develop more material. The inmates have asked for scriptural teaching about addiction, pornography, marriage, parenting, and more. Biblical material on all those subjects is readily available and I plan to use much of it as the basis for future courses. My desire is to not only have a one-time course on

biblical counseling, but to conduct semi-annual seminars on various topics as a continual encouragement to the believers in prison.

The requests to return for more teaching is also heart-rending because there is not enough time available to return to each prison for subsequent courses. In light of this dilemma, I hope to make the material I have developed available to others who would like to teach in prison. Specific to Columbia Correctional Institute, there may be other biblical counselors who can become involved in teaching there. First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Florida, is only about an hour's drive away from the prison and has a number of people involved in biblical counseling. My hope is to facilitate this type of ministry by others at Columbia as well as at other prisons.

Mostly, my amazement at God's love and grace and my gratefulness for his salvation continues to deepen. I am amazed that he uses me as a blessing to others and am thrilled each time I see God at work in this ministry (1 Cor 1:26-31). As I get to speak about the indicatives of Scripture—what Christ has done for us—I get more and more excited that I am among those whom he has saved for His purposes (Eph 1:3-8).

Conclusion

This project served to shape the ministry of Northshore Biblical Counseling and Training Center in a definitive way. While I had been teaching similar material, the focus in the past was mainly to share biblical truths in terms of personal sanctification. While that is always the first focus when learning precepts of biblical counseling, the ministry is now focused more on actually helping prison inmates to be sound, scriptural counselors to other inmates.

The students have shown that biblical counseling is needed in prison, many inmates have a desire to provide biblical counsel, and, once they are properly equipped, they have the ability to biblically counsel. To God be the glory.

APPENDIX 1

FUNDAMENTALS OF BIBLICAL
COUNSELING SURVEY

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify the current understanding and practices of scriptural counseling of the participant. This research is being conducted by Donald Roy for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will answer questions before the project and you will answer the same questions at the conclusion of the project. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. 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.

Directions: Answer the following questions: (1) Place a check by the multiple-choice questions. (2) Some questions ask you to give your opinion using the following scale: SD = strongly disagree, D = disagree, DS = disagree somewhat, AS = agree somewhat, A = agree, SA = strongly agree; please circle the appropriate answer.

1. With which faith group do you identify?
☐ Evangelical Christian
☐ Roman Catholic
☐ Muslim
☐ Jewish
☐ Other (Please specify): _____
2. How long have you actively participated in your faith? _____
3. What is your age? _____
4. The Sacred Writings of my faith contain answers to all of life's issues. SD D DS AS A SA
5. Psychology is valuable in helping us solve the root cause of life's problems. SD D DS AS A SA
6. Psychological theories come from solid scientific research. SD D DS AS A SA
7. I would recommend attending Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and similar groups as the best way to deal with addiction. SD D DS AS A SA

- | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 8. | The Sacred Writings of my faith teach me how to deal with depression. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 9. | The Sacred Writings of my faith teach me how to deal with anger. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 10. | The Sacred Writings of my faith teach me how to deal with worry. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 11. | I am comfortable helping others grow spiritually. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 12. | I am comfortable helping others understand how to apply my faith to specific issues in life. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 13. | I have a hard time forgiving people who have hurt me. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 14. | When I have conflict with someone, I ask forgiveness for what I did wrong. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 15. | I have trouble forgiving myself. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 16. | A counselor should not develop a friendship with people he counsels in order to remain objective. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 17. | I would like to learn how to help others grow in my faith. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 18. | The main purpose of counseling is to help a person deal with a difficult situation. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 19. | Sacred Writings are more useful for providing comfort than solutions for life's problems. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 20. | How often do you read the Sacred Writings of your faith?
<input type="checkbox"/> Daily
<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly
<input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
<input type="checkbox"/> Only when I want to study a subject
<input type="checkbox"/> Never | | | | | | |
| 21. | If a friend was struggling with depression, I would recommend he visit a
<input type="checkbox"/> Psychologist
<input type="checkbox"/> Medical Doctor
<input type="checkbox"/> Pastor/Cleric
<input type="checkbox"/> Another Friend
<input type="checkbox"/> None of the above | | | | | | |

22. Depression is mainly caused by
_____ Bad circumstances
_____ Making poor choices
_____ Chemical imbalance in the brain
_____ Wrong understanding of God
23. If someone is angry most of the time, it is mainly because of
_____ Bad circumstances
_____ Being treated wrongly by others
_____ Chemical imbalance in the brain
_____ Wrong understanding of God
24. If you were to attend counseling training, which of the following issues would you most like to learn about? (1 is most important, 5 is least important)
_____ Anger
_____ Worry
_____ Fear
_____ Depression
_____ Temptation
25. If you were to attend counseling training, what other topics would you like to learn about?

APPENDIX 2

COURSE EVALUATION RUBRIC FOR ACBC COUNSELORS

Name of evaluator _____ Unit # _____ Date _____

Biblical Counseling Curriculum Evaluation					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Biblical Faithfulness					
The curriculum is hermeneutically sound. All Scripture is properly interpreted, explained and applied.					
The curriculum is theologically sound.					
Scope					
The curriculum sufficiently covers each issue it is designed to address.					
The curriculum sufficiently covers the basics of Biblical Counseling.					
Methodology					
The curriculum makes appropriate use of various learning approaches.					
Practicality					
The curriculum covers how to properly apply Scripture to various issues.					
The material sufficiently addresses counseling methodology.					
At the completion of this course, students should be able to counsel others biblically.					

APPENDIX 3

COURSE EVALUATION RUBRIC FOR PRISON CHAPLAINS

Name of evaluator _____ Unit # _____ Date _____

Biblical Counseling Curriculum Evaluation					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Understandability					
The curriculum is written at a level that is appropriate for most inmates.					
Applicability					
The curriculum addresses topics that inmates deal with in prison life.					
The curriculum addresses issues the inmates will deal with when they leave prison.					
Practicality					
The curriculum will help equip inmates to deal with the difficulties of prison life.					
The curriculum will help equip inmates to help other inmates.					

APPENDIX 4

BIBLICAL COUNSELING COURSE SURVEY

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify the current understanding and practices of biblical counseling of the participant. This research is being conducted by Donald Roy for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will answer questions before the project and you will answer the same questions at the conclusion of the project. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. 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.

This survey will be administered before and after the course. In order for this survey to remain anonymous, please use an unique four-number identifier. Using the same identifier on both the before and after surveys will enable an accurate measure the success of this course.

Four-Number Identifier: _____

Directions: Answer the following questions: (1) Place a check by the multiple-choice questions. (2) Some questions ask you to give your opinion using the following scale: SD = strongly disagree, D = disagree, DS = disagree somewhat, AS = agree somewhat, A = agree, SA = strongly agree; please circle the appropriate answer.

- | | | | | | | |
|--|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 1. Psychology is science just as much as medicine is science. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 2. Man is basically good. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 3. Psychological help can bring about lasting change. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 4. Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and other similar groups are valuable resources that aid a Christian in remaining sober and clean. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 5. Pastors should refer church members to a psychologist when they are depressed. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 6. Only trained experts should counsel others. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |

7.	The Bible teaches that all Christians should be able to counsel others.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
8.	Christian psychologists can accurately combine Biblical truth with psychology.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
9.	Biblical counseling is mainly about learning God's commands.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
10.	Sin is the main cause of our problems.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
11.	Suffering is never God's plan for His children.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
12.	The Bible is all we need to address life's issues.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
13.	After becoming a Christian, God changes us so we no longer struggle with temptation.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
14.	Theology is not important – I just need to love Jesus.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
15.	All personal conflict is the result of sin.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
16.	Saying "I'm sorry" is the same as asking forgiveness.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
17.	If I don't feel like forgiving someone, it's hypocritical to forgive him.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
18.	If someone has hurt me, I should wait until I'm ready to forgive that person before I talk to him.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
19.	If someone hurts me, I should always simply "forgive and forget."	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
20.	God wants me to be happy in life.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
21.	Some people struggle with anger because they inherited an angry nature.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
22.	Venting is an appropriate way of dealing with anger.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
23.	Depression is a disease.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
24.	Alcoholism is a disease.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
25.	Doctors conduct tests to determine if brain chemistry is out of balance before prescribing anti-depressants.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

26.	It is sinful to worry.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
27.	Fear is always sinful.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
28.	All temptation is sinful.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
29.	Temptation usually starts from outside influences.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
30.	The way we were raised determines how we react to bad situations.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
31.	I feel comfortable counseling others who are struggling with sin.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
32.	I feel comfortable counseling people who are struggling with suffering.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
33.	I have a desire to counsel others.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

APPENDIX 5

ROLE PLAY EVALUATION FORM

Role Play Observation					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Counseling Methodology					
The counselor listens carefully.					
The counselor takes notes.					
The counselor shows compassion.					
The counselor provides hope.					
The counselor prays with the counselee.					
Counseling Focus					
The counselor tries to discover the heart issue.					
The counselor helps the counselee see God's sovereignty and love.					
Counseling Content					
The counselor applies appropriate Scripture.					
The counselor assigns useful homework.					

APPENDIX 6

COURSE EVALUATION FORM

Columbia Correctional Institution Biblical Counseling Seminar Course Critique

Please take a few minutes after each session to evaluate the class. Your evaluation will be used to improve the course as needed. Circling 1 in the “Material” block means the material was not clear or not useful. Circling 5 means it was very clear and very useful. Circling 1 in the “Instructor” block means the material was presented poorly and circling 5 means the instructor was outstanding.

Please add any remarks for each session that you’d like to make. There’s also a section for additional remarks on the next page.

Monday

Session	Material	Instructor	Remarks / Making it Pertinent to Prison Life
What is Biblical Counseling? (Part 1)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
What is Biblical Counseling? (Part 2)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
What is Biblical Counseling? (Part 3)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
General Principles of Biblical Counseling (Part 1)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
General Principles of Biblical Counseling (Part 2)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	

Tuesday

Session	Material	Instructor	Remarks / Making it Pertinent to Prison Life
General Principles of Biblical Counseling (Part 3)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
How Do People Change? (Part 1)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
How Do People Change? (Part 2)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
Theology and Biblical Counseling	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
Peacemaking (Part 1)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	

Wednesday

Session	Material	Instructor	Remarks / Making it Pertinent to Prison Life
Peacemaking (Part 2)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
Peacemaking (Part 3)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
Grace When Things Are Hard	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
Anger Mismanagement: Only Grace Transforms the Heart	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
Biblical Counseling: Depression	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	

Thursday

Session	Material	Instructor	Remarks / Making it Pertinent to Prison Life
Biblical Counseling: Worry and Anxiety	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
Biblical Counseling: Fear	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
Temptation: Part 1	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
Temptation: Part 2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
Understanding the Influences of Nature and Nurture	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	

Please feel free to write any additional comments:

APPENDIX 7

INSTRUCTOR COURSE EVALUATION

Instructor Course Evaluation	
Expected Learning Antecedents	Actual Learning Antecedents
Expected Learning Transactions	Actual Learning Transactions
Expected Learning Outcomes	Actual Learning Outcomes

APPENDIX 8

DATA RESULTS OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING
COURSE SURVEY

Table A1. T-test results

t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means			
	Variable 1	Variable 2	Difference
Mean	115.6315789	126.368421	10.73684
Variance	221.6900585	434.690058	
Observations	19	19	
Pearson Correlation	0.872908735		
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0		
Df	18		
t Stat	-4.375113254	95.62489	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.000182509		
t Critical one-tail	1.734063607		
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.000365018		
t Critical two-tail	2.10092204		

Table A2. Results of pre-biblical counseling course survey, questions 1 through 11

Student	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 5	Q 6	Q 7	Q 8	Q 9	Q 10	Q 11
1	2	3	1	3	4	3	1	4	2	4	2
2	2	6	2	2	3	2	5	2	2	6	2
3	3	1	1	2	5	2	3	2	2	5	2
4	2	5	2	2	3	2	2	3	3	5	5
5	1	6	3	5	6	4	5	3	4	6	6
6	4	1	3	1	6	6	4	2	3	3	4
7	2	6	2	3	5	2	4	1	4	6	5
8	4	3	5	6	6	6	5	3	3	6	2
9	1	5	6	6	4	6	6	6	1	6	6
10	1	4	2	3	3	6	1	6	5	5	1
11	2	5	3	3	2	5	5	1	2	6	6
12	2	3	2	1	5	6	6	1	3	3	1
13	3	6	1	1	6	5	6	1	1	6	1
14	2	1	1	1	3	5	5	2	1	6	2
15	4	4	3	2	4	4	6	2	2	6	6
16	1	2	3	1	6	3	4	1	1	6	1
17	3	5	3	5	6	1	6	1	1	6	6
18	2	5	4	3	5	5	4	3	2	6	1
19	5	5	2	2	3	3	5	5	4	5	1
Total	46	76	49	52	85	76	83	49	46	102	60
Ave.	2.4	4	2.5	2.7	4.4	4	4.3	2.5	2.4	5.3	3.1

Table A3. Results of pre-biblical counseling course survey, questions 12 through 22

Student	Q 12	Q 13	Q 14	Q 15	Q 16	Q 17	Q 18	Q 19	Q 20	Q 21	Q 22
1	4	2	4	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	5
2	6	5	2	5	2	5	2	2	1	2	5
3	6	2	1	6	1	1	4	2	2	1	4
4	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	3	2	3	2
5	6	1	2	2	3	1	6	2	1	6	6
6	4	5	2	1	6	6	6	1	1	1	2
7	4	6	5	4	6	5	5	5	3	3	5
8	6	6	6	3	4	5	6	4	1	2	4
9	6	6	3	2	4	1	6	1	2	1	1
10	4	6	5	4	3	5	5	5	1	3	1
11	5	3	4	3	5	3	5	2	1	3	4
12	5	3	2	3	2	1	2	3	1	2	3
13	6	6	1	6	5	2	1	2	1	1	1
14	4	5	3	5	2	2	5	2	2	5	2
15	4	3	4	4	5	2	3	4	2	5	3
16	4	5	5	5	1	5	2	5	1	5	3
17	6	6	3	4	3	5	3	1	1	2	2
18	6	5	2	5	5	2	5	3	1	3	5
19	5	4	3	3	3	6	5	2	1	3	3
Total	96	82	62	73	67	64	78	51	27	53	61
Ave.	5.0	4.3	3.2	3.8	3.5	3.3	4.1	2.6	1.4	2.7	3.2

Table A4. Results of pre-biblical counseling course survey, questions 23 through 33

Student	Q 23	Q 24	Q 25	Q 26	Q 27	Q 28	Q 29	Q 30	Q 31	Q 32	Q 33	Ave.
1	2	2	2	5	2	4	2	2	5	5	5	2.8
2	5	5	3	2	2	2	2	2	5	5	5	3.3
3	1	1	1	4	2	4	1	1	6	5	5	2.6
4	3	3	3	5	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	3.4
5	6	6	2	5	4	4	1	3	6	6	6	4.0
6	1	1	5	6	3	3	3	6	4	4	4	3.3
7	4	4	3	5	5	6	6	3	6	6	6	4.3
8	4	4	6	5	4	5	3	5	3	2	5	4.3
9	2	2	2	6	2	1	5	1	5	5	5	3.6
10	1	1	3	6	2	4	2	3	4	5	4	3.4
11	2	2	3	6	1	5	2	3	4	4	4	3.4
12	2	2	2	5	3	2	1	6	5	5	6	3
13	2	2	5	5	2	5	2	2	6	6	6	3.3
14	2	2	2	2	5	2	3	2	5	5	6	3.0
15	3	3	3	4	5	3	2	2	5	5	5	3.6
16	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3.1
17	2	2	1	6	3	4	2	2	6	6	6	3.6
18	5	5	2	5	5	3	1	3	5	5	6	3.8
19	2	2	5	5	4	4	4	3	5	5	5	3.6
Total	52	52	56	90	60	67	48	55	92	91	96	
Ave.	2.7	2.7	2.9	4.7	3.1	3.5	2.5	2.8	4.8	4.7	5.0	3.5

Table A5. Results of post-biblical counseling course survey, questions 1 through 11

Student	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 5	Q 6	Q 7	Q 8	Q 9	Q 10	Q 11
1	3	2	2	5	3	2	5	3	2	2	2
2	5	6	5	2	5	5	5	2	2	6	1
3	1	1	4	2	4	1	6	3	3	6	3
4	2	5	5	2	3	2	5	4	3	5	2
5	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	3	3	6	6
6	2	3	3	1	5	5	5	2	2	4	5
7	6	6	3	3	5	4	5	2	5	6	6
8	5	5	6	6	5	5	6	5	2	6	5
9	5	5	5	1	5	5	5	1	5	5	5
10	2	3	5	5	4	5	6	5	2	1	1
11	1	6	2	2	5	5	6	1	1	6	6
12	2	3	2	2	4	4	6	1	2	6	1
13	3	4	3	3	6	1	6	2	1	6	1
14	5	5	2	1	3	3	6	3	1	6	3
15	5	6	3	5	4	5	6	1	1	6	5
16	1	1	3	3	5	5	4	2	1	6	2
17	1	5	3	5	6	1	6	1	1	6	6
18	3	6	2	1	3	5	5	3	3	6	3
19	2	2	3	1	3	2	5	3	3	5	1
Total	60	80	67	56	84	70	103	47	43	100	64
Ave.	3.1	4.2	3.5	2.9	4.4	3.6	5.4	2.4	2.2	5.2	3.3
Ave. Diff	.73	.21	.94	.21	-.05	-.31	1.1	-.10	-.15	-.10	.21

Table A6. Results of post-biblical counseling course survey, questions 12 through 23

Student	Q 12	Q 13	Q 14	Q 15	Q 16	Q 17	Q 18	Q 19	Q 20	Q 21	Q 22	Q 23
1	5	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2
2	6	5	2	3	5	5	5	2	1	5	5	5
3	5	3	1	5	4	2	3	1	1	4	1	2
4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	3	2	3	3	5
5	5	4	3	3	4	2	5	2	1	4	6	6
6	6	6	2	1	6	6	3	2	1	3	3	1
7	4	6	6	5	6	5	5	6	3	5	5	5
8	6	6	6	5	5	6	6	5	2	6	6	6
9	5	5	5	6	5	5	5	2	2	3	2	2
10	6	6	6	5	2	2	2	5	1	2	2	4
11	6	6	5	1	6	1	6	2	1	1	5	6
12	6	1	1	5	4	1	1	5	1	3	3	2
13	6	6	3	6	3	2	3	6	1	1	3	6
14	4	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	1	4	2	5
15	5	5	5	5	6	1	2	5	1	6	5	5
16	2	6	5	5	4	4	1	5	1	6	3	5
17	6	5	5	4	2	5	3	1	1	5	2	3
18	5	6	3	3	5	2	3	5	1	2	5	5
19	4	3	4	2	5	3	5	5	1	4	3	1
Total	97	89	73	72	81	61	67	66	25	69	67	76
Ave.	5.1	4.6	3.8	3.7	4.2	3.2	3.5	3.4	1.3	3.6	3.5	4.0
Ave. Diff	.05	.36	.57	-.05	.73	-.15	-.57	.78	-.10	0.84	0.31	1.26

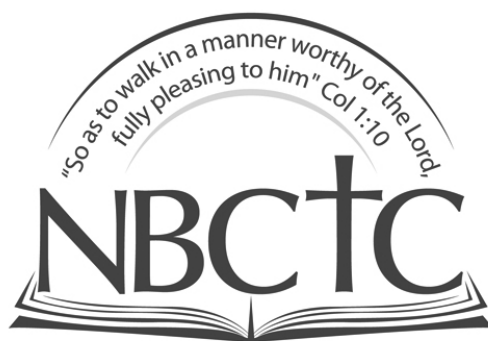
Table A7. Results of post-biblical counseling course survey, questions 24 through 33

Student	Q 24	Q 25	Q 26	Q27	Q 28	Q 29	Q 30	Q 31	Q 32	Q 33	Ave.	Ave. Diff.
1	2	2	5	2	2	3	2	4	4	4	2.72	-0.15
2	5	5	5	5	5	2	2	5	5	5	4.15	0.84
3	2	2	5	1	4	1	4	5	6	5	3.0	0.36
4	5	4	5	2	3	2	2	4	4	5	3.7	0.27
5	6	3	6	4	4	5	3	6	5	6	4.5	0.51
6	1	4	6	1	3	1	6	5	4	4	3.3	0
7	5	5	6	3	6	6	3	6	6	6	4.9	0.57
8	6	5	6	1	6	5	5	5	5	6	5.1	0.87
9	2	2	5	1	1	5	5	5	5	5	3.9	0.24
10	2	5	5	2	2	6	3	4	4	5	3.6	0.18
11	6	5	5	5	5	1	3	4	4	5	3.9	0.48
12	2	4	5	2	2	2	5	6	6	6	3.2	0.21
13	6	6	5	4	5	4	1	6	6	6	3.9	0.57
14	2	5	1	6	2	2	2	5	5	6	3.2	0.12
15	5	5	6	5	2	2	3	6	6	6	4.3	0.67
16	5	5	6	2	2	2	5	5	5	5	3.6	0.57
17	2	2	6	1	4	2	2	5	5	6	3.5	-0.03
18	5	3	5	5	5	2	5	5	5	6	3.9	0.12
19	1	6	2	6	6	5	2	5	5	5	3.4	-0.27
Total	70	78	95	58	69	58	63	96	95	102		
Ave.	3.6	4.1	5	3.0	3.6	3.0	3.3	5.0	5.0	5.3	3.8	0.3
Ave. Diff	0.94	1.15	0.26	-.10	0.10	0.52	0.42	0.21	0.21	0.31		

APPENDIX 9
INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL COUNSELING
FOR PRISON INMATES

This appendix is a condensed version of the course syllabus used at Columbia Correctional Institution in August and September 2015. The full syllabus is 78 pages in length.

Northshore Biblical Counseling and Training Center
Introduction to Biblical Counseling
For
Prison Inmates



by
Donald Roy
Director, NBCTC

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LESSON 1

THE NEED FOR BIBLICAL COUNSELING

Adapted from the Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship
Care and Discipleship Course Handbook

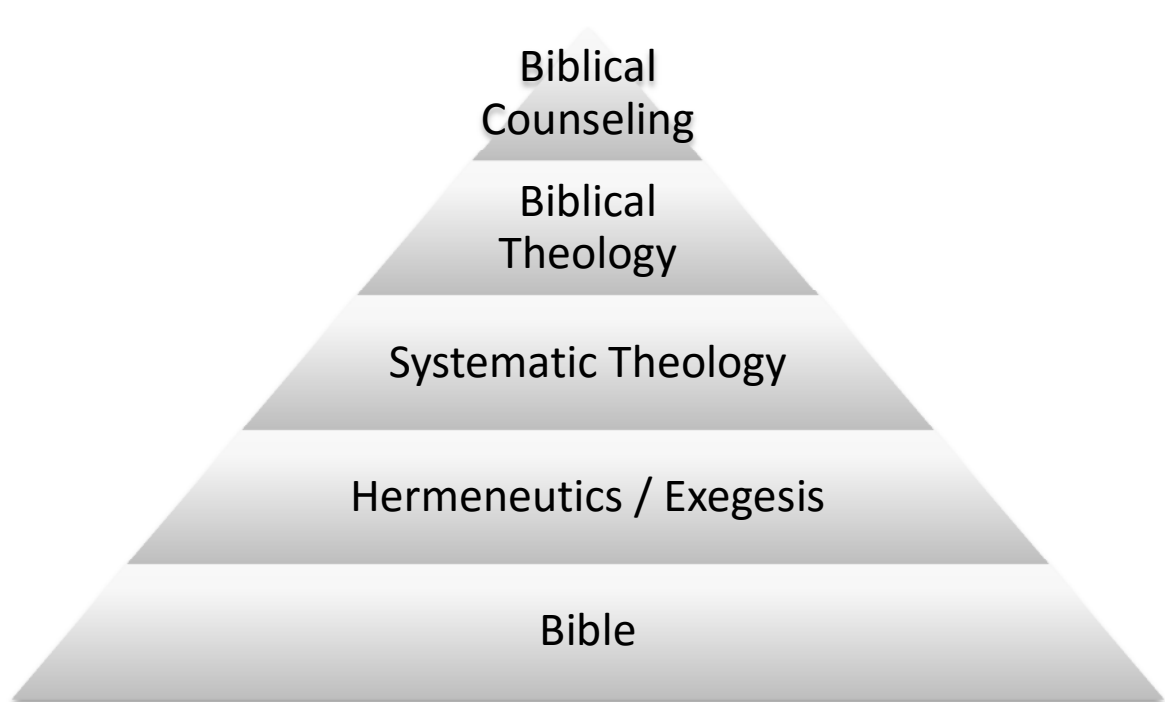
- A. The religion of secular humanism.
 - a. We live in a culture that is mostly atheistic and humanistic.
 - b. Prov 14:12, “There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end of it is death.”
- B. Failure of the church
 - a. 19th Century and earlier, when people had problems, they went to the pastor for help.
 - b. As psychology became popular in society in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, seminaries and churches accepted much of the teaching; as a result they taught pastors to send troubled people to psychiatrists.
- C. The emergence of the biblical counseling movement.
 - a. Jay Adams: 1970’s, *Competent to Counsel*.
- D. Harmful errors of modern psychology.
 - a. Psychology is not a pure science.
 - i. There are over 250 views and approaches in psychology and many of them are contradictory.
 - b. In what areas is psychology valuable and accurate?
 - i. True medical issues, such as Alzheimer’s Disease, Dementia, Traumatic Brain Injury, or other physical brain issues.
 - ii. Observation, such as common behavioral patterns.
- E. The main problem with psychology is the unscriptural presuppositions.
 - a. A faulty view of man.
 - i. Evolution: man is only an advanced animal.
 - ii. Man is basically good, or at worst a blank slate.
 - iii. Man is autonomous and is able to solve his problems without God’s help.
 - b. Excuses sin and denies personal responsibility.
 - i. The medical model: calling sin sickness – “Mental illness.”
 - c. No fixed, moral values: relativism.
 - i. Sinful behaviors are legitimized.
 - ii. Promotion of socially acceptable behaviors: gratification of carnal appetites, ventilation, etc.
 - iii. Often attempts to relieve God-given guilt by destroying the conscience.
 - iv. No place for God.
- F. Secular psychology is powerless to bring about meaningful change.

LESSON 2

WHAT IS BIBLICAL COUNSELING?

Adapted from the Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship
Care and Discipleship Course Handbook

- A. The Bible is a fully sufficient textbook for counseling.
- B. The goal of biblical counseling is to give instruction from the Bible so that the counselee can achieve God's goals in his life.
- C. Key concepts in biblical counseling.
 - a. Biblical counseling is God-centered.
 - b. Biblical counseling is founded on sound theology
 - c. Biblical counseling confronts sin as the source of mankind's spiritual problems.
 - d. Biblical counseling is Christ-centered and redemptive
 - e. Biblical counseling aims at the heart.
 - f. Biblical counseling is based on the all-sufficient and infallible Scripture.
 - g. Biblical counseling relies upon the Holy Spirit.
 - h. Biblical counseling is gentle and compassionate.
 - i. Biblical counseling is not merely for an elite group of professionals.
 - j. Biblical counseling ideally takes place within the context of the local church.
- D. Who is qualified to counsel?
 - a. Counselor qualifications are spiritual not merely academic
 - b. Grow in your biblical knowledge.
 - i. Biblical counseling = practical theology = discipleship.



- E. Ultimately counseling is God's Work

LESSON 3

THE PROCESS OF BIBLICAL CHANGE

Adapted from the Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship
Care and Discipleship Course Handbook

- A. Counseling is about helping people change.
 - a. Not fixing a problem or changing circumstances.
- B. The change we as biblical counselors seek is unique.
 - a. Col 1:28, “That we may present everyone mature in Christ.”
- C. Unbiblical approaches to change.
- D. The Bible sets forth a balanced perspective on how change takes place.
 - a. Change begins by understanding and applying the gospel.
 - b. Scripture begins with the indicatives – what God has done for us in Christ, as the ground for the imperatives.
 - c. Specific exhortations are grounded in the gospel.
 - d. This implies that only Christians are able to change according to the will of God.
 - e. The change we need is inward and Godward.
- E. We and our counselees need to comprehend that who we are in Christ is the basis for the changed lives we want to live.
 - a. The gospel is just as important for our sanctification as it is for our justification.
 - b. Many people have a false identity and label themselves according to their past sin rather than their new identity in Christ.
 - c. The first imperative in Romans is to consider your identity in Christ.
 - d. Understanding your union with Christ is the key to your growth in holiness.
 - e. You can’t go on sinning because you are united to Christ.
 - f. You have been set free from slavery to sin to serve righteousness.
 - g. The fact that you are united with Christ does not mean that it is no longer possible for you to sin.
- F. While the gospel enables us to change, we must exert effort.
 - a. The imperatives (God’s law) shows us our need for Christ.
 - b. God’s law also shows us how He desires His redeemed people to live.
- G. Biblical examples
 - a. Jesus tells us what we must do in order to abide in Him. John 5:1-11.
 - i. The NT is filled with specific exhortations to actively fight sin and to faithfully and diligently pursue holiness.
 - b. It is not enough to merely hear and agree with God’s word, we must do what He commands.
- H. Our motive for obedience is crucial.
 - a. Not in order to make ourselves more acceptable to God, but out of love and gratitude to God for what He has done for us – to glorify Him.

LESSON 4

ADDRESSING HEART ISSUES

Adapted from lecture material by Dr. Stuart W. Scott

- A. Every heart is a worshipping heart.
 - a. All creation is created to worship God.
 - b. Only God is worthy of worship.
 - c. We must understand worship:
 - i. Seek: What you go after and how you prioritize my life.
 - ii. Serve: Now it controls you.
 - iii. Sacrifice: You sacrifice to get what you worship.
 - iv. Spend: Time, energy, and money.
 - v. Speak: About what you worship. What do you talk about when not directed; what do you gravitate to?
 - vi. Trust: This will fulfill me when I get it.
- B. The heart is the vehicle of worship.
 - a. The heart is the “real” you: cognition, affections, volition.
 - b. The heart is the temple of worship.
 - c. The heart is where belief and unbelief take place (Rom 10:9-10).
- C. There are many terms for sinful heart worship.
 - a. The Bible has several words for idolatrous lusts.
- D. Contemporary labels for idolatrous lusts that can all be self-serving.
- E. How to recognize idolatrous lusts.
 - a. A desire, sometimes good in and of itself, becomes idolatrous as I am consumed with it for my own benefit (James 4).
 - b. I am usually willing to sin to get this desire or sin if I don’t.
- F. Beware of introspection.
 - a. 2 Cor 13:5 tells us to examine ourselves, but it is in order to go to the cross, repent, and move forward, not to wallow in our sin and failures.
- G. The unsaved life in idol worship.
 - a. They are idolaters, worshipping a substitute god for self-worship, and dead in their sin.
 - i. Idolatrous lusts promise, but they don’t deliver.
 - ii. Anxiety, fear, worry, when we don’t get it.
 - iii. Seek a false refuge when not getting the idol.
- H. Even the saved must grow in worshipping God alone.
 - a. Sanctification often involves God revealing our lusts (out of unbelief) and self-focused moments.
 - b. It takes conscious effort to grow spiritually.
 - c. We grow in our love for God and people. Change in focus.
- I. The Gospel is just as important for sanctification as it is for justification.
 - a. Grace is foundational for change and our growth in faith.
 - b. Grace is instrumental in the change process from our union in Christ to our communion with Christ.
- J. We look forward to perfect worship of God alone in glory.
 - a. 1 Cor 13:12, “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face.”

LESSON 5

KEY ELEMENTS OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING—PART 1

Adapted from the Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship
Care and Discipleship Course Handbook

- A. Overview: Involvement, Investigation, Interpretation, Instruction, Intention, Implementation, Integration.
- B. Involvement. Gal 6:1.
 - a. Avoid “Professionalism.”
 - b. Don’t become an emotional crutch – make them dependent on God, not you.
 - c. Pray with and for your counselee.
 - d. Hope must be built from the earliest stages of counseling.
 - e. What can be done to build hope?
 - f. Give manageable homework assignments (projects for growth).
- C. Investigation
 - a. Begin with a plan. Prov 21:5, “The plans of the diligent lead to advantage.”
 - b. Don’t jump to conclusions. Prov 18:13, “He who gives an answer before hearing it is folly and shame.”
 - c. Learn to ask good questions and to listen. Prov 20:5, “The purpose in a man’s heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.”
 - d. The PREACH principle for investigating.
 - i. Physical: sleep, diet, exercise, drugs, medication (many psychotropic and prescribed), caffeine, etc.
 - ii. Resources: what help is available: family, friends for accountability?
 - iii. Emotional: fear, worry, anxiety, bitterness, loneliness, depression, anger.
 - iv. Action: what are they doing?
 - v. Conceptual – what are they thinking?
 - vi. Historical
 - e. Where possible, hear from all parties involved.
 - f. Not all problems are caused by personal sin.
 - g. One of the most important issues to determine is whether or not the person is a believer.
 - h. Also gather non-verbal data.

LESSON 6

KEY ELEMENTS OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING—PART 2

Adapted from the Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship
Care and Discipleship Course Handbook

A. Interpretation

- a. After you have gathered adequate data, you need to draw some conclusions.
- b. Evaluate your counselee's spiritual condition.
- c. Often the counselee will not know what his problem is, or he will have incorrectly identified his problem.
- d. You want to give biblical labels to the counselee's situation.
- e. What insights does the Bible give for the probable cause of such problems?
- f. Distinguish between the symptoms and the causes of the problem.
- g. Often your greatest challenge will be to sort out and prioritize the counselee's issues.
- h. Problems stem from the heart.

B. Instruction – 2 Tim 3:16-17

- a. Rely upon the inerrant and powerful Word of God.
 - i. Handle the Scriptures carefully.
 - ii. Use the texts for the purpose God gave them.
- b. Prepare counseling outlines.
- c. Teach interactively and creatively.
- d. Teach redemptively (answers are in Christ).
- e. You must deal firmly with sin.
- f. Sin must be repented of – put off.
- g. New life patterns must be established – put on.
- h. Be careful not to be legalistic: commanding beyond what the Bible says.
 - i. Differentiate clearly between your opinion and Biblical truth.

LESSON 7

KEY ELEMENTS OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING—PART 3

Adapted from the Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship
Care and Discipleship Course Handbook

- A. Intention – Prov 14:23, “In all labor there is profit but in talk there is poverty.”
 - a. Counseling is more than instruction.
 - i. Counselee must act upon what you teach.
 - b. The counselee is responsible to commit to obedience to God.
 - c. Motives are crucial.
 - d. Deal with behavior, not mere feelings. The counselee must agree to obey God, whether he feels like it or not.
 - e. Be prepared to meet with resistance.
 - f. Continue to offer hope: faith in Christ works.
 - g. If a counselee refuses to do God’s will, you may need to end the counseling relationship.
- B. Implementation
 - a. The counselee cannot expect you to change him.
 - i. The counseling session will not change you, the work will.
 - b. The counseling sessions are not ends in and of themselves.
 - i. Action and obedience are needed.
 - c. The greatest progress in counseling is made in between sessions.
 - i. Prepare for temptation: concrete steps.
 - ii. Prepare for failures.
 - iii. Expect growth
 - d. Concrete homework assignments should be given – projects for growth.
- C. Integration
 - a. Regular fellowship in the local group of believers should be used in maintaining accountability.
 - b. Best if he has at least one other friend for accountability.
 - c. Sometimes church discipline may be required – Matt 18:15-17.
 - d. You are not seeking merely a solution to one problem, but a total restructuring of a life over a period of time.
 - i. Seeking to help the person think biblically.
 - ii. Seeking to help the person make God’s glory his highest aim.
 - e. New, godly habits are built over time.
 - f. The goal is that the counselee will be able to counsel himself and others.
 - g. We want to be a witness to lost inmates and an encouragement to fellow believers by our Christian living in prison.

LESSON 8

DEALING WITH TEMPTATION—PART 1

Adapted from the Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship
Care and Discipleship Course Handbook

- A. Temptation follows a pattern.
 - a. James 1:13-15 – Lust leads to sin which leads to death.
- B. Using a narrative passage as instruction against temptation.
 - a. 2 Sam 11:1-5 – David’s sin with Bathsheba.
 - b. This passage shows that the Bible is honest about its heroes.
 - c. It serves as a warning against sin and presumption.
 - d. It is instructive about how weak we are despite what are seemingly great strengths – Abraham, Moses, Eli, Samuel, David.
 - e. It offers hope to the worst of sinners who repents.
- C. David did not fall suddenly – there were small steps of disobedience and not being on guard.
 - a. David acquired many wives; apparently prosperity and security had put David off guard.
 - b. David drifted into ingratitude and undervaluing the things of God.
 - c. David was guilty of neglecting his duties as king.
- D. Sin follows a progression – first, sin is conceived in the heart. James 1:13-14.
 - a. Don’t try to blame God when you are tempted.
 - i. David sees beautiful Bathsheba bathing – should have turned away at this point.
 - ii. Temptation enters in through the eye-gate.
 - iii. David then moves from looking to entertaining lustful thoughts as he inquires about the bathing woman.
 - 1. Matt 5:28 – looking at a woman with lustful intent.
 - iv. The answer David received should have stopped him in his tracks.
 - 1. 2 Sam 11:3 – Uriah was one of David’s mighty men.
- E. Sinful desire in the heart ultimately results in the tragic act of sin.
 - a. 2 Sam 11:4 – David sends for Bathsheba, thus involving others in his crime, then arranges for Uriah’s death at the hands of others.
 - b. David’s attempt to cover up his guilt will only compound his sin.
 - c. David’s sin will affect him for the rest of his life.
 - i. Sexual sin is not merely a private matter which involves only two people.
- F. How can we avoid falling into sin?
 - a. Be on your guard: don’t think it can’t happen to you: guard your heart, eyes, thoughts.
 - i. Neglect of the small things can lead to a big fall.
 - ii. Don’t think you can toy with sin without experiencing consequences.
 - b. Nurture your own relationship with the Lord – don’t let your love for Him grow cold.
 - c. Stay busy fulfilling God’s call on your life.

LESSON 9

DEALING WITH TEMPTATION—PART 2

Adapted from the Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship
Care and Discipleship Course Handbook

- A. Stay busy fulfilling God's call on your life.
 - a. You have a call on your life, even in prison.
 - b. Titus 2:11-14: We don't just put-off sin, but we actively put-on good works to glorify God.
 - c. Your time is not wasted in prison.
 - i. Paul's prison Epistles – Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon.
 - ii. Philippians – "joy" mentioned 17 times; Praetorian Guard, who were Paul's guard, brought the gospel to England.
 - d. Evangelism: Lennie Spitale – "There is no more fertile ground for evangelism in this country than inside prisons."
 - i. Inmates and CO's.
 - e. Personal spiritual growth: Rom 8:28-29.
 - f. Encouraging the brethren: Heb 10:24-25.
 - g. Evangelism and encouragement to family and friends outside prison.
- B. If you have started to give into temptation, abort the sin before it is too late.
 - a. At every stage, David could have chosen to turn from sin.
 - b. Take radical action to kill your sin before it kills you.
 - c. Seek accountability – secrecy keeps sin alive.
 - d. The longer you wait, the deeper into sin you will get, and the greater the consequences.
- C. God offers hope and grace to fallen sinners.
 - a. The significance of David's fall goes beyond merely warning us about temptation: David repented and received grace and forgiveness.
 - b. David, for all his excellent qualities was not able to fulfill God's covenant.
 - i. You are worse than you ever wanted to think, but loved more than you ever thought possible.
 - c. The story is not about great men, but about a great Redeemer and God's great love for us.
 - d. Jesus comes to the aid of those who are tempted.
 - e. Jesus forgives those who confess and forsake their sin.
- D. You need to see that God is most desirable.
- E. Counseling someone struggling with temptation.
 - a. What is the counselee's history in dealing with temptation?
 - b. What is the counselee's pattern of falling into this temptation?
 - c. Are you sure the person is a Christian?
 - d. Keep a temptation log.
 - e. Radically deal with sources of temptation.
 - f. Fill your mind with what is best; Be busy serving God and others.
 - g. Establish accountability. Effective accountability (seven principles from *Finally Free* by Heath Lambert).

LESSON 10

DEALING WITH ANGER—PART 1

Adapted from the Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship
Care and Discipleship Course Handbook

- A. Anger is a problem both in the world and in the church.
- B. What is anger?
 - a. Anger is an emotion.
 - b. All anger seems righteous.
 - c. Anger has a physical component.
 - d. Anger is active.
- C. Anger is not necessarily sinful.
 - a. God gets angry.
 - b. Jesus was angry.
 - c. Righteous anger is rare!
- D. Anger is very deceptive.
 - a. We typically try to justify our anger.
 - b. Some deny their anger or try to justify themselves by calling it something else.
 - c. Many blame anger on something outside of themselves.
 - d. Some try to blame genetics (nature) or their upbringing (nurture).
- E. Anger is dangerous.
 - a. Anger is usually murderous in nature.
 - b. Anger gives the devil an opportunity.
 - c. Those who give in to anger are at risk of losing control.
 - d. Anger is destructive and leads to many other sins.
- F. Anger is contagious.
 - a. Prov 22:24-25, “Make no friendship with a man given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man, lest you learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare.”
- G. What causes out of control anger?
 - a. Explanations of secular psychology – nature and nurture.
 - b. Scripture deals with most anger as a sin issue.
 - c. Scripture teaches that anger begins in the heart.
 - d. We become angry because we want something too much (James 4:1-4).
 - i. What do I seek and treasure more than Christ?
 - ii. Angry people have false beliefs that they possess certain rights including the right to express their anger (judgment/revenge) when their rights are violated.
 - iii. Angry people often succeed in getting what they want by manipulating others.
 - iv. In the end, angry people experience loss.
 - 1. Relationships.
 - 2. Peace, stress.
 - 3. Even lose the idols they’re trying to get.

LESSON 11

DEALING WITH ANGER—PART 2

Adapted from the Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship
Care and Discipleship Course Handbook

- A. Unbiblical methods of dealing with anger.
 - a. Secular psychology promotes anger management – deals with the symptoms: ventilation, displacement, internalizing, calming/relaxation.
- B. Overcoming anger biblically.
 - a. The key is what you are saying in your heart.
 - i. My heart will not be fixed by changing my circumstance.
 - b. Five things to tell yourself when you are getting angry.
 - i. I want something too much.
 - ii. I am not God or Judge.
 - iii. God has been very gracious to me in Christ.
 - iv. God is in control – He is doing good and will not give me more than I can bear.
 - v. Remember who I am – a new creature in Christ.
- C. Five more things to remember. God's grace enables me to:
 - a. Exercise self-control, patience and gentleness.
 - b. Speak with gentleness and grace.
 - c. Lovingly do good to those who have wronged me.
 - d. Receive correction, even from those who hurt me.
 - e. Pursue the restoration of those who hurt me.
 - f. If I am to help, I must be spiritual and gentle.
- D. Five more practical principles.
 - a. Don't be quarrelsome.
 - i. Deal with your anger and conflict quickly.
 - ii. Prepare for temptation.
 - iii. Seek God's help through prayer.
 - iv. Your anger can motivate you to pursue a biblical solution to problems.
- E. Common Questions about anger.
 - a. When is anger righteous?
 - i. When a real sin against God has taken place.
 - ii. When my concern is for God's kingdom, not my own.
 - iii. Anger is righteously expressed.
 - b. How can you be angry and not sin?
 - i. The five things to keep in mind mentioned earlier.
 - c. Is it ever permissible to be angry with God? No! God is never unjust!
 - d. What if you are angry with yourself?
 - i. Sometimes we are angry at ourselves because of pride.
 - ii. The only verdict that matters is that of God Who has declared you righteous for Christ's sake.
 - e. When you appreciate how God's anger has been turned from you, you can give grace to others.

LESSON 12

DEALING WITH DEPRESSION

Adapted from the Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship
Care and Discipleship Course Handbook

- A. What is depression?
 - a. Depression is more than feeling a bit down.
- B. Major depression includes five or more of the following (from the DSM V).
- C. Depression is widespread in society and among Christians.
- D. Some are more prone to depression than others.
- E. Cases of depression need to be handled with compassion.
- F. Depression can have various psychological labels, but they say nothing about cures or ultimate cause.
- G. Christians recognize the dual nature of man – body and soul.
- H. Depression will always have a spiritual component and will usually have a physical component.
- I. Why do people get depressed?
 - a. Sin and guilt; overwhelming circumstances; injustice; relationships.
 - b. Sometimes multiple causes (health and circumstances) and sometimes you can't tell.
- J. Do drugs help depressed people?
 - a. Psychotropic drugs given to bring brain chemistry back into balance.
 - b. Even if brain chemistry is out of balance, it is not known whether it is the cause or the result of depression.
 - c. In cases in which the cause is spiritual, they mask the symptoms, but don't address the cause.
 - d. Psychotropic drugs have numerous bad side-effects.
- K. We do not tell people to get off the drugs – they must consult with a doctor.
 - a. Our focus is understanding and addressing the spiritual issues.
- L. Depression works in cycles.
 - a. Depression cycles down but depressed people can cycle back up again.
 - b. It often takes a long time for a person to come out of depression.
- M. Instruction for people who are depressed.
 - a. Psalm 32 – Sin makes your life miserable.
 - b. Psalm 73 – God's perspective on the end of those who are unjust.
 - c. Psalm 42-43 – Especially if you don't know why; crying out to God.
 - d. Psalm 88 – sometimes people simply need to be encouraged to endure.
- N. Homework / Projects for Growth.
 - a. Make sure physical needs are being met.
 - b. Repent of known sin.
 - c. Submit to God's sovereignty over your circumstances.
 - d. Stop listening to yourself and start talking to yourself.
 - e. Hope in God; offer thanks and praise to God.
 - f. Serve others – this will start the cycle out of depression.

LESSON 13

WORRY AND FEAR

Adapted from the Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship
Care and Discipleship Course Handbook

- A. Worry is a problem of the mind.
 - a. You're thinking about things that might or might not happen.
 - b. Will I get paroled? Will my wife divorce me? Will my children run wild since I'm not there? Will my family abandon me? Will I get targeted?
- B. Worry is sin (Phil 4:6-7; Matt 6:34).
- C. Worry is rooted in unbelief (Matt 6:30; Luke 8:24-25).
- D. The person who worries desires something in the place of God.
- E. Worry can become life dominating.
- F. Worry, stress, and fear are all closely related.
- G. Don't deal with worry sinfully.
- H. It is not wrong to plan, as long as you leave the outcome to God.
- I. Why shouldn't you worry?
 - a. Worry is senseless because your Heavenly Father cares for you.
 - i. Because God has already given you the greater gift of life, you can trust Him with the lesser needs of sustenance.
 - ii. God is the only one we need to fear – Matt 10:28.
 - iii. If God provides for the physical needs of the lesser of creation, surely he will take care of you, His children.
- J. Worry is useless because it accomplishes nothing and keeps you from being productive today.
- K. Worry is faithless because it denies God's loving care for you.
- L. Fretting is unworthy of a child of the King.
- M. You can stop worrying.
 - a. Commit yourself to the Lord's business – Matt 6:33a.
 - i. Problem is not negative thinking, but God-less thinking.
- N. Trust God to meet your needs.
- O. Give thanks for His bountiful provision and be content.
- P. Jesus is not saying you won't have problems.
- Q. Counseling through Phil 4:4-7.
 - a. Rejoice in His care for us in the midst of different circumstances (v. 4).
 - b. Be yielding and gentle towards all people (v. 5); Instead of being anxious, pray (vv. 6-7); God's peace shall guard your heart and mind (v. 7).
- R. Counseling People Who Worry.
 - a. What is the focus of their worry? What is the history or pattern of worry? How is this person seeking to deal with worry?
 - b. Projects for Growth
 - i. Pray, following Phil 4:6-7 (ACTS acronym).
 - ii. Rejoice in the Lord (Phil 4:4-5).
 - iii. Trust God for the outcome – James 4:13-17.
 - iv. Meditate on what is profitable – Phil 4:8-9.
 - v. Desire and seek first God's kingdom – Matt 6:33.

LESSON 14

FORGIVENESS

Adapted from lecture material by Dr. Stuart W. Scott

- A. What is forgiveness?
 - a. Refers to the actual removal – cancelling the debt and its consequences.
- B. God's forgiveness.
 - a. Man needs forgiveness from God both before salvation and after salvation.
- C. Our forgiveness.
 - a. We are commanded to forgive one another just as God has forgiven us.
 - b. Promises of forgiveness – to “not remember” (Jer 31:34): to not think about the incident, remind you of it, mention it to others, or dwell on it.
- D. Whom should we forgive?
 - a. Only those who seek forgiveness or even those who do not ask forgiveness?
 - b. How to reconcile.
 - i. Always have an attitude of being willing to forgive.
 - ii. Always treat others graciously.
 - iii. Pray for your attitude and for the other person.
- E. The transaction of forgiveness.
 - a. God does not pardon unless people repent.
 - i. We can only be fully reconciled to those who repent.
 - ii. Our responsibility:
 - 1. Luke 17:3 – humbly and lovingly confront.
 - 2. If they repent, we can be reconciled.
 - 3. If they do not repent, may have to continue with Matt 18 process.
 - b. Process:
 - i. Someone sins against me: pray for my attitude and the other person...time...
 - ii. Ask questions (Pr 18:2, “A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion.”)
 - iii. Confront with Scripture...time...
 - iv. Bring someone else.
 - 1. Another person who can be objective since I might be the one who's wrong...time...
 - v. Complete the Matthew 18 process.
- F. Other issues related to whom we forgive.
 - a. Confronting vs. covering; Apologizing vs. asking for forgiveness; What about forgiving God?; What about forgiving unbelievers?; What about forgiving people who have died or whom we may never see again?
- G. What about forgiving yourself?
- H. How should we forgive?
 - a. Immediately (Luke 17:3); Repeatedly (Luke 17:4); Lavishly (2 Cor 2:5-8)
- I. Why should we forgive?
 - a. Gospel motivated!

LESSON 15

PUTTING YOUR PAST IN ITS PLACE

Adapted from the book *Putting Your Past in Its Place* by Dr. Stephen Viars

- A. Two extremes of dealing with the past.
 - a. Believing the past is nothing.
 - b. Believing the past is everything.
- B. The past is influential but not determinative.
 - a. Influences us in at least six ways: Unanswered questions; Unaddressed hurts; Unsolved problems; Unwise choices; Unconfessed sin; Unlearned lessons.
- C. How to put the past in its place.
 - a. Organizing the past:

		In what occurred, you were . . .	
		Innocent	Guilty
You responded . . .	Well	Bucket 1: You were sinned against but responded well.	Bucket 3: You sinned but handled it quickly.
	Poorly	Bucket 2: You were sinned against but you responded poorly.	Bucket 4: You sinned and responded poorly (with additional sin).

- D. Biblical examples.
- E. Interpreting events.
 - a. We must not begin with interpreting our experience and then judge God and His Word through that grid; What we need to do is choose to interpret the events of our past through the lens of Scripture.
- F. Bucket 1: Authentic suffering.
 - a. Principles; Face it honestly; Face it biblically; Face it hopefully; Face it missionally.
- G. Bucket 2: Humble analysis.
 - a. Principles – ask these questions: Did you return evil for evil?; Did you develop bitterness toward God?; Did you develop an unbiblical view of people?; Have you developed an unbiblical view of yourself?; Should you confront the person who sinned against you, and if so, have you done it?; If you confronted the person who sinned against you and he asked forgiveness, have you granted it?
- H. Bucket 3: Joyful remembrance.
 - a. Our emotions are only reliable to the degree that they reflect biblical truth.
 - i. Your eyes must not be on yourself and your sin but on the marvelous character of God.
 - b. Learn not to wallow in sins of the past.
 - i. God has created us with the ability to choose what we think about.
 - c. Reasons people get stuck: A lack of genuine repentance; The fear of man; An unwillingness to forsake our sin; Losing their awe of God's forgiving

grace; Your heart will fill with joy as you witness the changes God makes in you.

- I. Bucket 4: Honest self-confrontation.
 - a. How did you respond after you sinned?
 - i. Hard to ask forgiveness and make restitution.
 - b. Consequences to sin when it's not dealt with.
 - c. Hope for getting out of Bucket 4:
 - i. Psalm 51:12, "I have sinned against the Lord."
 - ii. Psalm 32:1-7 (read it) – David's joy after forgiveness.
- J. The main point is to have a growing and vibrant relationship with our Savior Jesus Christ: a clear conscience keeps that relationship alive.

LESSON 16

PEACEMAKING—PART 1

Adapted from the Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship
Care and Discipleship Course Handbook
The Peacemaker by Ken Sande

- A. God tells you how to make peace.
- B. Our peacemaking flows out from Christ.
- C. All conflict is the result of sin.
- D. Peace is sometimes out of your reach.
 - a. You cannot make peace at the expense of truth and righteousness.
 - b. There are some people with whom it is impossible to make peace.
 - c. God does not hold you responsible for the failure of others; our responsibility is to speak the truth in love.
- E. Conflict is very dangerous. Don't make things worse through unbiblical methods of handling conflict ("The Slippery Slope," Diagram from *The Peacemaker*).
 - a. Some fight: revenge, verbal attacks, gossip, assault, murder, lawsuits.
 - b. Others flee: denial, escape, suicide.
- F. Conflict brings opportunity to glorify God, to be more like Christ, to serve others, and to bear witness to a watching world.
- G. Do all that is in your power to pursue peace.
 - a. Don't stir up strife; Overlook minor offenses; Be ready to make sacrifices for the sake of peace; Trust God to defend your interests.
- H. Confess your sin: Get the log out of your eye (Matt 7:1-5).
 - a. Seek forgiveness for whatever fault you may have – even if it is only 10%.
- I. Seek forgiveness biblically (7 A's from *The Peacemaker*).
 - a. Address everyone involved.
 - b. Avoid "if, but, maybe."
 - c. Admit specifically.
 - d. Acknowledge the hurt.
 - e. Accept the consequences.
 - f. Alter your behavior.
 - g. Ask for forgiveness.
- J. Be ready to forgive others as God has forgiven you (as discussed in Lesson 14).
 - a. Forgiveness is not optional for forgiven people.
 - b. Make the promises of forgiveness (Jer 31:34).
 - i. I will not think about this incident.
 - ii. I will not bring this incident up and use it against you.
 - iii. I will not talk to others about the incident.
 - iv. I will not allow this incident to stand between us.
- K. Use the PAUSE principle in negotiating/peacemaking (from *The Peacemaker*).
 - a. Prepare for peacemaking.
 - b. Affirm relationships.
 - c. Understand the interests of others: listen!
 - d. Search for creative solutions.
 - e. Evaluate options objectively and reasonably.

LESSON 17

PEACEMAKING—PART 2

Adapted from the Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship
Care and Discipleship Course Handbook

- A. Promote peace by confronting sin biblically.
 - a. Be willing to receive correction from others.
 - b. Look honestly at criticism even if there's only a tiny nugget of truth to it.
- B. Love sometimes requires you to go and show your brother his fault.
 - a. Which sins must you confront?
 - i. Notorious sins which could damage the Lord's reputation.
 - ii. Sins which endanger the purity and unity of the church.
 - iii. Sins which could ruin the offender.
 - iv. Sins which could affect your relationship with this person.
- C. First, practice personal peacemaking.
 - a. Go to the individual first before involving others.
 - b. Go gently, lovingly, and humbly for the purpose of restoration.
 - c. If he repents, rejoice and forgive.
- D. Then, if necessary, seek help in making peace.
- E. Finally, if necessary, take it to the church.
- F. If he refuses to listen to the church, he is to be put out of the assembly.
 - a. He is to be regarded as an unbeliever and an outsider (Matt 18:17).
 - b. Church discipline takes place with the authority of the Lord.
 - c. What is the purpose of church discipline?
 - d. Biblical peacemaking requires a biblical church structure.
 - e. Most prisons do not have a church structure.
 - i. Believers need to identify themselves and hold each other accountable.
 - ii. They should consider themselves the church within this prison.
 - iii. They can still go through all the steps of confronting a sinner up to the point of church discipline.
 - iv. If necessary, they can then agree among the group that a person is not a believer and needs to be evangelized.
 - v. Some prisons do have a church structure.
 - 1. Church leaders may not be able to remove inmates from church attendance, but they can remove them from church positions.
- G. Common questions.
 - a. Does this approach to confronting sin violate confidentiality or one's right to privacy?
 - b. Do peacemaking techniques ever fail?
 - i. We need to be faithful, not successful, and leave results to God.
 - c. How can these principles be applied with unbelievers?
 - i. Overlooking an offense.
 - ii. Confront lovingly and gently.
 - d. Is there ever a time when it is appropriate for Christians to go to court?
 - i. After church discipline, if the person was put out as an unbeliever.

LESSON 18

GROWTH THROUGH SUFFERING

Adapted from the Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship
Care and Discipleship Course Handbook

- A. Introduction.
 - a. Jesus Himself grew through suffering.
 - b. God uses trials to make us more mature.
 - c. Read James 1:2-18.
- B. You will face trials.
 - a. Trials are the ordinary experience of believers living in a fallen world.
 - b. Believers in the Bible suffered great trials.
- C. We continue to endure significant trials.
- D. James does not say that we can, through faith and prayer, eliminate trials.
- E. Trials typically fall upon you unexpectedly.
- F. God is at work in your trials and uses your trials to mature you.
- G. God uses trials to help you grow.
 - a. Knowing – you need to understand God’s purpose in your trials.
 - b. The testing of your faith – your trials prove and refine your faith.
 - c. Produces endurance – your trials need to produce steadfastness.
- H. The end result of your trials is that you will be mature (James 1:4).
 - a. Let endurance have its perfect result – trials do not always and automatically produce results; What is God doing in my life?; You must cooperate in the trial – don’t waste your suffering!; How can I glorify God in this suffering?
 - b. In what sense can you become perfect and complete? Not spiritual perfection, but mature.
- I. Ask God for wisdom in your trials (James 1:5-8).
- J. God gladly gives His wisdom to all those who seek Him.
- K. How does God impart His wisdom?
 - a. God uses His Word to make you wise: His Word connected to the trials through life.
- L. You must ask in faith (James 1:6-8).
 - a. James is condemning the double mindedness of not wanting God’s wisdom; Wanting the world’s pleasures plus God.
 - b. God blesses those who are committed to Him with wisdom and stability. Jer 17:7-8: Circumstances don’t dictate happiness.
- M. Never lose sight of God’s goodness in your trails (James 1:12-18).
 - a. Satan will tempt you to doubt God’s goodness when you are enduring trials; Don’t blame God when you are tempted; He is immutably perfect in His goodness; God generously gives good gifts (James 1:17,5); God is good to everything and everyone, even His enemies.
- N. When you feel overwhelmed by trails and are tempted to doubt God’s goodness, remember His good gifts.
- O. Conclusion: You will face trials; God is at work; Seek God’s wisdom; Never lose sight of God’s goodness.

LESSON 19

RELATING TO AUTHORITY

Adapted from the Biblical Counseling Institute
Basic Counseling Course I for Prison and Jail Workers

- A. Recognize the sinful nature.
- B. The heart of sinful nature.
 - a. We desire independence from God.
 - b. Self-centeredness – “I am god.”
 - c. Rebellion and hatred toward God.
- C. The cure.
 - a. Jer 17:9,10: only God can cure a deceitful heart.
 - b. Salvation.
 - c. Sanctification.
- D. The need of government.
 - a. Keeps sinful nature in check.
 - b. Society needs structures to maintain order.
 - i. Saved people still sin.
- E. Biblical response to authority.
 - a. Recognize authority / government.
 - i. Home: God authored the members of each family.
 - ii. Church: God builds His church, so He places leaders in churches.
 - iii. Civil authority: God ordains governments.
 - iv. Marriage: Eph 5.
 - v. Employment: Col 3:22.
- F. Respect authority.
 - a. Respect is commanded, not earned.
- G. Obey authority.
 - a. In spite of their failures.
 - b. Unless it’s against God’s laws.
- H. Bigger picture – remember that God has ordained each authority.
 - a. God rules over each and every area of authority.
 - b. Some of these spheres of government don’t acknowledge God, but God still rules through them.
- I. God commands us to submit in each area as unto Him.
 - a. Unless they expect us to sin.
 - b. Unless they are usurping authority from another area.
 - i. 2 Pet 2 – we must be ready to suffer consequences for doing good.
 - ii. Our attitude must be, “we will obey you if this is within your authority.”
- J. What to do when authority doesn’t work right.
 - a. “Go over their heads” – pray!
 - b. Make a respectful appeal.
 - c. If nothing changes, trust God’s will and submit.
 - d. Disobey only when you have to in order to not sin.

LESSON 20

DEALING WITH INJUSTICE

Adapted from the Biblical Counseling Institute
Basic Counseling Course I for Prison and Jail Workers

- A. Injustice does happen.
 - a. Some innocent people are imprisoned.
 - b. Some receive lengthy sentences that don't seem to make sense.
- B. Though God is sovereign in all our affairs, we may never know the reason.
 - a. Trust that God is at work.
 - b. Job never knew why he suffered (Job 38-42); Deut 29:29.
- C. The example of Joseph.
 - a. By his brothers – Gen 37; By Potiphar – Gen 39.
 - b. He later saw that it was for God's good purposes.
 - c. Though he had the power, he did not take vengeance on his brothers.
- D. The example of Paul.
 - a. Acts 28 – two years under house arrest.
 - i. Paul sees the advancement of the kingdom of God.
 - ii. In Philippians, the word “joy” (or a derivative) is used 17 times.
 - iii. Phil 1:12-13:
 - 1. Known throughout all the Praetorian Guard – 16,000 soldiers.
 - 2. Caesar selected his general from the Praetorian Guard and we know that many Roman generals became believers who then evangelized soldiers, who brought the gospel to England.
 - 3. Saints that knew about Paul gained more courage.
 - iv. Paul is going to face a final sentence.
 - 1. His prayer in that Christ be exalted in his death or life.
- E. How to be like Paul and Joseph.
 - a. Eph 3:1, “For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles.”
 - i. See God in the imprisonment and circumstances.
 - b. Phil 1:13, “my imprisonment is for Christ.”
 - i. Paul was imprisoned because he was preaching Christ; you may be in prison so that you can preach Christ.
 - ii. Eph 6:20, “an ambassador in chains.”
 - iii. 2 Cor 5:20, “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.”
 - iv. You are an ambassador of Christ to this prison.
 - c. Gen 39-50.
 - i. Acknowledge God's providence and remain faithful to Him.
 - ii. Give thanks in it.
 - iii. You may be in prison because of a false charge or a harsh sentence, as opposed to preaching Christ, but you can use this time for God's glory and for your good.

ROLE PLAY SCENARIOS

Scenario 1

Stan is someone you've known for about five months. He's serving a 10 year prison term and has only been in for eight months. He's been faithful at chapel services since you've known him and also attends Bible studies whenever he can. Three weeks ago, he received a letter from his wife telling him she is filing for divorce. Since then, he seems to do as little as possible and sleeps as much as he can. You see him in chapel today, ask him how he's doing and he tells you his wife has filed for divorce. He said he expected it since their marriage was rocky before he was arrested and that it doesn't really bother him that much. He says he's suffering from severe depression. He also tells you that his father suffers with depression and depression runs in his family. How would you counsel Stan?

Scenario 2

Tom has been in prison for a little over two years and has eighteen more to go. He is a professing Christian and actively participates in the chapel program. Recently, though, he's been involved in a shouting match with another inmate over which program to watch on the television. Luckily for him, other inmates intervened and the shouting ended quickly. At other times, you've noticed him angrily slamming a book on the floor after reading a letter from his mother. Today, in chapel, he shoved someone who had bumped into him, but then immediately apologized. Turning to you, he says, "Man, I know I have an anger problem. I think I'll sign up for anger management class. I was just born with a short temper, but I know that if I don't learn some techniques to hold it in, I'll get myself in trouble here real soon." How would you counsel Tom?

Scenario 3

Joe, a fellow believer, has just come out of solitary confinement a few days ago. He was placed there because he was accused of having contraband, but it was not his and didn't know where it came from. Yesterday, Andy came to him to ask his forgiveness. The contraband was his and he placed it with Joe's things because he was afraid of getting caught with it and he never said anything after Joe was accused. Andy is a fairly new Christian and this is not the first time he has wronged Joe. About three months ago Andy had been upset with Joe over some small issue and had been rude to him. He did feel bad about it and later came to apologize. Joe told Andy he'd have to think about forgiving him; what he did was mean, cowardly, and just plain low. Joe knows he's supposed to forgive Andy, but just doesn't feel like he can. How would you counsel Joe?

Scenario 4

Bill has been in prison about six months and is serving a ten-year sentence. He's married to Mary and they have two young children. Other inmates have told him to expect a "Dear John" letter any day now since most wives file for divorce rather than stay married to an absent husband. He's starting to worry greatly and is anxious every time he gets a letter from Mary, but so far she has not said anything that would make him believe she would want a divorce. Also, before being arrested, Bill had a good job in commercial construction and his wife was able to stay home to raise their children. Now that he's in prison, Bill doesn't know how Mary will manage financially and is sure the bank will foreclose on his home. Bill is also worried about how his children will do without a father around and thinks they will reject him now that he's in prison. Though they seldom went to church, both he and his wife say they are Christians. He has just shared all this with you. How would you counsel Bill?

Scenario 5:

George has been in prison for five years and is serving a twenty-five year sentence. He says he's an alcoholic and faithfully attends AA meetings. He was convicted of killing two teenage girls in a drunk driving accident. The girls were high school seniors who had both won scholarships to prestigious colleges and were very popular at their school. While George had driven drunk a number of times, this was the first time anything bad had happened. His wife knew that he did this occasionally and had begged him to call a cab or call her rather than drive after drinking. George was extremely remorseful about what he had done. During the trial, the families told him they forgave him and were praying that he would receive Christ as his Savior. George became a Christian as a result of that, but even after five years, he says he just can't forgive himself. He knew better than to drive drunk, yet did it anyway. Those girls had such a bright future ahead of them and never should have died. "I just can't forgive myself," he repeated. How would you counsel George?

APPENDIX 10

IBCD'S CARE AND DISCIPLESHIP COURSE PERMISSION



September 14, 2015

To whom it may concern,

This letter is to confirm that Donald Roy has permission from the Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship to use and modify the Care and Discipleship Course for his doctoral program for teaching purposes.

If there are any questions, please contact me directly either by telephone or by email.

Craig Marshall
Director of Operations
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ABSTRACT

EQUIPPING INMATES AT COLUMBIA CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION IN LAKE CITY, FLORIDA, TO COUNSEL BIBLICALLY

Donald Leo Roy, D.Min.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. John David Trentham

The purpose of this project was to equip prison inmates at Columbia Correctional Institution in Lake City, Florida, to counsel other inmates biblically. Chapter 1 presents the purpose, goals, context, rationale, definitions, limitations, and research methodology of the project.

Chapter 2 is a study of the biblical and theological basis for idea that all believers should be able to counsel and encourage one another toward greater maturity in Christ. First, the chapter presents evidence that believers are equipped by Scripture to counsel one another. Second, it shows that Scripture is sufficient for counseling people in all situations. Third, it demonstrates the error of attempting to integrated psychology with biblical counsel. Finally, the chapter shows that believers are able to respond to biblical counsel because they have the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 3 explores theoretical and practical issues related to teaching inmates to counsel other inmates. It demonstrates how the unique culture that exists within the prison system makes Christian inmates more effective at counseling other inmates than volunteers from outside prison.

Chapters 4 and 5 provide details of the implementation of the project, as well as a thorough evaluation of the project.

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ORGANIZATIONS

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