EQUIPPING MEMBERS OF NEW LIFE CHURCH IN

WOODLAND HILLS, CALIFORNIA

TO COUNSEL BIBLICALLY

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A Project

Presented to

the Faculty of

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

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by

Thomas Kenji Sugimura

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APPROVAL SHEET

EQUIPPING MEMBERS OF NEW LIFE CHURCH IN

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACBC Association of Certified Biblical Counselors

APA American Psychiatric Association

BCA Basics of Counseling Assessment

C&MA Christian & Missionary Alliance

CCAC Community Christian Alliance Church

DSM *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*

NLC New Life Church

PGP Personal Growth Project

SFV San Fernando Valley

WHC Woodland Hills Church

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PREFACE

This project has been completed in large part due to the loving encouragement of the many people God has placed in my life. First and foremost, I am grateful to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Wonderful Counselor, whose wisdom and knowledge fill the depths of the riches found in his Word. Equipping others to counsel biblically has led me into a closer relationship with him.

Second, I thank the Lord for placing me into a loving family with godly parents, George and Linda Sugimura. Through prayer and diligence, they raised their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, and as my first counselors, they passed on to me a deep joy for God and for his Word. It is because of their gospel witness that I followed Jesus at an early age and have grown to love his church. I am grateful for their encouragement to pursue ministry and for their continued influence in my life.

Third, the Lord has blessed me with many godly men who have lovingly spoken truth into my life and have invested time and tears in my discipleship. I praise the Lord for my Almondwood brothers, who challenged me to wrestle in prayer. I am also indebted to many professors including Dr. William Barrick and Dr. Michael Grisanti for instilling in me a love for studying Scripture, Dr. Greg Harris for opening my eyes to the gold in God's Word, and Dr. Stuart Scott, who has taught me to apply sound doctrine to the human heart. To these men and others I owe a lifetime of gratitude.

Fourth, I am thankful for the privilege of serving the Lord with the body of Christ at New Life Church. They counsel me by living out the "one-another" commands of Scripture and inspire me with their voracious appetite for God's Word. They and the elders of the church have extended gracious support throughout my theological training. They have loved my family well, and I am grateful to shepherd this faithful church.

Finally, words would fail to fully describe how the Lord has blessed me with my wife, Amanda. I am thankful for her steadfast support through many years of schooling and her constant partnership in ministry. As my companion, supporter, best friend, and first love, she has joyfully sacrificed much time and energy for my studies. After twelve years of marriage and the birth of three rambunctious boys, I would rather spend time with my beloved bride than anyone else.

My hope and prayer is that this project will serve to equip Christ-like counselors at New Life Church and that God's name would be magnified in us and in future generations.

Tom Sugimura

Woodland Hills, California

December 2016

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Be Jesus to others to bring others to Jesus is the mission statement of New Life Church. By demonstrating Christ-like words and actions, the church brings people into relationship with Jesus through evangelism and discipleship. Biblical counseling supports this goal by lovingly speaking the truth of God's Word with those enslaved to sin or wounded by suffering (Eph 4:15). Biblical counseling makes disciples through bold declaration of the gospel, compassionate teaching of biblical principles, and practical application of God's Word (Matt 28:18-20). For this reason, New Life Church seeks to equip believers to counsel biblically for the good of the community and the glory of God.

Context

New Life Church (NLC) in Woodland Hills, California, launched in March 2011 on the campus of a recently-closed sister church. NLC had an immediate need for biblical counseling both in the planting process and in the early years of the church. The previous congregation, Woodland Hills Church (WHC), had closed its doors in October 2011 after a more than eighty-year history of faithful ministry. Sadly though, this history was tainted by pastoral disqualification, absent leadership, poor financial decisions, and bitter conflicts. The church did not deal with these moral failures in a biblical manner and had been in steep decline with over three-quarters of attendees departing the church in its final year. For this reason, the Christian & Missionary Alliance (C&MA) denomination made the decision to close WHC and to plant a "Fresh Start" church[1] in the same

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[1]"Fresh Start" is the process of restarting and strengthening churches by reinvesting the people

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location. They selected for this work a partner church, Community Christian Alliance Church (CCAC) in the neighboring city of Northridge.

Thirty former WHC members weathered the transition, yet continued to mourn the loss of their church, their pastor, and traditions of the past. Outsiders were coming in with a new elder board and a forward-thinking vision, so these former members required patient shepherding and prayerful counseling before the new church even launched. Once WHC closed, its former members joined CCAC during the four months of transition. This transition allowed for joint worship and ministry, grieving over losses, and personal counseling. The core team which planted NLC has now mixed with these former members and also many others from the community, resulting in a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural church representing different stages of life and maturity. NLC has seasoned saints from widely-varied church backgrounds gathering together with new believers and non-believers. This diversity and the unique beginnings of NLC have created a plethora of counseling needs.

Biblical counseling is also vital for a surrounding community seeking answers to life's difficulties. Population alone creates an abundant need in the high-density San Fernando Valley (SFV) which is home to over 1.8 million people and a bedroom community for the greater Los Angeles area. Woodland Hills is a neighborhood in the West SFV with a population of 59,661.[2] Members of the church also live in the surrounding neighborhoods of Chatsworth, Canoga Park, West Hills, Calabasas, Winnetka, Reseda, and Tarzana with a smaller number residing in other parts of the SFV and beyond. In addition, many in the SFV suffer mental health issues associated with

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and assets of a struggling and perhaps dying church. The purpose of the program, developed by the C&MA's South Pacific District, is to forge a new congregation with the help of the team on the ground, the district, a healthy partner church and an excellent coach" (Bill Malick, "Fresh Start Resources," accessed July 8, 2015, http://www.cmaspd.org/resources/freshstart).

[2]*Los Angeles Times*, "Mapping L.A.," accessed September 26, 2014, http://maps.latimes.com/ neighborhoods/region/san-fernando-valley.

poverty, unemployment, heavy alcohol and tobacco consumption, and physical inactivity. For example, "the total estimated cases of depression and anxiety in the SFV represent 8.7 percent (160,559) of the total population."[3] Other major concerns of SFV residents include aging, abuse, domestic violence, teen pregnancy, and homelessness. In the SFV, "West Valley . . . has the highest percentage (10.4 percent) of adults who reported being homeless or have not had their own place to live or sleep in the past five years."[4] Those with counseling needs from the community and from other churches have begun to approach NLC for help and more requests are expected. For these reasons, the church can impact its community with Christ-centered counseling if lay persons are trained as competent counselors.

Biblical counseling has been interwoven within the culture of NLC from the beginning. Members have applied instruction for resolving conflict biblically and addressing matters of the heart. Many have been equipped to dealing biblically with their past and have learned basic counseling methodology. Even some of the missionaries and church planters which New Life supports are training indigenous leaders in biblical counseling and peacemaking principles. The elder board wholeheartedly supports the ongoing plan to train lay counselors with the vision of ministering both to the church and to the wider community. The priority of developing a counseling ministry has been well-received and presents much hope for equipping a church of biblical counselors.

One concern, however, is the influence in the community of those opposed to or unaware of biblical counseling. Only a handful of churches in the SFV affirm the practice of biblical counseling and most will instead refer their members to secular or integrationist counseling centers. In addition, some at NLC with degrees in psychology or training as psychotherapists affirm or practice secular methodologies. Despite NLC's full

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[3]Valley Care Community Consortium, "Community Needs Assessment," October 2013, accessed July 8, 2015, http://www.valleyccc.org/needs-assessment, 86.

[4]Ibid., 26.

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affirmation of the Bible's inerrancy and authority, many church members are more likely to first seek therapeutic help than pastoral care or encouragement from the Scriptures. Some Christians are simply unaware of the biblical counseling alternative, but many intentionally seek help outside of the church. Some are too proud to share their struggles while others seek to conceal their shame and embarrassment. Whether from opposition or ignorance, however, they are sadly not receiving the soul care they need. For this reason, biblical counseling must be clearly explained and winsomely presented as an effective way to care for the spiritual wounds of hurting people.

Another concern is the limited time available for training. As a smaller church, most of NLC's ministry leaders are serving in multiple areas. In addition, many families are dual income families with both husband and wife pursuing careers. Potential participants may be hindered by lack of resources, pressing responsibilities, or the priority of other ministries. It will be necessary to convince those who are presently serving that this would be a valuable investment of their resources. Despite these challenges, NLC desires to become a church of biblical counseling in which all ministry leaders are competent to counsel.

Rationale

NLC has sustained a commitment to biblical counseling from before its inception and faithful instruction in this area has not diminished the need. The church has struggled to handle all the current requests of church members, regular attenders, and the community. Therefore, the NLC elders desire to train up a church of biblical counselors to meet the spiritual needs of fallen people devastated by sin and sorrow. The vision is to equip all members of the church broadly and a selection of members more specifically. Equipping classes, general training, and sermons will inform the greater church body, while the focus of this project was to develop a ten-week Life Group[5] training course to

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[5]Life Groups at NLC are small groups that meet in homes throughout the week for ten-week

introduce select individuals to a more formal counseling ministry.

The course curriculum shows that despite new and creative methods of soul care, only one approach truly moves people toward the biblical goal of Christ-likeness. As Paul encourages the Colossian church, "Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me" (Col 1:28-29).[6] Other models of counseling stress behavioral modification or religious conformity without focusing on the inner man. Biblical counseling, however, seeks to draw out heart motivations and thoughts as well as deal with their behavior for the ultimate goal of maturity in Christ.

Equipping the members of NLC also establishes a distinction from other models by revealing the rich spiritual resources the church possesses in Christ (Eph 1:3). Christ becomes not only the goal of biblical counseling, but also its strength and source. As Paul declares, "It is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. . . . 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 2:13; 1:6). Prayerless, God-less, church-less, Scripture-devoid forms of human wisdom may provide temporary comfort and relief, but will never produce disciples of Jesus Christ.[7] The NLC elders desire to equip a church of biblical counselors not just to see people growing in Christ-likeness, but also to glorify God by the means of that transformation. Only the gospel of God, and not human wisdom, has the power to save and to sanctify souls.[8]

Finally, equipping biblical counselors demonstrated in practice many

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sessions in the fall, winter, and spring. This training took place within the Life Group structure.

[6]Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version.

[7]See 1 Cor 2:13-14.

[8]See 1 Cor 1:18-25.

additional benefits to the church. The church gains confidence in God's all-sufficient Word (1 Tim 3:15-17) and becomes a faithful witness to the surrounding community as lives are changed by the power of the gospel (Rom 1:16). It then has opportunities to love its neighbors (Matt 22:39) by sharing the good news with unbelieving counselees and an unchurched community. Many seek help in the midst of suffering, not even knowing that their greatest need is a relationship with Jesus Christ. Effective counseling also encourages believers to pursue membership in a local church and provides avenues for members to be equipped as counselors in the ongoing work of the ministry (e.g., 1 Tim 3:1-13). These marks of a growing and healthy church redound to the glory of God (1 Pet 4:11). In this way, equipping biblical counselors at NLC results in the good of the community and the glory of God.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip members of New Life Church in Woodland Hills, California to counsel biblically for the good of the church and the glory of God.

Goals

The following four goals were established to determine the completion of this project. The first two goals focused on cognitive understanding of biblical counseling principles. The third goal incorporated affective and behavioral learning as well. The fourth goal ensured that application took place within the context of the local church.

1. The first goal was to assess the current level of counseling competency among members of NLC.

2. The second goal was to develop a ten-session methods of biblical change course.

3. The third goal was to implement the curriculum and equip biblical counselors in a Life Group setting.

4. The fourth goal was to develop a strategic plan for the practical application of biblical counseling in each participant's ministry context.

Definitive research methodology measured when these four goals were accomplished.[9] The research methodology and instruments used to measure the success of each goal will be detailed in the following section.

Research Methodology

Four goals determined the effectiveness of this project. The first goal was to assess the current level of counseling competency among members of NLC. Prior to the first session, a Basics of Counseling Assessment (BCA) was administered to participants. This pre-project assessment gauged each members' initial level of Christ-like character, knowledge of biblical content, competency in biblical counseling, and involvement within the local church. This goal was considered successfully met when at least ten members completed the BCA and the results were compiled electronically for a fuller analysis of counseling competency at NLC.

The second goal was to develop a ten-session methods of biblical change course. This course took place in a Life Group format with two hours of interactive teaching and discussion per session. Participants were required to complete any application assignments and engage in group discussion. The course primarily focused on developing Christ-like character and counseling competency. This goal was measured by an expert panel consisting of three NLC elders and one member in the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC). This panel utilized a rubric to evaluate the course material to ensure it was biblically faithful, sufficiently thorough, and applicable to ministry practice.[10] This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level and the curriculum was adopted by NLC. Should the initial feedback have yielded less than 90 percent, the

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

[10]See appendix 2.

curriculum would have been revised in accordance with the panel's evaluation until such time that the criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level and the curriculum was adopted by NLC.

The third goal was to implement the curriculum and equip biblical counselors in a Life Group setting. Participants in this equipping course were selected from those who completed the BCA and a subsequent application process.[11] The content aspect of this goal was measured by re-administering the BCA within one week after participants finish the course[12] and was considered successfully met when a t-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference in the pre and post-project results. A t-test for dependent samples "involves a comparison of the means from each group of scores and focuses on the differences between the scores."[13] Since this project involved a single group of the same subjects being surveyed under two conditions, a t-test of dependent samples was the appropriate test statistic.[14] Additionally, the competency aspect of this goal was measured by an evaluation of each participant's counseling practice.[15] The course instructor completed an evaluation of each participants' counseling competency in role play situations. Participants may have also received an evaluation from an individual whom they counseled outside of the course. The competency aspect of this goal was considered successfully met when at least 80 percent of participants met or exceeded the sufficient level in all skill areas. The satisfaction aspect of this goal was measured by conducting a post-project interview with each

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[11]The application form included in appendix 3 was replaced by an interview as appropriate.

[12]Only those participants attending 90 percent of the sessions were considered as having finished the course. Participants who were unable to attend a particular session arranged for the session to be recorded on video.

[13]Neil J. Salkind, *Statistics For People Who (Think They) Hate Statistics*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008), 191.

[14]Ibid., 189.

[15]See appendix 8.

participant to evaluate the course for its content, presentation, and applicability.[16] The satisfaction aspect of this goal was considered successfully met when all participants completed the course evaluation.

The fourth goal was to develop a strategic plan for the practical application of biblical counseling in each participant's ministry context. Those who completed this introductory course were directed toward serving opportunities according to the church's needs and each participant's specific passions and gifting. Various ministry roles at NLC include elders, deacons, Life Group leaders, youth group leaders, general disciple-makers, and focused one-on-one counselors. Some trained in counseling might also assist in future training for the church or other ministries. This goal was measured by three NLC elders who utilized a rubric to evaluate the plan's content, scope, resources, and application.[17] This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the rubric evaluation indicators met or exceeded the sufficient level and the plan was adopted by NLC. Should the rubric evaluation indicators have fallen short of the 90 percent sufficient level, the strategic plan would have been revised until such time that it met or exceeded the sufficient level and was adopted by NLC.

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

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

Biblical counseling. Biblical counseling may be succinctly defined as a "focused process of discipleship"[18] or "theology lovingly applied."[19] This project relied

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[16]See appendix 6.

[17]See appendix 7.

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

[19]Scott Harper Mehl, "Equipping Servant Ministers of Cornerstone Church in West Los Angeles, California, to Address Common Spiritual Issues" (D.Min. project, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012), 11.

on Robert Kellemen's more nuanced description:

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

Integrationist counseling. Integrationist counseling may broadly be understood as the incorporation of both theology and secular psychology into one's principles and practice of soul care. Stanton Jones provides a helpful working definition:

> Integration of Christianity and psychology (or any area of "secular thought") is our living out—in this particular area—of the lordship of Christ over all of existence by our giving his special attention—God's true Word—its appropriate place of authority in determining our fundamental beliefs about and practices toward all of reality and toward our academic subject matter in particular.[21]

Sufficiency of Scripture. Sufficiency is the "belief that the Scriptures comprehensively and sufficiently show how the power of Christ relevantly and powerfully speaks to all the issues that require counseling no matter how extreme or challenging."[22] It is the primary distinctive which sets apart biblical counseling from

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[20]Robert W. Kellemen, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church: The 4E Ministry Training Strategy* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2011), 36. These principles are more fully fleshed out in the Confessional Statement of the Biblical Counseling Coalition (Biblical Counseling Coalition, "Confessional Statement," accessed July 15, 2014, http://biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/about/confessional-statement). Other helpful definitions include David Powlison, "Affirmations and Denials: A Proposed Definition of Biblical Counseling," *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 19, no. 1 (2000): 22, and John Piper, "Toward a Definition of the Essence of Biblical Counseling," paper presented to the congregation of Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, December 12, 2001, accessed June 9, 2014, http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/articles/toward-a-definition-of-the-essence-of-biblical-counseling.

[21]Stanton L. Jones, "An Integration View," in *Psychology & Christianity: Five Views*, 2nd ed., ed. Eric L. Johnson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2010), 102. Integration is a term first attributed to Fritz Kunkel in 1953 (Daryl H. Stevenson, Brian E. Eck, and Peter C. Hill, eds., *Psychology & Christianity Integration: Seminal Works that Shaped the Movement* [Batavia, IL: Christian Association for Psychological Studies, 2007], 2). It is difficult to define because of widely-varying therapeutic traditions and the levels of integration practiced by those in the field. David Powlison proposes an overarching paradigm in David Powlison, *The Biblical Counseling Movement: History and Context* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2010), 275-77. "VITEX believes that secular psychologies must make a *VITal EXternal contribution* in the construction of a Christian model of personality, change, and counseling. . . . Christian truths must be "integrated" with the observations, personality theories, psychotherapies, and professional roles of the mental health world. . . . In contrast, COMPIN believes that the Christian faith contains *COMPrehensive INternal resources* to enable us to construct a Christian model of personality, change, and counseling."

[22]Heath Lambert, "The Sufficiency of Scripture," *Grace & Truth* (blog), June 18, 2012, accessed September 20, 2014, http://biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/blogs/2012/06/18/the-sufficiency-of-scripture. According to Wayne Mack, "God, the expert on helping people, has given us in Scripture

every other form of soul care.

Several delimitations were placed on the project. Participants were required to be NLC members who completed the BCA and were accepted to the equipping course. Membership at NLC ensured that they were baptized believers serving in a local church with pastoral supervision. Priority was given to NLC ministry leaders in order to train those with the most immediate influence within the church. The primary delimitation of this project was the condensed nature of this course into ten sessions. While the basic principles of biblical counseling can be taught in this time frame, participants may need additional training and supervision to apply these principles in personal ministry. The full completion of the project included curriculum development, pre-assessment, course instruction, post-assessment, and developing a strategic plan.

Conclusion

God has provided every believer with sufficient spiritual resources to counsel biblically through his call, his Word, his Spirit, his church, and his Son. The following chapters show how these resources contribute to the Christian's confidence and competency to counsel. Chapter 2 focuses on Scripture's sufficiency for a biblical theology of counseling and chapter 3 on Scripture's sufficiency for equipping competent biblical counselors.

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counseling perspectives and methodology that are wholly adequate for resolving sin-related problems" (Wayne A. Mack, "What Is Biblical Counseling?" in *Totally Sufficient*, ed. Edward E. Hindson and Howard Eyrich [Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2004], 50.). Eric Johnson states that biblical counselors have progressed beyond this extreme sufficiency position (Eric Johnson, *Foundations for Soul Care: A Christian Psychology Proposal* [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007], 110); however, Lambert makes clear that biblical counselors have always held "the same basic position on Scripture and the relevance of outside information for the counseling task" (Heath Lambert, *The Biblical Counseling Movement After Adams* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012], 125-37). As Powlison explains, "Scripture is sufficient, not in that it is exhaustive, containing all valid knowledge, but in that it rightly aligns a coherent and comprehensive system of counseling that is radically at odds with every a-theistic model" (Powlison, *Biblical Counseling Movement*, 276). Welch adds helpfully, "The Bible does not speak to each of these [counseling] problems as would an encyclopedia. It doesn't offer techniques for change that look like they came out of a cookbook. But through prayerful meditation on Scripture and a willingness to receive theological guidance from each other, we find that the biblical teaching on creation, the fall, and redemption, provide specific, useful insight into all the issues of life" (Edward Welch, "What Is Biblical Counseling, Anyway?" *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 16, no. 1 [1997]: 3).

CHAPTER 2

A THEOLOGY OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING

The apostle Paul's letter to the Ephesians establishes the church as the body of Christ whose unity is grounded on the good news of salvation and whose goal is to grow in Christ-likeness (chap. 1). This good news (2:1-10) then compels the church to be united in Christ (vv. 11-22) since Christ-like character cannot be developed in isolation (3:17-19). Thus Paul exhorts the church to live out gospel-cultivated oneness (4:1-3) and declares the hope of Christ for suffering sinners: "The truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" (vv. 21b-24). Picture a friend with mud streaks up and down a well-worn suit. He may have foolishly walked through the mud or was splashed by a passing car. He may be completely unaware of the mess or feeling ashamed of his appearance. Spiritually speaking, the counselor comes alongside as a compassionate friend who helps him recognize his soiled condition in the mirror of God's Word. This friend directs him to a Savior who can wash clean his evil thoughts, comfort his suffering, replace his spiritual garments, and create him after the likeness of God. Contrary to counseling which settles for behavior modification and mere coping with life, Christ has provided every believer with spiritual resources to counsel biblically through his call, his Word, his Spirit, his church, and his Son.

God's Call Presents the Impetus for Counseling

God calls every believer to the ministry of counseling. As Paul encourages the church in Rome, "I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are

full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another" (Rom 15:14).
The brothers whom Paul affirms are not the educated elite, the professional priests, or the
learned men of his day. They are not limited to elders, deacons, prophets, and apostles.
Many listed in Paul's letter are simple men and women, moms and dads, former slaves
and fellow prisoners, ordinary Christians scattered throughout the network of Roman
house churches (chap. 16). Every one of these Christians, however, has been spiritually
transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In Romans 1-11, Paul displayed the truth of this gospel with a powerful
exposition: All are sinners, Christ is Savior, and God had planned salvation from before
time began. Paul then followed with a practical exhortation to apply the gospel heard and
received (12:1-15:13): "Be transformed by the renewal of your mind" (12:2b). He now
closes with a personal encouragement for the fledgling church (15:14-16:27). His tone
changes as he speaks to them directly with the personal pronouns "I" and "you." He
affectionately calls them "my brothers" and many he lists by name. He prays for them
and thanks the Lord on their behalf, sharing with them his future dreams for ministry and
his own present struggles. In this closing context, Paul emphatically affirms the church's
ability to counsel, "I myself am satisfied about you" (15:14a). He is convinced in Christ
that these believers can live out the gospel with one another. In this one verse, God calls
believers to mutually counsel with Christ-like character, biblical comprehension, skillful
competency, and Christian community.

Christ-Like Character

Biblical counselors must first exude the character of Christ as Paul commends
the church in Rome for being "full of goodness" (Rom 15:14b). Like a net packed to the
breaking point with fish (see John 21:11) or a drink brimming over the side of a cup,
goodness, or God-likeness (see 1 Chr 16:34) so characterizes the believer's life that it
spills over onto everyone around. God graciously empowers believers in Christ to do

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good works (Eph 2:10; see 2 Thess 1:11) and bear good fruit (Gal 5:22-23; Col 1:10) which is brought "to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil 1:6).

Biblical Comprehension

Secondly, counselors must exercise biblical comprehension as Paul commends the Roman Christians for being "filled with all knowledge" (Rom 15:14c)." This wisdom for daily living filled the heart of Jesus as he rebuked Satan with the Word of God (Matt 4:1-11). Thus counselors following in Christ's steps must be filled with the knowledge of Scripture (Col 2:2-3) in order to speak that truth in love (Eph 4:15). Here Christ-like character merges effectively with biblical comprehension (see 1 Cor 13:2) as Paul Tripp explains, "The combination of powerful truth wrapped in self-sacrificing love is what God uses to transform people."[1] Those "filled with all knowledge" must also be "full of goodness" just as the Lord perfectly blended steadfast love with faithfulness (Exod 34:6) and grace with truth (John 1:14). Jesus graciously counseled an adulterous woman with the truth of her sin, "Go, and from now on sin no more" (John 8:11). Without abolishing the law, Jesus loved the rich, young ruler though he walked away from eternal life (Mark 10:17-23). So also, biblical counselors communicate the Word of God from a heart of sacrificial love (e.g., 1 Thess 2:8).

Counseling Competency

Thirdly, Paul affirms the skillful competency of biblical counselors, "You yourselves are able to instruct one another" (Rom 15:14d). "To instruct" means to place understanding on the heart or to take God's Word and lovingly set it before a person's mind. This influence of the mind and disposition involves "instruction, exhortation, warning, and correction."[2] Biblical counsel often warns against wrong conduct (e.g., Acts

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[1]Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping Others in Need of Change* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002), 21.

[2]James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 38b (Dallas: Word, 1998),

20:31; 1 Cor 4:14; Col 1:28; 1 Thess 5:12, 14; 2 Thess 3:15), yet also encourages in the

midst of suffering (e.g., 2 Cor 1:3-11). Despite the unique diversity of each situation,

believers have sufficient resources to counsel one another.

Christian Community

   Finally, counselors serve within the Christian community as Paul describes the

church in Rome with relational plurals, "my brothers," "you yourselves," "one another"

(Rom 15:14). This "one another" ministry (e.g., 12:9-21; 13:9-10; 14:1-15:13) must be

practiced in community.[3] For God calls every member in the body of Christ to be a

competent counselor (Col 3:16) and undergirds this call with sufficient spiritual resources

for effective church ministry.

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God's Word Sets the Foundation for Counseling

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   According to the apostle Peter, "[Christ'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" (2 Pet 1:3). Thus God's self-revelation in his Word

sufficiently ministers to any believer in every situation (vv. 1-2, 4-8). Now sufficiency

does not mean that the Bible is a textbook on science, medicine, or psychology. Scripture

is comprehensive, not exhaustive—sufficient unto the end for which it was designed.

Heath Lambert explains, "The Bible is sufficient because Christ is sufficient, and God

shows us in his Word how to encounter him in all of life's complexities."[4] The God who

sovereignly decided what to reveal in his holy Word provides essential counsel for wise

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858. Jay Adams provides a more comprehensive definition: "To bring about *correction* by verbal *confrontation* out of deep *concern* for the counselee" (Jay Adams, *Romans, Philippians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians*, The Christian Counselor's Commentary [Hackettson, NJ: Timeless Texts, 1995], 125, emphasis in original.).

  [3]Jerry Bridges, *The Crisis of Caring* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1987), 80.

  [4]Stuart Scott and Heath Lambert, eds., *Counseling the Hard Cases: True Stories Illustrating the Sufficiency of God's Resources in the Scriptures* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2012), 13.

living. Therefore, any claim that God's Word is not enough for spiritual care, disparages either God's wisdom or his goodness. According to Wayne Grudem, "The sufficiency of Scripture means that Scripture contained all the words of God he intended his people to have at each stage of redemptive history, and that it now contains everything we need God to tell us for salvation, for trusting him perfectly, and for obeying him perfectly."[5] Thus consider four spheres of life and godliness for which the Bible is sufficient.

Converting the Soul

God's Word grants new life to the believer (Ps 19:7; Rom 1:16; 1 Cor 1:18; 2 Tim 1:10; 1 Pet 1:23). This encouragement resonates as Paul warns his disciple, Timothy, his child in the faith, beloved brother, and shepherd of the church in Ephesus: "In the last days there will come . . . false teachers who "oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith" (2 Tim 3:1-8, 12-13). He exhorts, "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (vv. 14-15). These "sacred writings" refer to the Old Testament Scripture which Timothy had learned as a boy, studied as Paul's disciple, and now passed on by preaching to the church (2:15, 24-26; 4:1-5; see 1:13-14). Timothy's mother and grandmother (1:5b) likely taught him from Scripture how the Almighty God created heaven and earth (1 Tim 4:4). Mankind then rebelled and went their own way until God sent the law to explicitly expose their sin (1:8-10). Yet Timothy also discovered the manifestation of God's grace (2 Tim 2:1) from Abraham to Moses, David, and the prophets as God paved the way for the Messiah to come (1:9-10). Paul then instructed Timothy about the Son of God who sacrificed his life upon a cross to save repentant sinners by "knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:4; 2 Tim

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[5]Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 127.

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2:25). This truth so captivated Timothy that Paul could proclaim with confidence, "I am reminded of your sincere faith" (1:5a). Just as with Timothy, biblical counselors trust God's Word to convert the soul.

Comforting the Sufferer

Timothy faced many trials in his youth. He likely grew up without a godly father (see 2 Tim 1:5) and was despised as a half-Jew (see Acts 16:3). Thus only the word of Christ could heal his soul as he struggled with anxiety and timidity and physical ailments (1 Tim 5:23; 2 Tim 1:7). Yet as a believer, he took comfort that "this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison" (2 Cor 4:17). Paul exhorts him to endure suffering as a minister of the gospel (2 Tim 1:8, 12; 2:3, 9-10; 4:5) facing times of difficulty (3:1-7). For the gospel declares not only the reality of the Fall, but also the grace of redemption and the coming glories of Christ's eternal kingdom (2 Pet 1:1-11). Thus Biblical counselors come alongside suffering brothers and sisters in Christ, searching Scripture for the comfort and hope of God's everlasting promises (e.g., Ps 119:25, 49-50; 130:5; Rom 15:4; Col 1:5).

Convicting the Sinning Believer

God's Word also provides instruction and correction as Paul writes, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof . . ." (2 Tim 3:16a-c).[6] The inspired word of an infinitely perfect God speaks without error about his creation: "For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding" (Prov 2:6). None would be so foolish as to assume authority over the Creator (see Phil 2:10-11) since the one who made the world knows it best.

God's Word is also profitable for reproof by convicting the sinner (Rom 3:20;

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[6]Scripture self-attests to its divine inspiration (see 2 Sam 23:2; Luke 1:70; Mark 12:36; 1 Thess 2:13; Heb 1:1; 1 Pet 1:23-25; 2 Pet 1:20-21).

7:7): "For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life" (Prov 6:23; see Ps 119:105). "Whether the reproof is personal or doctrinal, Scripture can show sinning believers their failures, clarify the point of the mistake, and lead them to a new sense of peace and wholeness."[7] Conviction and repentance of sin then bring joy (e.g., 2 Sam 12:1-14; see Pss 32; 51), for "faithful are the wounds of a friend" (Prov 27:6a; see Rev 3:19) and joyful is the fruit of repentance (Luke 15:7). Thus biblical counselors do not speak with human expertise or cleverness, but with the authority of God's Word to convict the sinner and promise mercy (Prov 28:13).

Conforming the Sanctified

In addition to teaching and reproof, Scripture is also "profitable . . . for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16d-17). "Correction" restores a thing to its original condition, like setting upright a fallen object or supporting a friend who has fallen. Consider how God's Word progressively sanctifies the believer. All Scripture sufficiently declares God's moral instruction before convicting the sinner of disobedience (Ps 119:11; e.g., 2 Tim 2:15, 24-26). Scripture also sufficiently reproves by shining God's light on the person walking in darkness (Eph 5:8-14). Those who respond with conviction must then be restored by God's corrective Word (Matt 18:15-17; Gal 6:1; 2 Tim 2:25). Finally, believers exhort one another to repent and confess of sin before God, for "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

The one forgiven then begins to walk in the light of God's Word, for "training in righteousness" is like preparing for a race, investing time and effort into spiritual conditioning (1 Cor 9:24-27). "Training" also describes a father bringing up his child "in

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[7]Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, New American Commentary, vol. 34 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 237.

the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Eph 6:4b; see Heb 12:5-7, 11). Likewise, the believer strives for and develops new patterns of righteousness (1 Tim 4:7b-10; 6:11; 2 Tim 2:22) which God has guaranteed for those being conformed to the image of Christ (Rom 8:28-29; see John 17:17). He super-equips believers for every good work (2 Tim 3:17b), including the ministry of biblical counseling. As Mounce states, "Paul is encouraging Timothy to center his ministry on Scripture because it comes from God and will fully equip him for service."[8] This same promise applies to all believers today who "guard the good deposit" of God's Word (1:13-14).

God's Spirit Provides the Power for Counseling

The Holy Spirit brings the believer to salvation, pricks his conscience, convicts him of sin, and reveals his need for wisdom. Thus Paul exults in "him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us" (Eph 3:20). Instead of the Spirit assisting the counselor, the counselor assists the Spirit who has long been at work in every believer's life.

The counselor must seek the Lord's wisdom (Jas 1:5), listen with compassion (v. 19), and ask good questions. He must prayerfully understand each person's story as embedded in God's greater story, for the Spirit opens hearts and minds to know God through his Word (e.g., Acts 16:14). Apart from the Spirit, unbelieving man cannot know spiritual truth at all, for God's Spirit interprets God's Word for God's children (1 Cor 2:12-14; 12:3). MacArthur asserts, "The unregenerate have no facility for spiritual perception. They cannot comprehend spiritual truth because they are spiritually dead (Eph 2:1), unable to respond to anything except their own sinful passions."[9] Unbelievers

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[8]William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46 (Dallas: Word, 2000), 566.

[9]John MacArthur and Wayne Mack, eds., *Introduction to Biblical Counseling: A Basic Guide to the Principles and Practice of Counseling* (Dallas: Word, 1994), 135.

do not honor God's Word or live in right relationship with God. Thus true and lasting change only comes by the renewing power of the Spirit and the Spirit only comes by conversion (Titus 3:5-6; Ezek 36:26-27). Siang-Yang Tan also states that counseling apart from the Spirit is impotent, "The role of the Holy Spirit in counseling is therefore a crucial one. He is the ultimate source of all true healing and wholeness. All true Christian counseling needs to be done in the Spirit, by the Spirit's power, truth, and love, under the Lordship of Christ, and to the glory of God."[10] Therefore, consider four ministries of the Holy Spirit through God's Word, prayer, the counselor, and the counselee.

Ministry through God's Word

First, God's Spirit ministers through the Word he inspired: "For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet 1:21b). Holcomb and Wilkerson explain this phenomenon:

> The more we receive God's Word by faith, the more effect it has upon us, and the more we are transformed. In other words, to be counseled biblically—or to be discipled in general, really—is to receive God's Word more and more deeply as the Spirit drives it deeper into the heart. The Spirit works through the Word to change us.[11]

A Spirit-filled person (Eph 5:18) is a Scripture-saturated person (Col 3:16-17). Thus the Spirit teaches sound doctrine (1 John 2:27), rebukes those who stray (John 16:8-11), reveals truth to his disciples (vv. 13-14), corrects the crooked (Gal 5:22-23), and trains up in righteousness (vv. 16-18; John 17:17). He comforts and encourages as the "Wonderful Counselor—the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD" (Isa 9:6; see 11:2). The

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[10]Siang-Yang Tan, "Holy Spirit, Role in Counseling," in *Baker Encyclopedia of Psychology and Counseling*, ed. D. G. Benner and P. C. Hill (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1999), 569.

[11]Justin Holcomb and Mike Wilkerson, "The Ministry of the Holy Spirit," in *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, ed. James MacDonald, Bob Kellemen, and Stephen Viars (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2013), 54.

Spirit ministers through the word of Christ and speaks the truth in love out of submission to Christ.

God's Spirit also offers God's hope through God's Word as Paul prays, "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. . . . May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope" (Rom 15:4, 13). As Jesus promised his disciples, "the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (John 14:26).

Ministry through Prayer

Paul exhorts all believers to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess 5:17), "in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication" (Eph 6:18a). Therefore, biblical counselors are to pray with and for counselees as an act of humility before an all-wise, all-powerful God. Prayer acknowledges God's sovereign presence and recognizes the indwelling Spirit's power to comfort in the midst of affliction (2 Cor 1:3b-4a), establish confident hope in Christ (Eph 1:18), help deliver from temptation (Luke 22:40, and set captives free (Isa 61:1). The Spirit convicts the world concerning sin (John 16:8) and elicits repentance and confession by pricking the guilty conscience. Prayer reminds believers that lasting change and restoration only occur by the Spirit of Christ (2 Cor 13:7-9; Phil 1:9-11; Col 1:9-12).

Ministry through the Counselor

God's Spirit ministers through his Word and through prayer, yet God has also chosen to work through human agents as instruments in his redeeming hands. He does this by first transforming the character of the counselor (2 Cor 3:17-18). Daily, Christ changes his children to be more steeped in his Word and more dependent on him in prayer. His indwelling Spirit produces a new creation (2 Cor 5:17) by renewing the mind

in the likeness of Christ's (Rom 12:2). God's Spirit then informs the counselor's wisdom

(Eph 1:17) and enables the church to help others so "that according to the riches of his

glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner

being" (3:16). In this way, the Spirit energizes each person's specific training, ministry

experience, knowledge of the Word, and compassionate heart. He does not replace skill

any more than a farmer's dependence on God (1 Cor 3:6-7) replaces the need to cultivate

soil, study weather patterns, plant in the proper season, and protect the crops from harm

(Luke 8:11-15). God's Spirit works through the counselor's competence to listen well,

ask good questions, and love people the way God does. He brings to mind sufficient

Scripture for every situation and opportunities for application (Matt 10:20; Luke 12:12).

Paul Tautges concludes, "Men and women who are walking and growing in the Spirit are

those who are qualified to come alongside sinning brothers and sisters to gently restore

them to the spiritual blessing that flows from obedience. Without the Holy Spirit, biblical

counseling cannot exist."[12] Thus believers are indwelt, instructed, and empowered by the

Spirit to counsel one another.

Ministry through the Counselee

One great encouragement when counseling fellow believers is knowing that

God's Spirit already works within them. Christians have the choice to either walk with

God or to appease sinful desires (Gal 5:16-17), yet even the struggle against sin shows

assurance of salvation. At the cross, Jesus took sin upon himself and imputed his

righteousness to believers, making possible new life and victory over sin (Rom 8:2-4).

Thus Paul exhorts, "You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the

Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not

belong to him" (v. 9). Although Christian living demands hard work, Paul argues that

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[12]Paul Tautges, *Counsel One Another: A Theology of Personal Discipleship* (Leominster, UK: Day One, 2009), 103.

divine effort develops growth in godliness: "Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" (Gal 3:2-3). Clearly, Christ's word richly dwelling in the believer produces the fruit of the Spirit (5:22-23) instead of the works of the flesh (vv. 19-21).

Christ abides with believers by his Spirit (1 John 4:13) and empowers victory over sin once "those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Gal 5:24; see 2:20; 6:14; Rom 6:6). All who belong to Christ have had their sin cancelled and nailed to the cross (Col 2:14). Yet succumbing to the flesh is like returning to the cross by cover of darkness, pulling out the blood-stained nails, and cherishing those sins for which Christ died (see Heb 6:4-6). Instead Paul commands, "Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col 1:10; see Eph 4:1). Christ has already purchased victory by the Spirit's power over the flesh, for sin was crucified on the cross and will one day be eradicated. Therefore, "if we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit" (Gal 5:25; see vv. 16, 18). A believer follows God's marching orders when the same Spirit who raised Christ Jesus from the dead is alive in him, putting to death the sinful flesh (Rom 8:9-11). The Spirit takes charge of the believer's life and guarantees he will one day stand before the Lord holy and blameless and above reproach (Col 1:22). No true and lasting change takes place apart from God's Spirit.

God's Church Cultivates the Counseling Community

Human beings were made in the image of God for relationship with God and with each other (Gen 1:26-27; 2:18). And throughout history, the community of God's people has been the context of spiritual transformation. Kellemen avers,

> There has apparently never been a time or place where individuals did not seek out religious leaders for personal help for: sustaining comfort, guidance and counsel,

reconciliation through forgiveness and assurance, and healing or spiritual health. The process can be traced from the Old Testament to Christ and the Apostles in the New Testament to the early Church to the medieval Church to the Reformation and up to our own day. . . . The church has always been about the business of viewing and using God's Word to compassionately and wisely help hurting and hardened people to deal with suffering and sin.[13]

Only recently has the church neglected its role in the ministry of soul care. God's people, therefore, must rediscover that while help may be found outside of the church, it must never be found apart from the church. Surely those who were graciously forgiven can graciously help fellow strugglers. Reju and Dever insist, "In a healthy church, the members have an expectation that it is normal for believers to care for and counsel one another with the Word. It is normal to be invested in each other's lives. No one has to give permission to initiate love for one another and be invested in each other's lives."[14] Hebrews 10:19-31 describes three ways in which the church cultivates the proper community for the confident assurance, communal agitation, and courageous admonition of biblical counseling.

Confident Assurance

The church equips one another based on the confident assurance availed in Christ. The writer of Hebrews exhorts fellow believers, "Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus" (10:19; see 2:11; 3:1). Christ shed his blood so that sinners declared righteous in him might gain full access to the Father "by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh" (10:20). The word "new" could describe a freshly slaughtered religious sacrifice as Tautges portrays,

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[13]Bob Kellemen, "A Counseling Primer from the Great Cloud of Witnesses," in *Scripture and Counseling*, ed. Bob Kellemen and Jeff Forrey (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 128, 143.

[14]Deepak Reju and Mark Dever, "The Health of the Church and Biblical Counseling," in *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, ed. James MacDonald, Bob Kellemen, and Stephen Viars (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2013), 248.

The sacrifice of Jesus is forever regarded as having just been made. It shall never lose its power. The word indicates 'fresh,' not only in the sense that it is a way which was before unknown, but also as one that retains its freshness and cannot grow old. Therefore, Jesus remains the newly slain one who is able to free us from sin's penalty and power by giving us His spiritual freedom and life.[15]

The "living" way speaks of a way that leads to salvation and life more abundant (John 10:10b). According to Kistemaker,

Christ has dedicated the way by opening the curtain, 'that is, his body.' At his death the curtain to the Most Holy Place had to be torn from top to bottom. Likewise the body of Jesus had to be broken, and his blood had to be shed to open for us the way to God. By his sacrifice on the cross, Christ has removed the veil between God and his people.[16]

The torn curtain in the temple vividly depicted Jesus's body destroyed so that believers might freely access the throne room of God (Matt 27:51). Christians now confidently enter not on the basis of good works, but "since we have a great priest over the house of God" (Heb 10:21; see 4:14-16). Therefore, "let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (10:22).[17] The church equips Christians to approach the Lord boldly in prayer, having been declared righteous both spiritually in regeneration and symbolically in baptism. As a child seeking comfort runs with assurance into her daddy's arms, so also God's children run to their heavenly Father in the midst of suffering. The perfect tense verbs indicate past action at the cross with lasting results into the future. Tautges adds,

The atoning work of Christ is so complete that it continues to cleanse us. . . . There is no sin that God will not wash away when we come to Him on His terms. . . . As counselors, we must help disciples understand the fullness of their forgiveness in

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[15]Tautges, *Counsel One Another*, 159.

[16]William Hendriksen and Simon Kistemaker, *Exposition of Hebrews*, New Testament Commentary, vol. 15 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 287.

[17]Sprinkling is an Old Testament concept by which the priests were consecrated (Exod 29:21) and the people cleansed (Ezek 36:25; see Heb 9:14). When animal sacrifices were made on their behalf, the sprinkling signified the benefits of that sacrifice—their sins forgiven and evil consciences cleansed. "Bodies washed with pure water" relates the New Testament concept of believer's baptism with the heart cleansing they had already experienced (1 Pet 3:21; see Eph 5:25-26).

Christ. . . . In Christ, the believer's conscience has already been cleansed of guilt. When a sinner comes to Jesus and receives salvation, guilt is removed. Even if feelings of guilt remain, the actual legal guilt is gone because, in the body of His Son, God judged the sin that caused the guilt (Rom 8:1).[18]

Therefore, because of Christ and his work, "let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful" (Heb 10:23). The church gathered for worship and fellowship proclaims the source of her common hope in Jesus Christ. "Salvation is something that connects us to God and his people. It's not just in heaven that we will be united around the throne of God. Our personal relationship with God links us to other believers now."[19] The church expresses worship with song and preaching and biblical counsel, declaring her hope in God alone who will cease to exist before he ever breaks his promises (6:17). Believers united together attest that Christ's loving sacrifice is an "anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast" (vv. 19-20) grounded in his life, death, resurrection, ascension, enthronement, and intercession.

This confident assurance equips God's children to seek forgiveness for sin and comfort for suffering. "The church is full of people dealing with the effects of sin, people who are not fully formed into the image of Jesus Christ."[20] Therefore, the church retells the story of forgiveness accomplished through the shed blood of Christ (Isa 53:5), hearts sprinkled clean by the Savior's sacrifice, evil consciences removed, sins forgiven, and guilt taken away (6:7). The church reminds each repentant believer of the baptism which symbolized internal cleansing and the message of grace.

So also, the church counsels suffering believers with the sacrifice of Christ who "was despised and rejected by men. . . . Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted" (Isa 53:3-4).

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[18]Tautges, *Counsel One Another*, 163-64.

[19]Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp, *How People Change: Facilitator's Guide* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2005), 50.

[20]Tripp, *Instruments*, 116.

Jesus is a high priest able "to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Heb 4:15). He was sinned against, surrounded by hateful people in a fallen world, and afflicted with agony. The church reminds the suffering believer he will be heard in prayer, comforted in grief, and accepted by God through union with Christ. He is a child of the forever-faithful God and a recipient of his grace. The church equips one another with the confident assurance in Christ to joyfully enter into the presence of God.

Communal Agitation

Secondly, God's church provides the proper environment for communal agitation: "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works" (Heb 10:24). This present tense command anticipates constant agitation as when mixing concrete. The word connotes a sudden convulsion or violent emotion,[21] yet the church directs this energy in a positive way like the irritant in an oyster that becomes a pearl of "love and good works." The plural pronouns and the "one another" reveal that this godly provocation takes place in the context of community. The church intentionally stirs up one another to love disparate people held together simply by a common bond in Christ. Lane and Tripp declare,

> It takes a work of God's grace to transform self-absorbed individuals into a community of love. Being in community shows us our need for change and helps bring it about! . . . The love of Christ is so long and high and deep that we cannot see this love or experience it all by our finite selves. We have to grasp it "together with all the saints" (Eph 3:18), much like a jury relies on twelve different minds to come to a full understanding of the truth.[22]

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[21]R. Kent Hughes, *Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1993), 2:35.

[22]Lane and Tripp, *How People Change*, 51-52. The church displays Christ by attracting others to her uncommon community (John 13:34-35). Kellemen expounds, "Every gospel conversation we have with each other as Christians should encourage and empower us so that we can have gospel conversations with those who do not yet know Christ. The church is the place where gospel talk is so natural that it becomes the training ground for gospel talk with those who do not know the gospel. . . . We don't divorce personal ministry in the church from personal ministry to the community. Instead, our ministry to one another in the church builds each other up in truth and love so that we can embody truth and love in our community" (Robert W. Kellemen, *Gospel-Centered Counseling: How Christ Changes Lives* [Grand

Spiritual transformation blossoms within the church community that is "not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near" (Heb 10:25). The gathered church encourages one another through corporate worship, loving fellowship, learning God's truth, and rejoicing in the presence of Christ. The Hebrew Christians, however, who received this letter were suffering greatly for their faith (see vv. 32-34) while others had apostatized to Judaism (see 3:14). Meeting together with the church was losing priority over self-preservation, so the writer exhorts them not to make this a habit. In addition to spiritual discouragement, the church also ministers to believers suffering physical ailments, emotional struggles, and difficulties in a fallen world. Thus Powlison states that "sustaining sufferers and transforming sinners—is a vital part of the ministry of the church according to the Bible."[23]

The church agitates one another to love and good works by remembering God's greatest work upon the cross. "We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19) and forgive one another as God in Christ forgave us (Eph 4:32). Christ restores repentant sinners to his church through the abundant grace of God (Prov 28:13; 1 John 1:9) and calls them to do the good works he has set apart for them (Eph 2:10). Sadly though, sin and suffering compel many to neglect meeting together with the church, so mutual encouragement must be ongoing. Saints must constantly remind one another that the church is the bride of Christ, fellow worshippers, heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ who await with anticipation that glorious Day as it draws near. The church must not neglect to meet together, for she has a Savior who is greater than suffering and greater

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Rapids: Zondervan, 2014], 233).

[23]David Powlison, *Speaking Truth in Love: Counsel in Community* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2005), 110. Higbee adds, "It is every believer's job description to: (1) care enough to ask, (2) be wise enough to seek God's Word for answers, and (3) be humble enough to intercede in prayer" (Garrett Higbee, "The Practicality of the Bible for Becoming a Church of Biblical Counseling," in *Scripture and Counseling*, ed. Bob Kellemen and Jeff Forrey [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014], 228).

than sin.

Courageous Admonition

Finally, the church provides the proper environment for courageous admonition. The writer of Hebrews includes a warning, "For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins" (10:26; see 3:12; 6:4-6). Continual and intentional sin despite full knowledge of the truth (2:3-4) comprises open rebellion against the Almighty Creator of the universe. Christ's sacrifice is ineffectual for those who fall away from the living God because those who never possessed salvation face "a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries" (10:27). The church warns the unrepentant to dread the wrath of God, for "anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?" (vv. 28-29; see Num 35:30; Deut 17:1-6; 19:15; Matt 18:16). The sinning apostate stares Jesus in the face and seeks to crush him underfoot. He scoffs at Christ's shed blood, denies the Son of God, curses the covenant which purchased forgiveness, and grieves the Holy Spirit of grace. Defiling the Savior results not merely in physical death, but spiritual—not just separation from the camp, but eternal separation from God. "For we know him who said, 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay.' And again, 'The Lord will judge his people.' It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb 10:30-31). Therefore, those who deny the Savior's protection are fully exposed to the Father's wrath.

The church lovingly declares the serious nature of unconfessed sin (Matt 18:15-17; see Gal 6:1) and calls suffering sinners to return to the fellowship of Christ. This exhortation to genuine repentance only takes place in the community of the church

as biblical counselors courageously admonish professing believers to live according to God's promises and commands.

God's Son Establishes the Pattern for Counseling

Every believer is a new creation in Christ (2 Cor 3:17-18; 5:17); therefore biblical counselors simply uncover what God in Christ has already accomplished (2 Tim 1:5-7). Christ's Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20 establishes him as the church's commander, goal, and counselor in making disciples.

The Church's Commander

Jesus calls his church to make disciples based on the sovereign authority bestowed by his Father (John 5:17-19; 10:17-18, 25; 12:49-50). "And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me'" (Matt 28:18). Already the risen Savior had appeared to many followers, yet their lives were still endangered by the Roman rulers and Jewish leaders. Not only that, but Jesus had told his anxious disciples that he must leave them once again (John 16:16). Yet desiring they continue his Spirit-empowered work (vv. 13-15), he passed on his authority to them as the foundation of his commission: "Therefore, go . . ." (Matt 28:19a). Throughout his earthly ministry, Jesus demonstrated complete authority over nature (Mark 4:35-41), demons (5:1-20), disease (vv. 21-34), and death (vv. 35-43). He also had the power to lay down his own life and take it up again (John 10:17-18), for after three days in the tomb he rose from the grave, conquering sin and death. He had divine authority to forgive all iniquities (Matt 9:6; Mark 2:7; Rev 1:5) and astonished the people because "his word possessed authority" (Luke 4:32). Then after the resurrection, Paul exclaims that Jesus's authority was even greater: "God raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come" (Eph 1:20-21). The risen Christ remains the King of kings and the Lord of lords who created

the universe and holds the world in the palm of his hand (Col 1:15-17). He appoints kings and presidents and prime ministers and turns their hearts like channels of water (Prov 21:1). He is the divine Son of God (John 1:1-2), who sits in supreme authority at his Father's right hand.

Jesus's disciples follow the pattern of their commander-in-chief by helping others become like him also, for the counselee's goal is not simply an improved version of self. Tripp comments, "The Great Commission is not only a missionary commission; it is also a pastoral, fellowship, and counseling commission."[24] While the first half of the Great Commission commands all believers to be globally-minded missionaries, Tripp notes that the second half "defines and directs the life and ministry of the local church, for the pastor, the biblical counselor, the small group leader, and the brother and sister in Christ committed to biblical, mutual ministry."[25]

Christ calls his church to counsel biblically because many in the world are not worshipping Jesus as Lord. Many have never heard the gospel and have no access to a relationship with Christ. The church must submit to the authority of the risen Christ, for "the God of salvation has not given us a mission that is dependent on human resources. . . . Thanks be to God that the resurrected Jesus has rendered the devil powerless, and that His delegated authority will grant us the victory (Heb 2:14; 1 Cor 15:57)."[26] The command of Christ establishes the foundation of the Great Commission.

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[24]Paul David Tripp, "The Great Commission: A Paradigm for Ministry in the Local Church," *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 16, no. 3 (1998): 2.

[25]Ibid. Kellemen concurs: "We have wrongly defined biblical counseling so that it is about solving problems. We've made it a subset of discipleship focused on reactive work with persons struggling with sin. Instead, we should think of biblical counseling as synonymous with comprehensive personal discipleship. Biblical counseling is focused one-another ministry designed to fulfill the Great Commandment and the Great Commission" (Kellemen, *Equipping Counselors*, 35).

[26]Tautges, *Counsel One Another*, 30-31.

The Church's Commission

The singular goal of the Great Commission is to "make disciples" by multiplying followers of Jesus Christ. Three participial actions support this one imperative: going, baptizing, and teaching to obey. "Going" precedes disciple-making since a believer cannot make disciples without already being one. Christ has commissioned his church to go and make disciples, for believers possess the cure for souls in God's Word and the person of Christ. "As you are going" involves being a living example of Christ to the counselee (e.g., 1 Cor 11:1) and keeping Christ central to the conversation (Col 1:27).

Disciple-makers, however, do not only go out into the world, but eventually bring disciples into the church. Baptism follows repentance and the receiving of God's Word (Acts 2:38, 41) as the outward representation of the inward change that God has worked in the believer's life (1 Cor 12:13a). Baptism brings joyful glory to Christ when unbelievers are introduced to a relationship with him.

Christ also calls the church to teach disciples how to rightly relate to God, others, and self (Matt 22:37-39). Tautges affirms, "A commitment to discipleship means that we must not merely lead lost sheep back to God through evangelism, but that we must also shepherd and train them to consistently live out the truths of the gospel."[27] Disciples who obey everything Jesus has commanded (28:20a) give him all glory as the one who teaches with authority by treating his word as a rock-solid foundation (Matt 7:24-25). According to Carson and Forrey,

> Making disciples is not accomplished by merely giving information about Jesus, but by enabling people to conform their lives to the example of Jesus. Disciples obey Jesus' teaching instead of merely hearing it (Jas 1:22-25); they conform their lives to it rather than trying it out and discarding it (John 8:31-32; 15:1-8).[28]

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[27]Tautges, *Counsel One Another*, 39.

[28]Kevin Carson and Jeff Forrey, "The Unity of the Trinity," in *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, ed. James MacDonald, Bob Kellemen, and Stephen Viars (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2013), 64.

Counseling reflects the Bible's central theme of God's redemptive work in Christ (Col 1:28-29; see 2:2-3, 8-10). The church counsels by teaching God's Word (John 5:39-40; Luke 24:25-27, 44-45; Heb 1:1-3) and proclaiming the death and resurrection of Christ as the controlling motivation for growth in godliness (2 Cor 5:14a; see Titus 2:11-14). Robert Jones explains,

> The fact that someone needed to die for us reminds us of our sinfulness and helplessness; the fact that Jesus did die for us reminds us that He loves us. And the fact that Jesus rose from the dead assures us that the Father accepted His sacrifice and that Jesus is a living and active Savior who is with us by His Spirit to help us to follow Him.[29]

Biblical counselors trust in Christ's presence and power as the ultimate source of spiritual strength. He will never leave his children nor forsake them (2 Tim 4:16-17; Heb 7:24-25), for the God who commands (Phil 4:11-12) is the God who supplies (v. 13). The church also presents Christ as the final hope for all of life's problems beyond this present age. In eternal glory, God promises a perfect soul (1 John 3:2), a perfect body (1 Cor 15:42-44, 45-49; see 2 Cor 5), and a perfect place in the new heavens and the new earth (2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:1-4). Biblical counselors make disciples by teaching them to trust every word that Jesus promised and to obey all that he commanded.

The Church's Counselor

When Jesus decreed the Great Commission, he did not tell his disciples to sit in a building and wait for people to come to them. Instead he commanded, "Go into all the world and make disciples." Jesus promises the church, challenged beyond her abilities to reach lost people for Christ, "Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt 28:20b). He keeps this promise by sending the indwelling Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17, see v. 26; 15:26) who empowers the church to make disciples until the task is

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[29]Robert Jones, "The Christ-Centeredness of Biblical Counseling," in *Scripture and Counseling*, ed. Bob Kellemen and Jeff Forrey (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 117.

complete (Heb 13:5b). The Wonderful Counselor thus indwells every believer and anoints each counselor's ministry of compassion to others (Col 3:12; see Matt 9:36). Through his church, Christ will "bring good news to the poor; bind up the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, and [open] the prison to those who are bound" (Isa 61:1; see Col 1:13-14). Baker and Holmes exult,

> Christ came to comfort and heal the wounded (Ps 147:2-3) . . . both physically and emotionally. . . . One of the ways to define biblical counseling is 'broken people helping other broken people find healing through the power of the gospel and in the power of the Spirit as they apply the living principles of Scripture (Heb 4:12) to life.' . . . Our Lord came to break enslavements to sin and to help people come out into the light of day and truly deal with sin (Eph 5:11).[30]

The church makes disciples through the life-changing power of Jesus Christ (Titus 3:3-7), for "the gospel is not just a message to believe; it is a person to follow (Matt 11:28-29)."[31]

Conclusion

The child of God has been blessed "in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" (Eph 1:3b) with God's divine power granting "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Pet 1:3). These resources available to every believer are necessary for effective spiritual growth. In short, biblical counseling is God's people ministering God's Word by the power of God's Spirit in the context of God's church for the glory of God's Son. Faithful dependence upon these spiritual resources reflect the church's dependence upon the Lord.

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[30]Ernie Baker and Jonathan Holmes, "The Power of the Redeemer," in *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, ed. James MacDonald, Bob Kellemen, and Stephen Viars (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2013), 40-41.

[31]Ibid., 40. Tripp concurs: "In confronting people with truth, we confront them with Christ. This is quite radical, for it says that truth, in its most basic form, is not a system, a theology, or a philosophy. It is a *person* whose name is Jesus. Living a godly life means trusting him, following him, and living like him. Personal ministry weaves the threads of grace and truth through every part of a person's life. In that it is truly incarnational, because grace and truth will always lead people to Christ" (Tripp, *Instruments*, 101, emphasis in original). Kellemen follows the same line of thought, "Gospel-centered counseling promotes personal change centered on the Person of Christ through the personal ministry of the Word" (Kellemen, *Gospel-Centered Counseling*, 16).

CHAPTER 3

EQUIPPING COMPETENT BIBLICAL COUNSELORS

God calls his church to counsel using both biblical doctrine and biblical methods, for he is just as much concerned with the means of soul care as he is with the content. Equipping competent biblical counselors uniquely cultivates Christ-like character, applies theological foundations, and utilizes the abundance of soul care resources.

Christ-Like Character

Competent biblical counselors model Christ-like character when leading others to follow Jesus. This is not a call to perfection, but a commitment to continued spiritual growth and maturity in Christ.

Spiritual Maturity

Secular counselors expected to abide by a code of ethics and receive ongoing education have no licensing requirements for spiritual maturity. The qualifications of biblical counselors, however, are repeatedly described in Scripture. 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 present the characteristics for church leaders who shepherd the flock. Other essential qualities include the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23), growth in godliness (2 Pet 1:3-8), and Christ-like wisdom (1 Cor 2:11-16). Effective counselors "see people as a priority" (Col 3:12-14), "experience peace with God through the Gospel" (v. 15), "have a passion for the Word" (v. 16a), demonstrate a practical wisdom" (v. 16b), and "live out a passionate praise for God" (vv. 16c-17).[1] The apostle Paul emphasizes that believers must

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

be "full of goodness" and "filled with all knowledge" (Rom 15:14) and exhorts them to counsel competently: "And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all" (1 Thess 5:14). Integrationist counselors also share this desire to display Christ-likeness so that clients may glimpse a clearer picture of God's attributes and actions.[2] All Christians who counsel should agree that any believer in a people-helping ministry must strive to be like Jesus.

The incarnate Christ provides the only perfect example from which to learn Christ-likeness. For "when he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Matt 9:36). He loved each individual person in the midst of their suffering and sought to minister both spiritually and physically, "teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction" (v. 35). The Gospels reveal how Jesus loved the unsaved (Luke 13:34; 19:41), the grieving (John 11:33-35), and even those who would betray him (John 13:1-5). Although he followed his own counsel to love enemies and pray for persecutors (Matt 5:44), the Good Shepherd particularly cared for his followers (John 10). He instructed his disciples in the truth, prayed for their spiritual growth (John 17), and granted them access to his Father in heaven (Heb 4:14-16). Jesus today still sympathizes with the suffering of his people, allows confident entry into the throne room of God, and offers mercy and grace for sinners in a fallen world.

The apostle Paul reflects Christ's godly example while laboring for three years

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[2]This involves emulating the Holy Spirit's ministry "to help, comfort, and encourage." It is making peace and fostering reconciliation as Christ's ambassadors (2 Cor 5:18-21), trusting in the God who heals (Ps 103:2-4), and learning from his wisdom (Prov 1:7, 20-33; Jer 8:8-9). Christian counselors are called "to compassion as opposed to elitism, . . . servanthood as opposed to superiority, . . . community as opposed to isolation, . . . accountability as opposed to independence and autonomy, . . . transparency as opposed to impression management, . . . love as opposed to Rogerian positive regard, . . . stewardship as opposed to profit maximization, . . . holiness as opposed to anonymity or wholeness, . . . wisdom as opposed to mere secular brilliance, . . . [and] integrity as opposed to mere ethical compliance (Stanton L. Jones and Richard E. Butman, *Modern Psychotherapies: A Comprehensive Christian Appraisal* [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011], 464-76).

in Ephesus, "serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials" (Acts 20:17-19; see vv. 31, 36-38; Eph 5:1-2). He held the Philippian believers in his heart, praying for them with joy, thanking God in his remembrance of them, and yearning for them with the affection of Christ. He assured them of his confidence in their spiritual maturation and prayed "that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God" (Phil 1:3-11; see 2:17-21). He opened his heart wide to the church in Corinth (2 Cor 6:11) and anguished over the churches in Galatia (Gal 4:19) and Rome (Rom 9:1-3). Even when he had to admonish the church and write a stern letter, he did so with anguish of heart and tears (2 Cor 2:4). To the church in Colossae, he proclaimed Christ through the power of Christ with the goal of presenting believers mature in Christ: "Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me" (Col 1:28-29). Yet despite passionate appeals to the church, he could describe himself to the Thessalonians as "gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us" (1 Thess 2:7-8; see vv. 9, 13-14, 17; 3:9). He did the same as a father with his children (2:11-12). Likewise, he exhorts the church to love one another with the compassion of Christ: "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together" (1 Cor 12:26; see Rom 12:10, 15). Both Jesus and Paul demonstrate the importance of godly character for the ministry of counseling. Therefore, biblical counselor training must retain spiritual maturation in Christ as its primary qualification.

Spiritual Giftedness

Although biblical counseling remains the responsibility of every believer, God has uniquely gifted each member for different kinds of "one another" ministry. MacArthur highlights the relevance of certain gifts such as prophecy, teaching, exhortation, wisdom, knowledge, administration, and mercy,[3] but states that "nearly all the spiritual gifts delineated in the New Testament have usefulness in the counseling ministry."[4] Kellemen agrees that spiritual gifting helps "to indicate the style, feel, and focus of one's counseling rather than whether or not he or she would be a capable counselor."[5] Spiritual gifting is a quality of the counselor, but not a qualification. Therefore, the church must equip believers to counsel according to spiritual gifting or risk leaving certain gifts dormant through neglect.

Theological Foundations

Every counseling system reveals a particular theology regarding God's relationship with man. According to Lambert, "Every counseling system is, essentially, a worldview which presents its own understanding about how life works best and how best to help someone make changes in his life consistent with that worldview."[6] All believers are counselors and all counselors are theologians. The question remains: What kind? Comparing the elements affected by worldview helps to explain each system's

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[3]John MacArthur, "Spirit-Giftedness and Biblical Counseling," in *Introduction to Biblical Counseling*, ed. John MacArthur and Wayne Mack (Dallas: Word, 1994), 315-21.

[4]Ibid., 314.

[5]Robert W. Kellemen, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church: The 4E Ministry Training Strategy* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2011), 171.

[6]Stuart Scott and Heath Lambert, eds., *Counseling the Hard Cases: True Stories Illustrating the Sufficiency of God's Resources in the Scriptures* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2012), 23. Adams also emphasizes the manner in which theology shapes thinking: "All counseling, by its very nature (as it tries to explain and direct human beings in their living before God and in a fallen world) implies theological commitments by the counselor. He simply cannot become involved in the attempt to change beliefs, values, attitudes, relationships, and behavior without wading neck deep in theological waters. . . . These theological commitments may be conscious or unconscious, biblical or heretical, good theology or bad, but—either way—they surely are theological. . . . Counseling cannot be done apart from theological commitments" (Jay E. Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979], 14-15.).

theological foundations. These elements include the presupposition of counseling

authority, the perception of man's problem, the presentation of the solution, and the

provision of support.

Presupposition of Counseling Authority

First, every counseling system begins with a presupposition of authority. For

example, the medical model upholds scientific research to explain emotional issues such

as depression with the theory of chemical imbalance.[7] Behaviorism claims that behaviors

are learned, therefore problems may be addressed by identifying the causal influences in

a person's life.[8] Consider also the bold claim of Carl Rogers:

> *Experience is, for me, the highest authority*. The touchstone of validity is my own
> experience. No other person's ideas, and none of my own ideas, are as authoritative
> as my experiences. It is to experience I must return again and again, to discover a
> closer approximation to truth as it is in the process of becoming in me. Neither the
> Bible nor the prophets—neither Freud nor research—neither the revelations of God
> nor man—can take precedence over my own direct experience.[9]

Biblical counseling, on the other hand, bases its authority on the inspiration

and inerrancy of Scripture. As Stuart Scott asserts, "We must establish from the outset

that the source of truth about man is not sociology (the study of our society), psychology

(the humanistic study of the soul), or secular anthropology (the evolutionary study of

man), but the Word of God."[10] Extra-biblical insights are confirmative when they align

with God's Word, however, they have no authority on their own. So Mack declares,

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[7]See Peter R. Breggin, *Toxic Psychiatry: Why Therapy, Empathy and Love Must Replace the Drugs, Electroshock, and Biochemical Theories of the "New Psychiatry"* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991); Thomas Szasz, *The Myth of Mental Illness: Foundations of a Theory of Personal Conduct* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2010); and Allen Frances, *Saving Normal: An Insider's Revolt Against Out-of-Control Psychiatric Diagnosis, DSM-5, Big Pharma, and the Medicalization of Ordinary Life* (New York: HarperCollins, 2013) for a discussion within the psychiatric community regarding the medical model.

[8]B. F. Skinner, *About Behaviorism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), 46-71. Skinner posits that behavioral evolution takes place when a person experiences the punishment of his or her environment.

[9]Carl R. Rogers, *On Becoming a Person* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), 23-24, emphasis in original.

[10]Stuart Scott, *The Exemplary Husband: A Biblical Perspective* (Bemidji, MN: Focus, 2002), 30.

We have every reason to place our confidence in the sure, dependable, and entirely trustworthy revelation of God given to us in Holy Scripture because it contains a God-ordained, sufficient, comprehensive system of theoretical commitments, principles, insights, goals, and appropriate methods for understanding and resolving the non-physical problems of people.[11]

Such statements by biblical counselors mirror the confidence Scripture places in its own sufficiency (2 Tim 3:16-17).

The integrationist worldview attempts to wed the secular and biblical bases of authority. Integration is, according to McMinn, "bringing spirituality, as well as psychology and theology, into the Christian counseling office."[12] Carter and Narramore assert that integration "assumes there is ultimately only one set (configuration) of concepts, laws, or principles that operates in two disciplines. Genuine integration involves the discovery and articulation of the common underlying principles of both psychology and the Scriptures."[13] Eric Johnson affirms, "The majority approach among genuine integration models considers integration to be an intellectual project concerned with bringing together and harmonizing the concepts of the theology and philosophy of the Christian faith with those of contemporary psychology."[14] In response, Powlison critiques this patchwork worldview:

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[11]Wayne A. Mack, "What Is Biblical Counseling?" in *Totally Sufficient*, ed. Edward E. Hindson and Howard Eyrich (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2004), 50.

[12]Mark R. McMinn, *Psychology, Theology, and Spirituality in Christian Counseling* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 1996), xii. McMinn and Campbell elsewhere reason, "To what extent should counseling and our view of persons be influenced by both the Christian faith and contemporary psychology? Some believe that faith is enough, that psychology is irrelevant and perhaps dangerous. Others believe that psychology is enough, that faith ought to be left outside the counseling office. Integrationists believe that some sort of reciprocal interaction between faith and psychology is the best way to gain a comprehensive understanding of personality and counseling. This is not to say that psychology carries the same authority as the Christian faith, but that understanding and wisdom can be discovered in both" (Mark R. McMinn and Clark D. Campbell, *Integrative Psychotherapy: Toward a Comprehensive Christian Approach* [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007], 22-23.).

[13]John D. Carter and Bruce Narramore, *The Integration of Psychology and Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 92.

[14]Eric Johnson, *Foundations for Soul Care: A Christian Psychology Proposed* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007), 89. Johnson identifies himself as a Christian psychologist who critiques modern soul care as "secular and grounded in evolutionary theory, . . . fundamentally human-centered in its orientation, . . . and directly antithetical to Christian" soul care (ibid., 98). However, he argues against Scripture containing "*all* knowledge *that God has* regarding the care of souls" (ibid., 119, emphasis in original).

The stated intent of frank integrationists is to borrow theories and practices from secular psychology and to weave these in with Christian faith. Covert or unwitting integrationists do not state this intention but simply borrow. The net effect in every integrationist's system is that secular error eats up biblical truth, so that false views of human nature, of Christ and of the change/counseling process control the system.[15]

The problem of integration lies in the misguided assumption that "all truth is God's truth."[16] "Of course all truth is God's truth," states Adams, "But there is only one touchstone for determining whether a given statement claiming to be true is, indeed true: Does it square with God's standard for truth—the Bible?"[17] Integrationists face a conflict of authority when scientific research presents extra-biblical or contra-biblical methods for helping people. As a result, many uphold Scripture as foundational in theory, yet insufficient in practice.[18] For example, McMinn claims that the use of Scripture can be unwise or even harmful in the counseling process: "Counselors can sometimes introduce relational problems by explicitly using Scripture in counseling, [therefore] the best counselors use Scripture only after carefully considering the psychological implications and the effect on the therapeutic relationship."[19] As a result of such caution, many

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[15]David Powlison, "Critiquing Modern Integrationists," *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 11, no. 3 (1993): 25.

[16]Carter and Narramore, *Integration*, 13. Integrationists argue that general revelation includes psychological observations pried out from creation. Johnson describes this as "common grace" or "creation grace" and claims that God's speech in creation must be discovered "through some investigative procedures" for the sake of soul care (Johnson, *Foundations*, 100). Jones and Butman claim that "all truth is from above (Jas 1:17)" (Jones and Butman, *Modern Psychotherapies*, 49). They are careful not to displace the ultimate authority of God's Word when discerning these truths of human experience, yet they attempt to show from Jewish writings, early church scholars, and the Old Testament, "the value of appropriating secular wisdom to God's purposes, if that work is done with due diligence to remain faithful to God's revealed Word" (ibid., 31).

[17]Adams, *Theology of Christian Counseling*, 8. Rich Thompson reasons, "Granted, as the believer evaluates human wisdom's observations by accurately handling the Word of Truth (God's Word) (2 Tim 2:15), he can determine whether those observations *contradict* the Word of God. But how is he to determine which observations of man are, in fact, true, if they are not already indicated *to be true* in Scripture? . . . General revelation is *not* truth that is revealed *in addition to* the special revelation of Scripture. It is truth that is *also* revealed in Scripture" (Rich Thompson, *The Heart of Man and Mental Disorders: How the Word of God is Sufficient* [Alief, TX: Biblical Counseling Ministries, 2012], 22, emphasis in original).

[18]Eric L. Johnson, ed., *Psychology & Christianity: Five Views* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010) depicts the level of authority each counseling system gives to Scripture.

[19]McMinn, *Psychology, Theology, and Spirituality*, 114, 116. Jones and Butman express a similar sentiment in *Modern Psychotherapies*, 49: "Thus, though the Bible is an essential foundation for a Christian approach to psychotherapy, it is not an all-sufficient guide for the discipline of counseling" (also

integrationists do not effectively minister God's Word for lack of theological training and have subsequently forgone sufficient training having found minimal use for it.[20]

Authority matters because of the eternal consequences at stake in the care of souls (Prov 18:21). The good intentions of human wisdom are not enough, since "there is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death" (14:12). Counselees will either stand or fall amidst the storms of life based on the foundation in which they trust (Matt 7:24-27), yet the church has been "limping between two different opinions" (1 Kgs 18:21) for far too long. Over thirty years ago, J. Robertson McQuilkin predicted that

> the greatest threat to Biblical authority is the behavioral scientist who would in all good conscience man the barricades to defend the front door against any theologian who would attack the inspiration and authority of Scripture while all the while himself smuggling the content of Scripture out the back door through cultural or psychological interpretation.[21]

Sadly, the modern church continues to struggle over the presupposition of authority in counseling.

Perception of Man's Problem

Every worldview differently describes the problem of man. The medical model consistently labels human struggles as genetic disorders or chemical imbalance in the brain.[22] Behaviorism states that man responds naturally to his environment with

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see 60-61).

[20]According to Adams, "Typically, the self-appointed Christian 'professional' has spent years studying psychology at the graduate level, but has little more than a Sunday School (or, at best a Bible school) knowledge of the Bible" (Adams, *Theology of Christian Counseling*, 13).

[21]J. Robertson McQuilkin, "The Behavioral Sciences Under the Authority of Scripture," *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society* 20, no. 1 (1977): 37.

[22]*The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (*DSM*) is now in its fifth edition and is the definitive sourcebook for making psychiatric diagnoses. Biblical counselors, including Adams, have consistently recognized the influence of frail physiology in a fallen world: "Organic malfunctions affecting the brain that are caused by brain damage, tumors, gene inheritance, glandular or chemical disorders, validly may be termed mental illnesses. But at the same time a vast number of other human problems have been classified as mental illnesses for which there is no evidence that they have been engendered by disease or illness at all" (Jay Adams, *Competent to Counsel* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970], 28.). For example, "when people talk about 'chemical imbalance' as a cause for depression, it is because there are no laboratory tests to prove this. . . . The chemical imbalance diagnosis is based on what a person thinks and feels as described by the *DSM*" (Robert D. Smith, *The Christian Counselor's Medical*

animalistic instincts.[23] Televangelist Robert Schuller popularized the doctrine of self-esteem,[24] whereas Cloud and Townsend decry "conflicts with boundaries."[25] Yet all of these varied worldviews mask the true problem of man.

Scripture makes clear that although man suffers greatly in a fallen world (Jas 1:1-12), sin remains his greatest struggle (vv. 13-15). Pain is not the root of man's problem (see Mark 7:21-23), but rather sinful rebellion against his Creator (Rom 3:10-12, 23). One theologian defines sin as "any lack of conformity, active or passive, to the moral law of God. This may be a matter of act, of thought, or of inner disposition or state."[26] Man embraces sin both by nature (Ps 51:3-5) and behavior (1 John 1:8, 10), then reaps its consequences in various ways. Belonging to a fallen, cursed creation (Rom 8:22-27), man faces a Genesis 3 "hangover" of natural disasters, physical ailments, the wickedness of others (Titus 3:3), and the penalty of personal sin (Rom 6:23a). Even counselors offering biblical help are still "people in need of change helping people in need of change."[27] For this reason Adams concludes, "Personal sin [is] the root and cause of most of the day-by-day counseling problems that arise."[28]

Understanding man's basic problem, however, actually serves to increase hope. As Packer explains, "The Bible is an exposition of God's answer to the problem of human sin, and unless you have that problem clearly before you, you will keep missing

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Desk Reference [Stanley, NC: Timeless Texts, 2000], 66).

[23]Behaviorism asserts that "human beings are material beings only and hence explainable by natural laws" (Jones and Butman, *Modern Psychotherapies*, 169).

[24]Robert H. Schuller, *Self-Esteem: The New Reformation* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1982).

[25]Henry Cloud and John Townsend, *Boundaries* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 26.

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

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

[28]Jay E. Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973), 136. Adams also asserts, "Apart from organically generated difficulties, the 'mentally ill' are really *people with unsolved personal problems*" (Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 29, emphasis in original).

the point of what it says."[29] Sin is horrible, but at least there is a cure. Anthony Hoekema

warns against neglecting this cure by ignoring the problem:

> In today's world there is little emphasis on the biblical doctrine of sin. But a person with a shallow sense of sin and of the wrath of God against our sin will neither feel the need for nor understand the biblical doctrine of justification. When sin is ignored, minimized or redefined we no longer live aware of our desperate need for Jesus Christ nor appreciative of what he accomplished on the cross for us.[30]

Jesus "came not to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mark 2:17b), for those who

think they are spiritually healthy will not receive the care and comfort of the Great

Physician. Jones and Hambrick point to the hope of this truth, "A biblical view of sin

makes us long for a solution larger than ourselves. It causes us to cling to Christ, the only

one more powerful than the cause of human problems."[31] Recognizing the ultimate

source of man's problem eventually points to the cure.

Presentation of the Solution

A right understanding of sin, therefore leads to the hope-filled solution of

definitive justification, ongoing sanctification, and future glorification. Hope for change

began in the Garden of Eden when "God created man in his own image, in the image of

God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27). Although God's

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[29]J. I. Packer, *God's Words* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1981), 71. Keller upholds John Owen as the Puritan most helpful in dealing with the problem of indwelling sin: "To Owen the major difference between the believer and the non-believer is that the dominion of sin is broken (Romans 6). However, the influence of sin remains in the believer with its basic tendencies the same, though badly weakened. There are, then, two basic pastoral problems: to convince those under sin's dominion that they really are and to convince those not under sin's dominion that they really are not. Biblical counselors must be prepared to skillfully accomplish both tasks. . . . Owen teaches first that the dominion of sin is seen in 'hardness of heart.' Believers are influenced by the power of sin but they are grieved over their sinful motives. The very grief and concern over their sin are a healthy sign that a person is not under sin's reign. Owen also points out that real believers engage in 'mortification': they recognize and work on sinful motives, rather than just notice external behavior. 'When the only restraints on sin are the consequences of the action, sin has dominion in the will'" (Timothy J. Keller, "Puritan Resources for Biblical Counseling," *Journal of Pastoral Practice* 9, no. 3 [1988]: 22-24).

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

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

creation was "very good" (v. 31) with mankind designed to reflect his glory, the corruption of the world (3:1-24) remained within God's sovereign decree. For since God planned redemption from "before the foundation of the world" (Eph 1:4), the problem of sin did not take him by surprise. Instead, Scripture reveals in the story of redemption how God permitted mankind to fall short of his glory (Rom 3:23) before sending his only Son to accomplish humanity's created purpose. Jesus himself "is the image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15a) and "the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature" (Heb 1:3a). "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). Jesus entered the world as a man, reflecting forth the only true image of God. He succeeded where Adam failed and accomplished victory where all others had fallen short (1 Cor 15:21-22; Rom 5:14-18).

In Christ, God's children would then be renewed in his image to reflect his glory. This second chance was God's sovereign plan from the very beginning as Paul exults, "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 8:28-29a). Jesus showed the righteousness of God by the way he lived and the love of God by the way he died. He demonstrated his Father's power through miracles and his Father's gentleness in ministry. Jesus then became "the firstborn among many brothers" (v. 29b) as he now rescues broken images of God and renews them in his glorious likeness. "And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified" (v. 30). God accomplishes his work in the believer's life by the gracious work of Jesus Christ (Eph 2:8-9), for true and lasting holiness begins when God grants the believer a new heart and a new Spirit (Ezek 36:25-27). "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Cor 5:17). Christ's substitutionary payment releases the believer once enslaved

to sin (Rom 6:1-7), who having died to his old ways now walks free in the newness of life (Col 2:6). The sinner declared righteous continues walking in the Spirit by faith (Gal 3:1-3) and will one day be glorified in the likeness of his Savior (1 John 3:2). God's work is as good as done from start to finish, for he always completes what he begins. "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). Justification ignites the process of sanctification and inevitably results in glorification. "Counseling in its fullest sense, then, is simply *an application of the means of sanctification*."[32]

Based upon the authority of Scripture, biblical counselors address man's problem of sin with the hope of the gospel. God's Word rejoices that the mind can be renewed and the heart transformed (Rom 12:2; Eph 4:23), yet Tautges cautions against what happens to this gospel hope when God's Word is rejected:

> It is to be expected that, when a church or seminary departs from the doctrine of inerrancy, a rejection of the Bible's authority and sufficiency will follow not long afterward. And once the authority and sufficiency of the Bible are undermined, it soon follows that belief in the total depravity of man and his desperate need of redemption through Jesus Christ is replaced by the psychological gospel of self-improvement.[33]

In Scripture, Jesus emphasized the centrality of the heart (Mark 7:21-23; Luke 6:43-45) while the Pharisees flaunted superficial change. In like manner, "using psychology for soul-care is like treating cancer with aspirin. It may temporarily relieve the pain or even mask the symptoms, but it will never penetrate the issues of the heart like God's Word."[34] Too many therapists coddle pharisaical clients who are

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[32]Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 73, emphasis in original. Keller, again drawing insight from Owens, compels the repentant believer to take his sin "not just to the law . . . but also to the gospel—to the cross of Christ. A healthy conviction of sin grows by seeing the patience of God, the riches of grace, the suffering of Jesus—all so one would not sin" (Keller, *Puritan Resources*, 25).

[33]Paul Tautges, *Counsel One Another: A Theology of Personal Discipleship* (Leominster, UK: Day One, 2009), 16.

[34]John Street, "Why Biblical Counseling and Not Psychology?" in *Think Biblically!* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003), 217.

"whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness" (Matt 23:27b). According to the American Counseling Association, secular "counseling is a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals."[35] For example, behavior therapists "typically view what they are doing as building necessary behavior changes to equip clients to acquire greater freedom and choice in life."[36] Success involves achieving the client's stated goals which may very well conflict with God's values in Scripture. Cognitive therapists seek to change thought patterns through psychotherapy and maximized rewards, however this approach often "leads to shallow views of healing and growth. . . . Cognitive therapists, consequently, seem proficient at eliminating suffering (about which clients have focused goals) but less capable at producing growth."[37] Only God's Word, however, proficiently addresses the heart and provides the resources necessary for growth (Heb 4:12-13). Thus Powlison evaluates the biblical counseling solution: "This care and cure for the soul systematically differs from how other psychotherapies deal with the same problems in living."[38]

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[35]American Counseling Association, "What is Professional Counseling?" accessed February 8, 2016, https://www.counseling.org/aca-community/learn-about-counseling/what-is-counseling/overview. The governing council further explains, "Counseling is a collaborative effort between the counselor and client. Professional counselors help clients identify goals and potential solutions to problems which cause emotional turmoil; seek to improve communication and coping skills; strengthen self-esteem; and promote behavior change and optimal mental health."

[36]Jones and Butman, *Modern Psychotherapies*, 191.

[37]Ibid., 247-48.

[38]David Powlison, "A Biblical Counseling View," in *Psychology & Christianity: Five Views* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 245. Keller also assesses the modern climate: "The Puritans' balanced understanding of the roots of personal problems is not mirrored in the pastoral practice of modern evangelicals. Most counselors tend to 'major' in one of the factors mentioned by Baxter. Some will see personal sin as the cause of nearly all problems. Others have built a counseling methodology mainly upon an analysis of 'transformed temperments.' Still others have developed 'deliverance' ministries which see personal problems largely in terms of demonic activity. And of course, some evangelicals have adopted the whole 'medical model' of mental illness, removing all 'moral blame' from the patient, who needs not repentance but the treatment of a physician. . . . Many Christian counselors tend to mirror secular approaches that either focus their treatment largely on the feelings (such as the client-centered approach of Rogers), on the actions (such as the behavioral approach of Skinner and his kin) or on the 'thinking' (such

Provision of Support

One final worldview difference among counseling systems involves the provision of support for both counselors and counselees. A thorough study of the New Testament reveals not a single passage exhorting believers to seek counsel apart from the church. Yet by contrast, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) explicitly requires that licensed counselors separate their practice from the church. Counselees are encouraged to develop and utilize healthy support systems, but therapists avoid a dual or multiple relationship which "occurs when a psychologist is in a professional role with a person and at the same time is in another role with the same person."[39] Christians licensed by the state who follow the APA code of ethics are therefore prohibited from referring clients to the local church which they attend, thus keeping professional care separate from personal ministry. As stated in the previous chapter, however, the church must be the context for biblical counseling. Powlison asserts,

> The church is in trouble when its designated experts in the cure of souls are mental health professionals who owe their legitimacy to the state. Cure of souls is a decidedly *pastoral* function, in the broadest and deepest sense of the word. It is deeply problematic to operate as if the Word of God is useful, necessary, and sufficient for public ministry—preaching, teaching, worship, sacraments—but that training and credentialing in secular psychology are necessary for private ministry.[40]

Soul Care Resources

Due to neglect by the church, many Christians are unaware of the vast resources available for soul care. The following provides a brief history of pastoral counseling with examples of helpful resources.

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as the rational-emotive therapies of Ellis and Beck)" (Keller, *Puritan Resources*, 18).

[39]American Psychiatric Association, *Code of Ethics* section 3.0.5(a)(1), June 1, 2010, accessed September 28, 2015, http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx.

[40]David Powlison, *The Biblical Counseling Movement: History and Context* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2010), 294-95, emphasis in original.

A Brief History

The history of soul care began in Scripture when God demonstrated his role as the Wonderful Counselor (Isa 9:6) by his fellowship with man at creation. In the Garden of Eden, he provided instruction (Gen 2:16-17) within the context of relationship (1:26-28). Even when Adam and Eve disobeyed and hid in shame (3:1-8), God sought his children and urged them to confess their sin (vv. 9-11). Though they shifted the blame through self-justification, God continued to speak the truth in love (vv. 12-13). Even as he dictated the consequences of their sin (vv. 14-24) he extended unmerited grace and mercy with the promise of forgiveness. God's prophets throughout the Old Testament continued this biblical call to life-giving repentance (e.g., Deut 30:15, 19; 2 Chr 6:27, 37; 7:14; Isa 55:7; Ezek 18:12). Jesus did the same (Mark 1:15; Luke 13:3, 5) along with his apostles (Acts 2:38; 3:19-20; 2 Cor 7:10) and Paul especially made clear that Christ-centered biblical counseling was at the forefront of his ministry (Col 1:27-28).

The apostolic church faced many false teachings, yet consistently responded with the truth of the gospel. Sadly though, some of the early church fathers in the centuries following began to deviate from sound teaching[41] and Roman Catholic dogma essentially nullified the practice of biblical soul care. The Reformation re-established the priesthood of believers and God's Word as the basis of authority (c. 1500s)[42] and the Puritans carried on this mantle (1560 to 1659). Many Puritans eventually immigrated to America in the 1630s to establish "a city on a hill" as a shining example of godly living in a darkened world (see Matt 5:14). Ken Sarles attests to the Puritan influence regarding soul care:

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[41]Although "the first sophisticated psychologies in the West were developed by Greek philosopher-therapists like Plato, Aristotle and Epicurus. . . . The major teachers and writers of the early church and medieval periods were convinced that Scripture and rigorous reflection on it provided the surest route to psychological knowledge" (Johnson, *Five Views*, 11-13). See Thomas C. Oden, *Classical Pastoral Care: Pastoral Counsel* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000) for a description of how the early church fathers practiced biblical counsel while also anticipating the future psychotherapies.

[42]See John T. McNeil, *History of the Cure of Souls* (New York: Harper, 1951).

As far as the English Puritans were concerned, every psychological need could be met and every imaginable psychological problem could be solved through a direct application of biblical truth. . . . The Puritans challenge us today, more than any other generation in the history of the Church, by their absolute commitment to integrity between action and belief.[43]

The Puritans' allegiance to Scripture and observations of human nature have stood the test of time with many resources made available today.

Following the Puritan era, various historical forces led to the decline of biblical counseling in the local church.[44] Religious revivalism popular in the 1700s emphasized the conversion of crowds instead of personal discipleship and immediate change instead of progressive sanctification. Such practices contrasted sharply with the ministry of pastoral counseling. Then in the 1900s, liberal modernism began its assault on the absolute integrity of Scripture. Fundamentalists defended the doctrine of Scripture, "however, a biblical defense of theology that was pastoral, personal, and practical was not included."[45] In the early twentieth century, Wilhelm Wündt asserted the medical

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[43]Ken L. Sarles, "The English Puritans: A Historical Paradigm of Biblical Counseling," in *Introduction to Biblical Counseling*, ed. John MacArthur and Wayne Mack (Dallas: Word, 1994), 25, 42-43. Timothy Keller summarizes: "The works of the Puritans are a rich resource for biblical counselors because the Puritans were committed to the functional authority of the Scripture. For them it was the comprehensive manual for dealing with all problems of the heart. The Puritans developed a sophisticated and sensitive system of diagnosis for personal problems, distinguishing a variety of physical, spiritual, temperamental and demonic causes. [They also] developed a remarkable balance in their treatment because they were not invested in any one 'personality theory' other than biblical teaching about the heart. The Puritans were realistic about difficulties of the Christian life, especially conflicts with remaining, indwelling sin. . . . [looking] not just at behavior but at underlying root motives and desires. Man is a worshipper; all problems grow out of 'sinful imagination' or idol manufacturing. The Puritans considered the essential spiritual remedy to be belief in the gospel, used in both repentance and the development of proper self-understanding. . . . Today's biblical scholars don't understand the human heart, . . . while our counselors don't know the Scripture. But the Puritans were an entire generation of men who combined these two strengths" (Keller, *Puritan Resources*, 1, 11). Holifield adds, "The Puritan pastor, especially in the seventeenth century, became a specialist in the cure of the idolatrous heart. He analyzed motives, evaluated feelings, sought to discern hidden intentions and to direct inward consent" (E. Brooks Holifield, *A History of Pastoral Care in America: From Salvation to Self-Realization* [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983], 23). Also see Mark Deckard, *Helpful Truth in Past Places: The Puritan Practice of Biblical Counselling* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2010), and J. Cameron Fraser, *Developments in Biblical Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2015).

[44]See Heath Lambert, *The Biblical Counseling Movement after Adams* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 26-35, who summarizes the forces which influenced the theological neglect of biblical counseling.

[45]Ibid., 31. See Johnson, *Five Views*, 15-19. Conservative Protestants (i.e., Fundamentalists) rejected the modern psychologies, yet turned to ineffective methods of pastoral care: "prayer-and-Bible-verse prescriptions, rationalistic persuasion, moral condemnation, or casting out demons. Fundamentalist-revivalist pastoral care regressed into what might be termed an anti-counseling mode. Problems in people's lives were addressed by a hybrid of highly rationalistic, moralistic, mystical, and emotional kinds of

model of physiological psychology, and Sigmund Freud proposed the "talking cure" of psychotherapy. Lambert states,

> According to Wündt, all of a person's psychological processes are rooted in some element in their biology. What this means is that basically everything you think and feel begins in your physical parts. . . . Once psychology began to be defined in secular scientific terms (Wündt), it became possible to argue that psychotherapy should be the prerogative of secular professionals (Freud).[46]

Other factors contributing to the decline of biblical counseling in the church included the Industrial Revolution (1800s to 1900s), during which Americans began moving to the big cities and being hired into large companies. According to Holifield, these companies needed psychologically-trained human resource experts to satisfy all of their new employees.

> Their task was to maintain the morale and high motivation of the people who worked under them, adapting themselves to the expectations of superiors who valued "well-rounded personality." . . .Large corporations began to value good scores on "personality tests" as much as experience or intellectual ability.[47]

During this time, America was also torn apart by a brutal Civil War (1861-1865) about which Holifield surmises,

> By promoting a veritable cult of masculinity in intellectual circles, the war raised a question about the cure of souls: Was the whole enterprise perhaps "unmanly"? The question implicitly equated pastoral care with genteel and refined conversations that proceeded delicately in parlors and sitting rooms. Such an image of pastoral labor embarrassed ministers who had come to admire "the bold virtues."[48]

In addition, World Wars I (1914-1918) and II (1939-1945) resulted in soldiers being overwhelmed by the effects of post-traumatic stress with untrained chaplains

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persuasion that aimed to accomplish a miraculous, instantaneous, and absolute change. The dropouts, failures, or burnouts either suffered in silence or covertly found their way into the secular mental health system. In short, the theological community was nearly bankrupt intellectually, methodologically, and institutionally in its ability to provide organized resources for the counseling task" (Kenneth Dale Van Kooten, "Equipping Lay Leaders in the Basics of Biblical Counseling at Christ Fellowship, Everson, Washington" [D.Min. project, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013], 50-51).

[46]Lambert, *After Adams*, 31-32.

[47]Holifield, *History of Pastoral Care*, 268-69.

[48]Ibid., 167.

shown to be thoroughly unqualified to help.[49] By contrast, psychology had been

advancing for well over one hundred years while the dormant church had inadequately

equipped its ministers in soul care.

By the mid-twentieth century, these various historical forces influenced many

churches (especially in the mainline denominations) to align with secular counselors. By

the early twenty-first century, integrationist counseling barraged evangelical churches,

Bible colleges, and seminaries.[50] Powlison concludes, "The 'therapeutic' was triumphant.

Psychiatry and psychotherapy displaced the cure of souls, reifying the medical metaphor

and so ordaining 'secular pastoral workers' to take up the task. . . . Invariably, pastoral

counseling drifted toward a junior version of psychotherapy."[51]

After a period of neglect, however, pastor and professor Jay Adams re-

introduced biblical counseling to the church when he published *Competent to Counsel*.

Powlison reports,

> In 1970 Jay Adams, a Presbyterian minister, launched an anti-psychiatry movement
> among American, conservative Protestants. Partly inspired by O. H. Mowrer and
> Thomas Szasz, Adams made a three-fold claim. First, modern psychological
> theories were bad theology, misinterpreting functional problems in living. Second,
> psychotherapeutic professions were a false pastorate, interlopers on tasks that
> properly belonged to pastors. Third, the Bible, as interpreted by Reformed
> Protestants, taught pastors the matters necessary to counsel competently.[52]

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[49]Holifield, *History of Pastoral Care*, 269-70.

[50]Educational institutions promoting integration were Wheaton College, Rosemead Graduate
School of Professional Psychology, Dallas Theological Seminary, and Fuller Seminary. Leading
integrationists included Gary Collins, Larry Crabb, Clyde Narramore, John Carter, Stanton Jones, James
Dobson, Frank Minirth, and Paul Meier.

[51]Powlison, *Biblical Counseling Movement*, 23. According to John Street, "Pastors, trained
under these psychologies, influenced an entire generation of parishioners to think and act according to the
therapeutic instead of according to the gospel. Even the authorial intent of Scripture was replaced by a
psychological hermeneutic that loaded biblical terminology with psychotherapeutic meaning. Where the
Bible was not replaced by a psychology, it was redefined by it" (John Street, "Why Biblical Counseling and
Not Psychology?" in *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically,* ed. John MacArthur [Nashville: Thomas
Nelson, 2005], 32).

[52]Powlison, *Biblical Counseling Movement*, xvii.

Adams's teaching immediately resonated with many conservative Protestant pastors, yet failed to gain a larger following in academia and mainstream evangelicalism. Some of this was due to Adams's brash posture toward psychologists and the isolationist stance of the movement.[53] Ironically, Adams himself was criticized for behaviorism and eisegetical hermeneutics by Christian therapists who took issue at being called sub-biblical.[54] Powlison also evaluates that "evangelical psychotherapists . . . proved far more successful than nouthetic counselors in local churches, education, publishing, and counseling practice."[55]

According to Powlison, the biblical counseling movement stalled in the 1980s, but experienced a resurgence in the 1990s and has continued progressing into the present. As secular psychology drifted even further from the biblical worldview, more evangelicals, including integrationists themselves, became critical of the therapeutic invasion. Historian George Marsden noted the "obviously Herculean task of integrating the largely opposed assumptions of modern psychology and evangelical theology,"[56] whereas sociologist James Hunter evaluated the trends of evangelical publishing as losing touch with the traditional Protestant concern with "the rule of sin in the life and the process of mortification and sanctification."[57] Such disillusionment with the modern

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[53]Although Gary Collins sympathized with Adams's views, he wrote, "Unfortunately, many who could learn from Adams will not do so because his angry style which blasts clinical and counseling psychology is so distracting" (Gary R. Collins, "The Pulpit and the Couch," *Christianity Today* 23 [1975]: 8).

[54]Powlison, *Biblical Counseling Movement*, 168-77.

[55]Ibid., 167.

[56]George M. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 238. Culture critic Os Guinness even declared the modern psychologies "a substitute theology designed to replace faith in God" mediated by "alternative priests" (Os Guinness, "America's Last Men and Their Magnificent Talking Cure," in *No God But God*, ed. Os Guinness and John Seel [Chicago: Moody Press, 1992], 114, 126).

[57]James Davison Hunter, *American Evangelicalism: Conservative Religion and the Quandary of Modernity* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1983), 99.

psychologies paired with a new generation taking up Adams's mantle have contributed to a resurgence in the biblical counseling movement.

Developing Resources

Since 1970, many practical resources have enriched the biblical counseling community from supportive pastors[58] and counselors,[59] churches,[60] recovery programs,[61] educational institutions,[62] training centers,[63] certifying organizations,[64] and mission agencies.[65] Many books, study materials, journals,[66] and online forums[67] also provide helpful resources. The modern biblical counseling movement is still a far cry from the pastoral depth of the Puritan era, yet it promises much hope for continued development.

Conclusion

Biblical counseling differs greatly from secular and integrationist models primarily in the area of theological foundations. Scripture alone constitutes the basis of its counseling authority and the church cultivates the necessary environment for effective soul care. Man's problem begins with personal sin and the consequences of living in a world of suffering. Therefore, Scripture's solution is God's redemptive plan of saving

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[58]E.g., John Piper, John MacArthur, and Tim Keller.

[59]E.g., David Powlison, Paul Tripp, and Bob Kellemen.

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

[61]E.g., Twelve Stones Ministries and Vision of Hope.

[62]E.g., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Westminster Seminary, and The Master's University.

[63]E.g., Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation and One-Eighty Counseling & Education.

[64]E.g., Association of Certified Biblical Counselors and Peacemaker Ministries.

[65]E.g., Overseas Instruction in Counseling and The Master's Academy International.

[66]E.g., *Journal of Biblical Counseling*.

[67]E.g., Biblical Counseling Coalition and The Institute for Biblical Counseling & Discipleship.

grace and progressive sanctification. True and lasting change requires repentance from sin and faith in Christ. Thus biblical counseling is simply the practical application of the gospel message.

CHAPTER 4

TEACHING THE METHODS OF BIBLICAL CHANGE

In the spring of 2016, NLC offered an equipping course in biblical counseling. Almost every participant initially shared that their primary goal in taking the course was to grow in their competence to counsel within their present and future ministries. They recognized the need in their personal relationships and in the church. The goal of this chapter is to describe this ministry project in the context of NLC, yet the insights may benefit future trainers to equip counselors in other contexts. The length of this project was twenty weeks, which included a ten-week introductory session and a ten-week course on the methods of biblical change.

Table 1. Participant involvement

NLC Members	Participants in 10-week introductory course	Participants in 10-week methods of biblical change course	Participants completing both pre-project and post-project BCAs
96	17	13	11

Selection and Screening of Participants

Seventeen participants for biblical counselor training were interviewed and selected from members of the NLC congregation. The subsequent screening process comprised a ten-week introductory course which addressed the theological foundations and essential principles of biblical counseling. Some of the participants had already been exposed to biblical counseling through other training venues and the class discussion was interactive and informative. Instruction included defining worship and idolatry,

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understanding the heart of the matter, spiritual qualities of the counselor, sin and guilt, the gospel and repentance, the process of sanctification, biblical methods of interpretation, and the history of the biblical counseling movement. Participants interacted with the textbook *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling* along with other recommended articles.[1] Only participants who completed this introductory course were permitted to continue with the following course on methods of biblical change.[2]

After the assessment period, thirteen participants continued with the training course on methods of biblical change. They averaged over thirty years of professing faith in Christ and over twenty years of being a member in a Bible-believing church. 36 percent expressed a regular practice of memorizing Scripture and 64 percent a daily discipline of praying with or for others. More than half declared that people come to them for spiritual help at least weekly or monthly. Ten were considered ministry leaders as elders, deacons, Life Group leaders, or youth ministry leaders. The other participants were not ministry leaders at the time, but were serving in some capacity through personal or congregational ministry. The BCA was administered electronically prior to the course and served as a baseline to measure the effectiveness of the training.[3]

Training Curriculum

In methods of biblical change, participants interacted with the textbook *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands* along with other recommended articles.[4] The

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[1]James MacDonald, Bob Kellemen, and Steve Viars, eds., *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling: Changing Lives with God's Changeless Truth* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2013).

[2]Appendix 4 provides a brief outline of the introductory course (stage one).

[3]See appendix 1.

[4]Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping Others in Need of Change* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002). Examples of articles include David Powlison, "X-Ray Questions: Drawing Out the Whys and Wherefores of Human Behavior," *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 18, no. 1 (1999): 2-9; David Powlison, "How Do You Help a 'Psychologized' Counselee?" *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 15, no. 1 (1996): 2-7; and Russell D. Moore, *Counseling and the Authority of Christ: A New Vision for Biblical Counseling at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary* (Louisville: The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, n.d.).

length of each class was two hours per week with the first thirty minutes including prayer and a discussion of the readings and assignments. At least one participant per week would share about his or her personal growth project (PGP) either as a testimony or through an interview format.[5] Participants would work with one another to apply the biblical process of sanctification to each PGP. The middle hour of each class balanced interactive teaching and discussion with inductive Bible study. Participants were able to review these notes, additional resources, and video recordings of the discussion on the NLC website. The final thirty minutes of each class covered case studies to apply the principles learned and also provided opportunities for prayer partners to minister to one another. The remainder of this chapter summarizes the weekly content of each class.[6]

Week 1

The focus of this week was demonstrating love through involvement in the lives of others. The class discussed questions such as the relationship between discipleship and counseling and the benefits and drawbacks of secular counselors maintaining professional distance. We talked about ways to cultivate a godly relationship with the counselee and how to discern a person's spiritual condition.

We then studied numerous examples of Jesus and Paul ministering with compassion and explained how godly counselors cultivate each virtue in the fruit of the Spirit. Together we considered practical illustrations for showing genuine compassion and respect toward others and spent considerable time on effective communication and listening.

In the case study, we explored how to minister to a young seminarian struggling with same-sex attraction. Participants learned how to discern the situation

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[5]See appendix 9 for a description of a personal growth project.

[6]Appendix 5 provides a brief outline of the course material (stage two).

using wise questions and by discussing applicable biblical principles. One participant then shared her PGP regarding how to suffer with joy with the class modeling how to show compassion and express hope for one another. The application assignments for this week were for each participant to evaluate his or her own spiritual condition based on the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23) and to spend at least thirty minutes intentionally listening to a fellow sufferer.

Week 2

The focus of this week was to demonstrate love by inspiring hope. We began by role-playing how one might offer hope to unbelievers who have no access to the gospel or the promises of God. The class found this difficult at first, but soon found itself able to offer some measure of hope. By comparison, we then role-played how to offer hope to a believer enduring a difficult trial. The additional biblical basis for hope proved encouraging for all.

Together we studied Scripture passages comparing true hope with empty hope and discussed how to produce and sustain confidence in Christ. We observed biblical examples of hope lost and hope restored (Num 13:25-14:4; Ps 42:5). Specifically, we examined the struggle of Naomi (Ruth 1:19-22) and considered how one might encourage her to hope in the Lord. We also expressed the hope found in reflecting on certain attributes of God such as his sovereignty, faithfulness, love, mercy, justice, and eternality. We then discussed many other ways to offer hope to those who are suffering.

The class worked its way with difficulty through a case study involving a bitter conflict between a mother and daughter, but it was helpful to show the potential complexity of counseling issues. The class learned new ways to offer hope in apparently hopeless situations. The PGP shared was about properly responding to child abuse as either a church leader or counselor. Some legal and ethical matters were discussed along with principles for biblical counseling. The application assignment for this week was to

study the context of Genesis 50:20 and Romans 8:28 and to use these truths from the lives of Joseph and Paul to offer hope to another person.

Week 3

The focus of this week was getting to know people by gathering personal information about their lives. We began by discussing the different counseling approaches in 1 Thessalonians 5:14 based on the type of counselee with whom we are working. We also observed how Jesus approached Nicodemus differently from the woman at the well (John 3-4), while perfectly fitting his counsel for each person and situation.

We practiced certain listening exercises and strategies for turning close-ended questions into open ones. One volunteer then took the hot seat and answered twenty questions from the class regarding her PGP of desiring to study the Bible more. The questions began by gathering information about her current devotional habits and struggles before addressing ideas and principles for being more diligent in her spiritual disciplines. The participant on the hot seat was noticeably uncomfortable allowing the class to ask questions tactfully, yet pointedly. Finally, we discussed various reasons why a counselee might be evasive or resistant and how a counselor might circumvent such resistance.

Our case study dealt with a middle-aged woman struggling with depression and anxiety. We addressed her complicated situation by using various methods for organizing her personal information.[7] We also introduced the NLC counselee questionnaire and explained how to use it in formal counseling situations.[8] The application assignment for this week was to ask a friend if they would share about a

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[7]See appendix 10.

[8]An electronic sample of a counselee questionnaire may be found at New Life Church, "Request Counseling," accessed June 5, 2016, http://nlcwh.org/content.cfm?id=3124.

current trial in their life, then gather and organize that friend's personal information for the purpose of counseling.

Week 4

The focus of this week was knowing people well by helping them to interpret their situation and strategize a solution. We first gathered and interpreted information from biblical examples (Ruth 1:19-21; 1 Sam 1:12-18; Jer 45; Luke 10:38-41; John 9:13-23; Mark 6:45-52; 3 John 9-10), demonstrating how various interpretations of a person's heart struggle might arise from the same set of facts. We then emphasized the importance of using biblical terminology in counseling (e.g., Mark 7:21-22; Rom 1:18-32; Gal 5:19-21; Eph 5:3-5; Col 3:4-11; 1 Cor 6:9-11; 2 Tim 1:9-10; 3:1-8) compared to the language of disorders found in the *DSM*.[9] We discussed several examples such as codependency, oppositional defiant disorder, and schizophrenia to juxtapose the secular and biblical understandings. The class also discussed inner and outer man issues regarding how to treat a counselee on medication or one who has already received a medical diagnosis. We then studied three categorical idols of the heart (1 John 2:15-17) to interpret various heart motives for deception, fear, bizarre behavior, and depression. Once we identified each heart issue, we were able to develop strategies for change. Finally, we demonstrated the benefits and practice of using journal assignments in counseling.

The case study for this class revealed both the sin and suffering of a divorced woman with two young children. Together we gathered and interpreted her personal information before considering ways to offer hope. For the PGP, we discussed an actual case of helping a new Christian discern whether to donate an organ to an unsaved family member. She was feeling pressure to do so, even though certain family members had afflicted her in the past. The application assignment was for each participant to journal

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[9]A helpful resource was Marshall and Mary Asher's *The Christian's Guide to Psychological Terms* (Bemidji, MN: Focus, 2014).

for one week about an issue with which they currently struggle. Participants also interpreted the personal information gathered from the previous class using the principles learned in this one.

Week 5

The focus of this week was speaking the truth in love. We introduced the class with questions such as what to do if an unbeliever seeks biblical counsel or if we discern that a counselee is not a believer as they profess. We emphasized the gospel truths about man's sin nature and depravity being the direct or indirect cause of every counseling problem.

The class discussed basic principles of hermeneutics using various passages for inductive study, then showed why counseling instruction must be biblically accurate and appropriate. We demonstrated how to fit the counselee's story into God's big story of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation. We then studied the change process of sanctification (Eph 4:17-32) and practiced the principle of taking every thought captive (2 Cor 10:5; Phil 4:6-9). Finally, the class worked through examples of pairing illustrative counseling connecting metaphors in Scripture with each counselee's unique life experiences.

The case study involved a wife who declared to the counselor that her husband needed help, so we talked about how to sort through presenting problems and helping counselees realize personal responsibility. One of the participants had ethical questions about an illegal immigration issue in her family, so we also addressed an actual case study relating to having a good conscience before God and man (see Acts 24:16). For the PGP, one of the participants was a social worker who described the secular approach to addiction therapy for relapse and recovery. We had a rousing discussion as several in the class were former addicts familiar with the various approaches. The application assignment was to pray for one opportunity to speak the truth in love during the

Week 6

The focus of this week was inducing counselees to make a commitment to change. We introduced this class by asking why some people overcome sin while others do not, then compared and contrasted techniques for manipulating people to change and motivating them with Scripture. The class discussed common reasons for counselee resistance, how to identify them, and how to persuade people to action. We then studied biblical examples of God overcoming Moses's resistance (Exod 3:1-4:20) and the writer to the Hebrews calling his audience to action (Heb 3:12-15; 4:1-7, 11; 10:23, 35-36).

This week we also introduced the NLC counseling consent form and explained how to use it in formal counseling situations.[10] The case study involved a college student struggling with depression, anger, and performance issues. We used this opportunity to consider how the counselor might induce him to make certain commitments toward responsibility and obedience. The PGP addressed an individual discontented about being unemployed. One participant role-played as the counselee allowing the class to counsel him collectively. The class found this exercise difficult with the counselee being a live person in the room instead of a hypothetical character on a page. The challenge helped them realize the need for more practice. The application assignment was to write down ten biblical motivations which might induce a counselee to change.

Week 7

The focus of this week was implementing change toward Christ-likeness. The class discussed the biblical basis for specifically applying God's Word to the issues of life, then considered the benefits of effective homework and how it helps both the

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[10]An example of the Counseling Consent form may be found at New Life Church, "Request Counseling," accessed June 5, 2016, http://nlcwh.org/content.cfm?id=3124.

counselee and the counselor. We demonstrated the nature of good homework and talked about what to do when a counselee repeatedly fails to complete assignments. We also recounted previous case studies to design creative homework for various counseling issues. Finally, we addressed when and how a counseling relationship should be ended either for positive or negative reasons.

The case study dealt with a marital conflict involving anger, withdrawal, and tension over finances. These issues were painful to deal with for some of the married couples in the class, demonstrating the way that God often uses our trials and shortcomings in our ministry to others. Addressing this God-given case study also allowed us to minister compassionately to these couples in the class. Then one of the participants shared her PGP about being a substitute for a teacher whose husband had just committed suicide. We rejoiced in how this class member had drawn on biblical counseling to minister to fellow teachers, her pupils, their families, and the community. The class also discussed other ways that counseling and care from the local church might be effective for ongoing ministry. The application assignment was to design homework for a counselee and for each participant to implement this homework personally throughout the week.

Week 8

The focus of this week was helping a counselee integrate Scripture into his or her life and to become integrated into the life of the church. We began by asking why former counselees are sometimes the best counselors of others and concluded that experience can help reinforce the application of biblical principles. We practiced ways for a counselee to integrate Scripture into his or her life and explained the importance of counselees being integrated in the body of Christ. We talked about the "one another" commands in Scripture and listed as many as we could together before considering how the entire body of Christ might participate in ministry to a counselee. Finally, we

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discussed the celebration of the counseling commencement and how to know when counseling has been effective.

The case study was the most complex with which the class has had to tackle, yet still they passed this final exam with excellence. It dealt with a middle-aged woman struggling with broken relationships, teenaged children, substance addiction, and abuse as a child. She then became a Christian and began to work through these issues. The class did not know how to address these advanced issues, but they showed that they understood the process for understanding and initially ministering to the counselee. For the PGP, one of our participants shared about her recent battles with anxiety, alcohol, and raising a special needs child. We conducted an impromptu counseling session with input from each of the others that ranged from compassionate care to biblical exhortation. The application assignment was for participants to write a one-page description describing how they grew and what they learned throughout the course. They were also asked how they might specifically apply these biblical counseling skills to their present and future ministries.

Week 9

The focus of this week was tying the course together and preparing participants for ministry. We discussed various biblical counseling resources, websites, and organizations, then described the current state and future goals of the biblical counseling movement.

We demonstrated more ways to use homework effectively and walked through a progression of sessions in a typical counseling case. We also described the necessary steps for becoming certified with ACBC and will be offering courses this summer in applied theology and observation of counseling sessions for those pursuing certification.[11] Finally, we addressed from the example of Job what to do when the

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[11]Information about certification may be found at Association of Certified Biblical Counselors,

counselor needs counseling and how to care for our own soul as we care for others.

Week 10

  This week was a review and celebration for completing the course. Participants completed course evaluations and the post-project BCA. Their application assignment was to begin using biblical counseling in their personal ministry. Each participant will also meet with the course instructor for evaluation.

<div align="center">

Conclusion

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  Methods of biblical change was a tremendous course for all participants. We did not cover as much content as expected, but we all grew in our understanding and expertise of biblical counseling. Many participants were using what they learned each week in actual counseling situations provided by our sovereign Lord.

  The BCA was re-administered following the course[12] and was considered successfully met when a t-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference in the pre and post-project results. The result of the t-test indicates that the equipping of biblical counselors made a statistically significant difference, resulting in their increased competency to counsel ($t_{(10)} = 2.28$, $p < 0.05$).[13] The following chapter will provide an extensive evaluation of this project.

"ACBC Certification," accessed June 15, 2014, http://www.biblicalcounseling.com/certification.

  [12]Only those participants attending 90 percent of the sessions were considered as having finished the course. Participants who were unable to attend a particular session were able to view the session on video.

  [13]See appendix 11.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

New Life Church equips biblical counselors to help people dealing with sin and suffering in a fallen world. Each participant in this project expressed a desire to grow in their ability to help others biblically. Many also indicated their desire to personally grow in Christ-likeness and this course effectively accomplished both goals. Of particular note were the many counseling issues exposed during class discussions and prayer times. These interactions provided opportunities to actively practice the personal ministry of counseling. One couple taking the class shared openly about their marital struggles and an older couple in the class moved forward to begin mentoring them. Another participant returned to his sin of drug and alcohol addiction, was removed from church membership through the practice of church discipline, but is now working through the process of biblical repentance. Three participants each learned separately about family members who revealed themselves as homosexual or bisexual. Another participant's family member is receiving counseling for domestic abuse of his wife. A substitute teacher took the place of a fellow teacher whose husband committed suicide and had the opportunity to minister to the faculty, students, and their families. One participant began counseling her sister through issues related to illegal immigration and another participant and his wife are facing extreme risk in her pregnancy. Two of our youth leaders have been working with a young woman who repeatedly ran away from her foster home and was eventually placed under house arrest. One of our elders has found biblical counseling to be extremely effective in sharing the gospel with his unbelieving friends. Despite the relatively small size of the class, we encountered an inordinate amount of counseling issues which have opened our eyes to the tremendous need for biblical soul care.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

This project was recommended by the pastoral staff and elders of NLC. Our goal is to become a church of biblical counselors who minister to the members of NLC as well as the surrounding community. This training merely constitutes the initial phase.

The purpose of this project was completed as thirteen participants were equipped to provide biblical counseling through various ministries in the church. The overall success of the project can be determined by examining two main criteria. First, personal feedback from the class was overwhelmingly positive. Course evaluations indicated that the content of the class scored high in understandability and methodology. The content of the course was biblically and theologically sound with Scripture references for each point and was presented at a level appropriate for most participants. The course also sufficiently addressed counseling methodology and made use of various learning approaches such as lecture, case studies, role play, and homework. Reviews of the course's applicability were mixed. Most participants agreed that the course included opportunities to practice counseling applications and addressed issues that participants dealt with in daily life. Some participants, however, expressed uncertainty that by the end of the course they had the confidence to counsel others biblically or had a strategic plan to implement counseling principles in personal ministry. They did indicate this uncertainty was not the fault of the instruction, but may have been due to the introductory nature of the course.

Participants shared various examples for how this training proved helpful. They were convicted of the sufficiency of God's Word for soul care and of their previous lack of faith that God could change the hearts of others. Many recognized that they did not know the Bible as well as they thought and were encouraged to study the Bible and memorize Scripture for the purpose of counseling others and themselves. Most participants never considered themselves qualified to biblically counsel anyone and often relegated those duties to ministry professionals due to intimidation. They learned through

the class that with faithfulness to God's Word, the right training, tools, and heart, God can use anyone in any situation to minister to someone in need. The training proved helpful in providing tools and a systematic approach to improve their confidence in helping others who come to them with problems. Participants have learned how to listen well and organize the personal information of those they are helping. Many also indicated an increased passion and consistency in their intercessory prayer life. One participant shared, "It helps me to be more empathetic as a result of having more confidence due to the training in being able to bring people to the throne of grace to find answers to their needs. I am finding that God is helping me to love others more and to be patient with those who are young in faith." This training will serve as a starting point for equipping God's people to use God's Word effectively to help and encourage others.

Many participants were also personally challenged by the course to deal with their own sinfulness and to grow in the practice of biblical repentance and forgiveness. One participant admitted, "My pride has been most challenged. I sometimes prefer to sulk than to see the hope in Christ and to take joy in him. With my pride comes my anxieties and fears. I am happier when I trust in him, but get mad that the answer is with him and not me. Joy is my challenge and I want to accept it." The class as a whole was encouraged that biblical counseling is simply sinners helping other sinners become more like Christ. They realized that change comes not through a process or a method, but in relationship with the person of Jesus Christ. They gained hope for themselves and those they are seeking to help and many are even looking outside of the local church for spheres of ministry in which to serve. Another participant concluded, "I now see biblical counseling as an aid to sharing the gospel with the loss and the means leading to discipleship. Although I know that people need Jesus to change their heart issues, I have gained confidence in the use of biblical counseling over psychology for achieving last change in a person's behavior."

Overall success in this project may also be shown by the accomplishment of

the project's goals. According to the pre-project BCA, over half of the participants were regularly being asked to help other people, but were not confident in how to do so biblically. The following describes an evaluation of whether the project's goals were accomplished.

Evaluation of the Project's Goals

The first goal was to assess the current level of counseling competency among members of NLC by administering a pre-project BCA. This goal was considered successfully met when eleven members completed the pre-project BCA and results were compiled electronically for a fuller analysis of counseling competency at NLC.

Table 2. Pre-project BCA results

Category	Average Results
Years as a believer	31.3
Years in a Bible-believing church	22.7
Hours per week reading the Bible	2.5
Memorizing Scripture is a present practice (percent)	36
Daily prayer is a present practice (percent)	64

When asked how often people came to them for help with spiritual (non-physical problems, five answered daily or weekly and five answered monthly or seldom. Most had some prior experience with secular counseling and were able to briefly describe both psychological counseling and biblical counseling.

The second goal was to develop a ten-session methods of biblical change course. This course took place in a Life Group format with two hours of interactive teaching and discussion per session. Participants would complete the homework assigned and engaged in group discussion. This goal was measured by an expert panel consisting of three NLC elders and one ACBC member utilizing a rubric to evaluate the course

material.[1] This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion exceeded the sufficient level and the curriculum was adopted by NLC. The content of the curriculum was deemed hermeneutically sound with Scripture properly interpreted, explained, and applied. The content was also judged theologically sound and sufficient to cover every issue it was designed to address including the basics of biblical counseling and counseling methodology. The curriculum was evaluated as making good use of various learning approaches such as lecture, discussion, case studies, role play, and homework while also providing opportunities to practice counseling applications. The comments provided by this expert panel helped to focus the course content and pedagogical approach. As one evaluator concluded, "The curriculum is very well-thought-out and should aid each student's ability to sufficiently counsel others biblically."

The third goal was to implement the curriculum and equip biblical counselors in a Life Group setting. Participants were selected following the introductory course and an interview of applicants. The course on methods of biblical change was then taught in ten successive weeks. The BCA was re-administered following the course[2] and was considered successfully met when a t-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference in the pre and post-project results. The result of the t-test indicates that the equipping of biblical counselors made a statistically significant difference, resulting in their increased competency to counsel ($t_{(10)} = 2.28$, $p < 0.05$).[3] Potential results for each of the eleven participants who completed both BCAs ranged between a minimum score of 29 and a maximum of 174. The average pre-project BCA

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[1]See appendix 2.

[2]Only those participants attending 90 percent of the sessions were considered as having finished the course. Participants who were unable to attend a particular session were able to view the session on video.

[3]See appendix 11.

score was 135.3 and the average post-project BCA score was 142.1, indicating an average improvement of 6.8. The highest pre-project BCA result was 167 and the lowest was 112. The maximum and minimum post-project scores were 157 and 124, respectively. As for the change between the pre- and post-project BCA results, the maximum observed change was 20 points, while the lowest was a ten point drop (-10). Table 3 depicts the comparison of these results.

Table 3. BCA results comparison

Category	Pre-Project BCA	Post-Project BCA	Difference
Average score	135.3	142.1	6.8
Maximum score	167	157	-10
Minimum score	112	124	12

Additionally, the competency aspect of this goal was measured by evaluating each participant's counseling practice.[4] They were evaluated based on their listening skills, demonstration of compassion, willingness to pray, and ability to offer biblical hope. Evaluators also considered whether the counselor could identify with the counselee's specific struggle with sin or suffering and the heart issues at the source. Counselors were then assessed as to whether they promoted a clearer picture of God's character and helped counselees replace wrong behavior with what is right. Regarding methodology, counselors were appraised for their appropriate application of Scripture and assigning of effective homework. Many of the participants struggled in actual counseling cases, but were given direction regarding how to improve in these practical skills. The competency aspect of this goal was considered successfully met when at least 80 percent of participants met or exceeded the sufficient level in all skill areas. Each participant also evaluated the course for its content, presentation, and applicability. The

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[4]See appendix 8.

satisfaction aspect of this goal was considered successfully met when participants completed the course evaluation.[5]

The fourth goal was to develop a strategic plan for the practical application of biblical counseling in each participant's ministry context. Those who completed this course were directed toward serving opportunities according to the church's needs and each participant's specific passions and gifting. This goal was measured by three NLC elders who utilized a rubric to evaluate the plan's content, scope, resources, and application[6] and was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the rubric evaluation indicators met or exceeded the sufficient level and the plan adopted by NLC. This ministry application plan was discussed at a subsequent elders' meeting and deemed easy to understand and simple to implement. The plan accounted for a wide scope of ministries and took into account each participant's ministry passions and goals. It also considered the church's resources and limitations while facilitating each participant's ability to practice biblical counseling in a specific ministry context. Several participants are now considering whether to further pursue certification with ACBC. Table 4 compares the pre-project and post-project BCA responses addressing the competency of participants to counsel.

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[5]See appendix 6.

[6]See appendix 7.

Table 4. Comparison of pre- and post-project BCA responses regarding competency

Diagnostic question	Improved (percent)	Stayed the same (percent)	Declined (percent)
I am confident in my ability to love and show compassion to a person who faces an issue of suffering or sin.	36	45	18
I am confident in my ability to provide biblical counseling to a person who faces an issue of suffering or sin.	64	27	9
I know how to ask the kind of questions that expose a person's heart attitudes and desires.	64	27	9
I can clearly articulate the gospel and lead someone to salvation.	73	27	0
I have a biblical-based methodology to follow when counseling others.	82	18	0
Many problems with which people struggle require the help of a licensed professional counselor.	27	36	36
Secular psychological therapy can bring about lasting change.	9	82	9
If a friend is struggling with depression or discouragement, I would recommend he speak with a pastor or Christian counselor.	45	18	36
If a friend is struggling with sinful lust, I would recommend he speak with a pastor or Christian counselor.	27	36	36
The Bible gives clear guidance for how to deal with anger.	27	55	18
The Bible gives clear guidance for how to deal with anxiety.	36	55	9
The Bible gives clear guidance for how to have a good marriage.	55	36	9
I understand the biblical process for making peace between two believers in conflict.	45	36	18
I know how to apply the Bible's teaching on repentance and forgiveness in my own life.	27	45	27
The main goal of counseling is to help a person cope with a difficult situation.	18	64	18
New Life Church encourages its members to care like Christ: to be spiritual friends, and to practice informal one-another ministry.	36	55	9
Our community would be responsive if New Life Church offered biblical counseling as a free service.	27	27	45

This project produced overall success in teaching introductory principles of biblical counseling, cultivating confidence in the participant's practice of soul care, and providing tools for a biblical approach to helping others. The following describes particular strengths and weaknesses of the project.

Strengths of the Project

The first strength of this project was its contribution to the personal growth of all participants. I was challenged in my studies as an instructor to faithfully present God's Word and the means for helping hurting people. The participants also grew in their commitment to biblical counseling and practice of the spiritual disciplines.

Table 5. Participants' practice of spiritual disciplines

	Pre-project	Post-project
Hours per week reading the Bible for study or devotions	2.5	3.0
Participants who regularly memorize Scripture (percent)	36	64
Participants practicing a daily discipline of intercessory prayer (percent)	64	82

One major strength was the formation of relationships as the class met together weekly. Participants shared deeply about their personal struggles and began to compassionately counsel one another. Every class ended with prayer partners interceding on each other's behalf with exhortation to meet and pray outside of class and to encourage one another with the homework. This blessing of fellowship served to strengthen the entire church body.

Another strength was the teaching style which utilized various types of instruction. The participants particularly benefited from discussing the PGPs and counseling case studies. The content of this training is reproducible for future classes and has led to other possibilities for equipping counselors. Not only is NLC offering two more equipping classes this year, but we are also mentoring church planters to install

biblical counseling ministries in their newly-formed churches.

A final strength was the opportunity to preach sermons with counseling application and to teach equipping classes for the church. Most of the participants in the project had their understanding of biblical counseling reinforced through these various venues.

Weaknesses of the Project for Improvement

One weakness of this project was an inability to go even deeper in relationships. Although class fellowship stimulated greater intimacy within the group, we had intended to create even more opportunities for interaction. Many of these ideas, such as mentoring meals for more personal evaluation, were limited due to lack of time. Inconsistent attendance by some of the participants also contributed to diminished time together. Making up missed classes by watching the instruction on video was not as beneficial as time in class together.

Some weaknesses in the teaching itself included insufficient preparation due to a tightened class schedule. This was mostly due to the structure of the doctoral program and the fluctuations of the NLC ministry schedule. We also could have been more deliberate in recruiting ministry leaders to take part in the class. Many leaders were unable to participate due to prior commitments in ministry, but expressed an interest in attending future classes. During the course itself, there was not enough time to cover the curriculum completely and some topics were only addressed summarily.

Further improvements that we would like to add to the class might be an annotated bibliography of recommended resources, additional video resources for classroom discussions, and a required weekly journal recording how participants were applying insight from the class. Overall, participants would have benefited from more consistent and focused mentoring.

A final weakness was the inefficiency of receiving course evaluations and

BCA responses. This resulted both from the instructor's miscommunication and the procrastination of the participants. It would have been wise to use a portion of the final class to complete these forms.

When teaching this methods of biblical change course in the future, we will attempt to shorten the number of sessions to allow for more focused study. We may also teach the material in a conference format over a series of weekends so that scheduling and inconsistent attendance become less of a factor. Adding material from other equipping classes to our church's website will also enable participants to immediately take the next step of development instead of waiting for future classes to be taught.

Theological Reflection

The theological emphases of this project have been fully detailed in chapters 2 and 3. The course explained the sufficiency of spiritual resources available to the biblical counselor: God's call, God's Word, God's Spirit, God's church, and God's Son. It also focused on developing Christ-like character, depending on theological foundations for soul care, and making good use of the abundant biblical counseling resources. Table 6 compares the pre-project and post-project BCA responses addressing the competency of participants to apply theological principles to counseling.

Table 6. Comparison of pre- and post-project BCA responses regarding theology

Diagnostic question	Improved (percent)	Stayed the same (percent)	Declined (percent)
The Bible commands Christians to counsel one another.	36	55	9
Every Christian has sufficient spiritual resources to counsel a fellow believer in any situation.	73	27	0
I depend upon the Holy Spirit in my counseling of others.	27	55	18
I believe that prayer is one of the primary means which God uses to change people's hearts.	36	45	18
I believe the Bible is absolutely sufficient and authoritative to address any non-physical problems.	36	55	9
A counselor should not develop a friendship with people he or she counsels in order to remain objective.	27	64	9
Man is basically good.	27	73	0
The way we were raised determines how we react to trials.	9	73	18
Sin is the ultimate source of people's problems.	36	64	0
Suffering is never God's plan for his children.	36	55	9
After becoming a Christian, God changes us so we no longer struggle with temptation.	18	73	9
If someone has hurt me, I should wait until I am ready to forgive that person before I talk to him.	18	27	45

Personal Reflection

This project reinforced the importance and benefits of ministering the gospel through biblical counseling. It has challenged me to grow not only in counseling skill, but also in my ability to teach and mentor others in this area. I am reminded of Wayne Vanderwier's insight into the seven phases of our counseling understanding.[7]

1. Discover your need for biblical counseling training.

2. Learn about biblical counseling.

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[7]Wayne Vanderwier, "Launching and Leading a Biblical Counseling Ministry for the Churches of the Nations," in *Biblical Counseling and the Church*, ed. Bob Kellemen and Kevin Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 275.

3. Train to counsel biblically.

4. Do biblical counseling.

5. Talk about biblical counseling.

6. Train other believers as biblical counselors.

7. Train Christian leaders to become biblical counseling trainers.

   I first discovered my need for biblical counseling training during the church plant of NLC about five years ago. I began to read, study, take classes, and speak with fellow pastors about counseling issues. I then trained to counsel biblically by being certified with ACBC and studying at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. I am now counseling people every week and mentoring church members to be counselors as well. We discuss biblical counseling in our staff meetings and elders' meetings and make counseling applications from the sermon text. We then train other believers as biblical counselors through equipping classes and counseling observations. Future classes at NLC will equip participants to complete the ACBC counseling observations and the theological and counseling exams. Our team has also partnered with missionaries overseas and with church planting initiatives stateside to train Christian leaders as biblical counseling trainers. By God's grace, I have grown as a pastor and NLC has grown into a church of biblical counselors. We have also discovered many opportunities to serve our community through evangelistic counseling. Praise God for his marvelous works.

Conclusion

   Teaching this course on the methods of biblical change at NLC was both challenging and rewarding. Challenges included preparing the curriculum, teaching the course, and analyzing the evaluations. Most rewarding, however, was the vast improvement in counseling competency of all participants and the post-course testimonies of how people were changed to become more like Christ. Participants grew more confident and capable in counseling others biblically and our church has grown

healthier as a result.

APPENDIX 1

BASICS OF COUNSELING ASSESSMENT

The following instrument is the Basics of Counseling Assessment (BCA). Some general questions will be followed by a thirty-question survey with a six-point Likert scale. The purpose of the instrument is to assess each participant's present level of theological understanding and confidence in offering biblical counseling.

BASICS OF COUNSELING ASSESSMENT

Agreement to Participate

New Life Church is committed to being Jesus to others to bring others to Jesus. One of the ways we fulfill this commitment is by becoming a church of biblical counseling. We want informal one-another ministry to saturate the church until we are all speaking the truth in love alongside one another. We are also considering a formal counseling ministry where members are equipped to disciple others with Christ's changeless truth. In light of this vision, our church is taking a serious look at our capacity to provide quality, distinctively Christian care for our congregation and community. This survey for New Life members will help us assess the church's current competency to counsel one another biblically.

This research is being conducted by Thomas Sugimura for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. Participation is strictly voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. By completion of this survey, you are providing informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

Because ministry is relational, we prefer that you include your name below, rather than completing the survey anonymously. If you prefer to be anonymous, however, please use the last four digits of your social security number or phone number for future reference.

Date: _____

Name (or 4 digit code): _____

Gender _____

General Questions:

1. How many years have you professed Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? _____

2. How many years have you been a member in a Bible-believing church? _____

3. Are you currently serving as a ministry leader, teacher, or discipler of other believers?
   a. Yes
   b. No

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

5. Is memorizing Scripture a present practice of yours?
   a. Yes
   b. No

6. Do you have a daily discipline of praying with and for other people?
   a. Yes
   b. No

7. Briefly define psychological counseling:

   _____

   _____

8. Briefly define biblical counseling:

   _____

   _____

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

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

11. How often do people come to you for help with spiritual (non-physical) problems?
    a. Daily
    b. Weekly
    c. Monthly
    d. Seldom

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

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

1. The Bible commands Christians to counsel one another.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

2. Every Christian has sufficient spiritual resources to counsel a fellow believer in any situation.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

3. I am confident in my ability to love and show compassion to a person who faces an issue of suffering or sin.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

4. I am confident in my ability to provide biblical counseling to a person who faces an issue of suffering or sin.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

5. I depend upon the Holy Spirit in my counseling of others.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

6. I believe that prayer is one of the primary means which God uses to change people's hearts.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

7. I believe the Bible is absolutely sufficient and authoritative to address any non-physical problems.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

8. I know how to ask the kind of questions that expose a person's heart attitudes and desires.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

9. I can clearly articulate the gospel and lead someone to salvation.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

10. I have a biblical-based methodology to follow when counseling others.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

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

24. I understand the biblical process for making peace between two believers in conflict.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

25. I know how to apply the Bible's teaching on repentance and forgiveness in my own life.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

26. If someone has hurt me, I should wait until I am ready to forgive that person before I talk to him.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

27. The main goal of counseling is to help a person cope with a difficult situation.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

28. I would like to learn how to help others grow in their faith.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

29. New Life Church encourages its members to care like Christ: to be spiritual friends, and to practice informal one-another ministry.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

30. Our community would be responsive if New Life Church offered biblical counseling as a free service.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

APPENDIX 2

BIBLICAL COUNSELING CURRICULUM
EVALUATION

The following evaluation was sent to an expert panel of three NLC elders and one

ACBC member. This panel evaluated the course material to ensure it was biblically

faithful, sufficiently thorough, and practically applicable.

Name of evaluator: _____   **Date: _____**

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

Please include any additional comments regarding the curriculum below:

APPENDIX 3

APPLICATION PACKET FOR TRAINING

The following packet describes the personal costs and commitments associated with the New Life Counselor Training and the application form which may be administered in writing or during a personal interview.[1]

[1]This application process is adapted from Robert W. Kellemen, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church: The 4E Ministry Training Strategy* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2011), 351-63.

Your Personal Cost and Commitment Inventory

Jesus taught us to "count the cost" (Luke 14:25-35) to determine if we have what it takes to complete the commitments we are about to make. New Life Counselor Training involves a cost on your part (though it promises many benefits). Please prayerfully weight these costs.

Training Time Commitment

1. **In-Class Training Time**

   New Life Counselor Training is ten weeks long. We will meet for ten-weeks with the structure of a Life Group. Consistent attendance is vital, so it will be necessary for you to participate in at least 90 percent of the classes.

2. **Out-of-Class Training Time**

   You can expect to commit to the following time outside of class:
   - Thirty minutes per day reading or responding to application assignment questions.
   - Two hours per month meeting with your prayer partner.
   - One hour per month meeting with your instructor.

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

1. **Biblical Counseling**

   If you choose to serve as a biblical counselor, you would:
   - Counsel one or two hours per week.
   - Meet with your mentor one hour per month (may be individual and/or group supervision).
   - Spend one hour per week in prayer, study, and preparation for your counseling.

2. **Life Group Leadership/Discipleship**

   If you choose to serve as a Life Group leader or discipler, you would:
   - Lead one Life Group per week or engage in weekly discipleship.
   - Meet with your mentor one hour per month (may be individual and/or group supervision)
   - Spend one hour per week in prayer, study, and preparation for your group leadership or personal discipleship.

Financial Commitment: There may be a small cost for resources which will be yours to keep after the class.

Your Personal Commitment Form

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

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

1. Sign and date this Personal Commitment Form.

2. Complete the Counselor Training Application Form.

3. Return these two documents to admin@nlcwh.org by _____ (due date).

4. Arrange for a personal interview with your instructor.

My Commitment to New Life Biblical Counselor Training

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

_____   _____
(Signature)   (Date)

I also grant New Life Counseling Ministry my approval to perform a background check.

_____   _____
(Signature)   (Date)

Counselor Training Application Form

Name _____

Application Questions: In the space beneath each question, please share concise and candid responses.

1. How did you come to follow Christ?

2. Which influences have contributed most to your growth in Christ over the years?

3. What further growth do you need to experience in the area of Christ-like character?

4. What biblical doctrines do you think are most important for a biblical counselor to know and apply?

5. In terms of counseling competence, how would you rate yourself at this point in your life and ministry?

6. What are examples in your life that demonstrate how highly you value Christian community—connecting deeply with others in Christ?

7. What are the primary reasons that you are interested in being a part of this training?

8. Describe any of your previous long-term ministry commitments (two years or more).

9. What is your definition of sin?

10. What is your definition of spiritual maturity?

11. Which area of commitment do you feel will be most difficult for you to keep? Why?

12. Discuss your strengths and weaknesses, particularly as they may affect your readiness for this training.

13. Do you have a model/approach to counseling that you are most comfortable with? If so, please describe it and share how you learned it.

14. What authors, articles, and books have most significantly shaped your views and practice of counseling?

15. In counseling and discipleship, would you tend to focus more on people's suffering or their sin? Why? How?

16. What future ministry do you hope to fulfill as a result of your training?

17. Comment on the encouragement that you have received from family members, church leaders, and significant friends concerning your giftedness for a ministry in biblical counseling and discipleship.

18. A friend comes up to you and says, "I'm about ready to give up on Christianity." Describe how you would interact with your friend.

19. What questions do you have for us?

20. Please list the names and contact information of two people you give us permission to talk to about your preparation for this training.

APPENDIX 4

STAGE ONE OUTLINE:

INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL COUNSELING

The following outline provides the main points and subpoints for the course on introduction to biblical counseling. This ten-week course was conducted as part of the assessment process and was not included in the project evaluation. Only participants who completed this prerequisite course were permitted to continue with the following course on methods of biblical change.

1. What is biblical counseling and why study it?

2. Understanding the heart with biblical exposition (Prov 4:23; Jer 17:9; Mark 7:21-23; Heb 4:12)

3. Worship: A biblical view of why we do what we do

   a. The location of worship: The heart (Gen 6:5; 1 Sam 16:7; Ps 111:1; Prov 4:23; 23:7; Matt 22:34-40; Mark 7:20-23)

   b. The intention of worship: To glorify the true and living God (Gen 1:26-28; Rom 11:36; 1 Cor 10:31)

   c. The frustration of worship: Idolatrous lusts (Exod 20:1-6; 1 Kgs 11:4; Jer 2:11-13; Ezek 14:1-11; Rom 1:24-25; 1 Cor 10:1-14; Titus 3:3; Heb 12:1; Jas 1:13-15; 4:1-2; 1 John 2:15-17)

   d. The renewal of worship: Salvation through justification (Rom 5-8), sanctification (Rom 12:2; 2 Cor 10:5), and glorification (Phil 1:6)

4. Elements and effects of true repentance (Ps 51; 2 Cor 7:9-11)

5. Biblical forgiveness and reconciliation (Matt 18:21-35; Eph 4:32; Col 3:13)

6. Biblical replacement: putting off and putting on by renewing the mind (Eph 4:22-32; Col 3:5-17)

7. Foundational statements regarding biblical counseling

   a. Biblical counseling was necessary before the Fall (Gen 1:26-30; 2:24), during (2:16-17; 3:1-5), and after (3:7-24).

   b. Biblical counseling is expected of every believer (Rom 15:14) and of every church leader (Acts 20:18-32; Titus 1:7-9)

   c. Biblical counseling is purposeful in its goals, both ultimate (Rom 8:28-30) and secondary (Gal 5:22-23)

   d. Biblical counseling is equipped through the sufficiency of God's Word (Ps 19; Isa 40:13-14; 55:11; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:16-21), the study of God's Word (Pss 1:2; 119:18, 105; 2 Tim 2:15), and its application (Matt 7:24-27; Jas

1:22-25)

e. Biblical counseling is sin-conscious regarding sin's results (Gen 3:7-5:5; Rom 8:20-22)

f. Biblical counseling is evangelistic because of man's problem (Isa 64:6; Rom 3:23; Heb 12:14), because of God's solution (Rom 8:33-34, 37; 1 Cor 6:9-11; 2 Cor 5:21; Eph 1:22; Phil 2:9-11; Titus 2:13; Heb 4:14-16; 1 Pet 2:24), and because of God's command (Matt 28:18-20; Rom 10:13-15)

g. Biblical counseling is heart-focused (Luke 6:43-45; Jas 1:13-16)

h. Biblical counseling is Spirit-driven because of the Holy Spirit's ministry (John 4:23-24; 6:63; 14:16-18; 16:7-9; Rom 5:5; 8:13-14, 26; 1 Cor 12) and his results (1 Cor 6:9-11; Titus 3:3-8; 1 Thess 1:9-10)

i. Biblical counseling is Christ-modeled physically (Phil 2:5-9), experientially (Heb 4:15; John 15:18), cognitively (Mark 5:35-36; John 6:61), and emotionally (Mark 10:21; John 11:35)

j. Biblical counseling is prayerful as demonstrated by Christ (Matt 5:43-44; 6:5-13; 9:38; Luke 3:21-23; 5:15-16; 23:34, 46) and his disciples (Rom 12:12; Eph 6:18; Phil 4:6-7; Heb 4:16; Jas 5:16-18; 1 Pet 4:7)

k. Biblical counseling is relational both toward the counselee (Phil 1:7; Acts 20:31; 1 Thess 2:7-8) and toward Christ (Heb 1:1-2; John 1:14, 18; 14:9; 1 Pet 3:18)

l. Biblical counseling is person-centered by its focus on Christ (1 Cor 2:2; 2 Cor 4:5; Col 1:28), its concern to help others (Gal 4:19; 1 Thess 2:8; Phlm 9), its content, and its methodology

m. Biblical counseling is comprehensive depending on the whole Godhead (John 15:1-2; 2 Cor 3:18; Eph 5:26), demanding man's participation (Rom 8:13; 1 Cor 9:24-27; 2 Cor 7:1; 1 Tim 4:7), discussing relationships with others (Gen 2:18; Luke 2:52; Prov 17:17), dealing with the whole man (Matt 5:28-30; Rom 6:11-13; 12:2; Eph 4:23; Heb 4:12; Jas 1:2; 1 Tim 6:11), and discussing past (Rom 8:28; 1

Cor 6:9-11; Col 3:5-8, 21; 1 Pet 1:18), present (Prov 13:20; Rom 8:18; 1 Cor

15:23; 1 Pet 1:6), and future (Rom 8:28-30; Phil 1:6; 1 John 3:2-3)

8. Is the Bible reliable?

9. The inner and outer man: Physical and spiritual aspects of counseling

10. The biblical view of self

11. Comparison of various counseling models: historical and present day

12. Presenting the gospel in its context

APPENDIX 5

STAGE TWO OUTLINE:

METHODS OF BIBLICAL CHANGE

The following outline provides the main points and subpoints for the course on methods of biblical change. This ten-week course provided the basis for the project evaluation.

1. Loving involvement (Prov 27:6, 9; Matt 22:37-40; John 1:14; Gal 6:1-10; Eph 5:1-2; Col 1:28-29)

   a. Developed through compassion for the counselee like Jesus (Matt 9:35-38; Heb 4:15-16) and Paul (Acts 20:17-19, 31; Gal 5:22-23)

   b. Developed by honoring the counselee (Rom 12:10; Phlm 8-9)

   c. Promoted through effective verbal communication (Prov 15:23; 16:21-24; 25:11; Eph 4:15, 25, 29)

   d. Fostered by good listening (Prov 5:1; Jas 1:19)

   e. Established by continuing the counseling process

2. Hope-filled inspiration

   a. True hope compared to empty hope (Rom 5:1-4; 8:28; 15:4; 2 Cor 10:4; Col 1:4-5, 25-27; Heb 10:24-25; 1 Pet 1:3, 13)

   b. Examples of those who need hope restored (2 Cor 4:8-9; 1 Thess 4:13; 1 Pet 1:3-7)

   c. Producing and sustaining biblical hopefulness (Ruth 1:19-22; 1 Cor 10:13; Gal 6:1-5)

3. Getting to know the counselee

   a. Importance of gathering personal information (John 3-4; 1 Thess 5:14)

   b. Kinds of personal information to gather

   c. Methods and manner for gathering personal information (Prov 20:5; Col 4:6)

4. Interpreting personal information

   a. Biblical examples of interpretation (Ruth 1:19-22; 1 Sam 1:12-18; Jer 45; Mark 6:45-52; 10:17-23; Luke 10:38-41; 24:13-26; John 9:13-23; 1 Tim 6:10, 20-21; 2 Tim 4:10; 3 John 9-10)

   b. Formulate and test a tentative interpretation (Prov 10:1, 8; 14:1; John 3:18, 36; 1 Cor 2:14-15; Eph 4:13-15; 1 Thess 5:14; Heb 5:11-14)

   c. Develop a helping strategy

   d. Using a journal in homework assignments

5. Speaking the truth in love

   a. Counseling the unbeliever (Ps 51:5; John 3:19-20; Rom 3:10-12, 23; 8:7-8; 1 Cor 2:14-15)

   b. Instruction must be biblical in nature (2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:3-4)

   c. Instruction must be biblically accurate (Eph 4:17-32)

   d. Instruction must be biblically appropriate (Prov 26:4-5; 1 Cor 3:1-2; 1 Thess 5:14; Heb 5:12-14)

   e. The counselee must meditate on these biblical principles until they are personally ingrained in the heart (Josh 1:8)

6. Inducement to change

   a. The importance of commitment (Ps 42; Luke 14:15-35)

   b. Kinds of commitments for counselees to make (Ps 51; Matt 6:24; John 17:17; Phil 4:13; Jas 1:19-25)

   c. Overcoming counselee resistance whether overt (Matt 21:28-32; Mark 10:17-26) or covert (Matt 21:28-32; Luke 6:46)

   d. An inducement model from the Old Testament (Exod 3:1-4:20)

   e. An inducement model from the New Testament (Heb 3:12-15; 4:1-7, 11; 10:23, 35-36)

7. Implementing homework strategies for change (Matt 19:21-22; 28:19-20; Jas 1:19-27)

   a. Renewing the mind (Eph 4:22-24)

   b. Taking every thought captive (Phil 4:4-9)

8. Integrating Christ-like principles into the life of the counselee and the counselee into the life of the church

   a. Biblical basis for integration into Christ (Rom 6:1-4; 8:2-4; Eph 4:1; Col 1:9-11; 1 Tim 4:7; 2 Tim 3:16; Heb 5:14) and into Christ's body (Acts 2:42-46; Rom 12:4-16; Eph 4:1-16)

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b. Integrating Christ-like principles into the counselee's life (Ps 119:9, 11; 1 Cor 6:9-11; Gal 5: 16, 22-23; Eph 4:21-24)

c. Integration of the counselee into the life of the church (Rom 12:3-5; 1 Cor 12:12-27; Eph 4:15-16)

d. Criteria for determining when integration has occurred

e. The counseling commencement

5. What to do when the counselor needs counseling (Job 1-42)

6. Format for conducting counseling sessions

a. General guidelines for each session

b. Additional guideline for the first session

c. Other tips for the counseling process

APPENDIX 6

BIBLICAL COUNSELING COURSE EVALUATION

The following post-project evaluation was completed by all participants who took the course to evaluate whether the course was biblically faithful, sufficiently thorough, and practically applicable.

Name of evaluator: _____   **Date:** _____

How many sessions did you attend (maximum = 10): _____

Biblical Counseling Course Evaluation					
1 = insufficient; 2 = requires attention; 3 = sufficient; 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Understandability					
The content of the course is biblically and theologically sound.					
The course is presented at a level appropriate for most participants.					
Methodology					
The course sufficiently addresses counseling methodology.					
The course makes use of various learning approaches such as lecture, case studies, role play and homework.					
Applicability					
The course includes opportunities to practice counseling applications.					
The course addresses issues that participants deal with in daily life.					
At the end of the course, participants have the confidence to counsel others biblically.					
Participants have a strategic plan to implement counseling principles in personal ministry.					

How has this training proved helpful to you?

What area of your personal life has been most challenged? What changes have you seen as a result?

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

APPENDIX 7

EVALUATION OF MINISTRY APPLICATION PLAN

The following evaluation was sent to three NLC elders to evaluate the strategic plan for applying biblical counseling in each participants' ministry context.

Name of evaluator: _____   **Date:** _____

Ministry Application Plan Evaluation					
1 = insufficient; 2 = requires attention; 3 = sufficient; 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Content					
The plan is easy to understand.					
The plan is simple to implement.					
Scope					
The plan accounts for a wide scope of ministries.					
The plan takes into account each participant's ministry passions and goals.					
Resources					
The plan takes into account the church's resources.					
The plan takes into account the church's limitations.					
Application					
The plan involves the church's leaders in the placement of biblical counselors.					
The plan facilitates each participant's ability to practice biblical counseling in a specific ministry context.					

Please include any additional comments regarding the ministry application plan below:

APPENDIX 8

COUNSELOR EVALUATION FORM

Course participants used the information they learned to simulate counseling sessions with one another. The instructor then evaluated how well they applied the course material. Each participant also counseled one close family member or friend who then evaluated their effectiveness in counseling.

Name of evaluator: _____   **Date:** _____

Name of counselor: _____

Brief description of counseling situation:

Counselor Evaluation Form					
1 = insufficient; 2 = requires attention; 3 = sufficient; 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Counseling Methodology					
The counselor listens carefully.					
The counselor shows compassion.					
The counselor offers biblical hope.					
The counselor prays with the counselee.					
Counseling Focus					
The counselor is able to identify the counselee's specific struggle with either sin or suffering.					
The counselor tries to discover the heart issue.					
The counselor provides the counselee with a greater picture of God's character.					
The counselor helps the counselee replace wrong behavior with what is right.					
Counseling Content					
The counselor applies appropriate Scriptures.					
The counselor assigns useful homework.					

Please include any additional comments below:

APPENDIX 9

PERSONAL GROWTH PROJECT

Each participant selected a personal growth project (PGP) at the beginning of the course and counseled themselves using the content learned each week. One participant each week then shared about their PGP in varied formats. The following are sample questions which were asked throughout.

PERSONAL GROWTH PROJECT: A PLAN FOR CHANGE

Questions:

1. Describe the problem in detail. Be specific. How does the problem show up in your behavior, words, thoughts, emotions? When, where and with whom does it appear? How often is it a problem? How intense? How long-standing? What was the starting point? What has helped in the past? What has hindered change?

2. Identify your goals for working on this problem.

3. This behavior or attitude comes from what heart idolatry? Please be specific. For example, "I desire and live to keep things under control" or "I make people my refuge."

4. Have you asked the Lord's forgiveness? When will you?

5. Have you asked the forgiveness of anyone who has been impacted by this? If not, when will you?

6. In what ways do you need to die to this idolatry? What behavior or attitude—and the wrong worship it reveals—needs to be "put off" from the heart? How could you or should you practice the principle of "radical amputation" demonstrating your sincere desire to change (Matt. 5:28-30; Col. 3:5)?

7. What behavior or attitude—as an expression of right worship—needs to be "put on" in likeness to Jesus?

8. How will you do this and when? Be practical and specific.

9. How do you need to grow in your love for or trust in the Lord in this/these areas?

10. By God's grace, how will you seek to do this and when?

11. Who will you ask to hold you accountable and how will they do it? Ideally, this should be someone in your local church or a close brother or sister in Christ.

12. What literature will you commit to reading to help address this subject?

13. What verses do you need to study, memorize, and meditate upon?

14. Describe a plan for evaluating the accomplishment of your project's goals. What change would you like to see in your life thirty days from now?

APPENDIX 10

FORMS FOR GATHERING INFORMATION

Every counselor needs a method for gathering personal information about the people they are counseling. The following forms provide examples for different ways to organize the data as a counselor listens to a counselee's story.

PREACHD

Physical – sleep patterns; medications; diet; activity level; illness

Resources and **R**elationships – family issues; job situation; school; social; spiritual

Emotional (feelings) – extremes; "feeling-oriented" thinking

Actions (behavior) – sins of commission and omission

Conceptual (thoughts) – goals; values

Historical – life story; good and bad in past or present context; failures; school/job problems

Desires and Motives – heart questions; X-ray questions[1]

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[1]Adapted from lecture notes by Wayne Mack and Stuart Scott.

WORSHIPER

Types of questions based on the idea that all are worshipers

Wants/wishes: What do you want in this situation? What are you wishing for?

Others: How are others being impacted by this situation? How are your relationships in general? How do others perceive you?

Reasoning: What do you think about regularly? What do you think about yourself?

Spiritually: How is this impacting your relationship with the Lord? What do you find yourself praying about regularly?

Heart: Drawing out the purposes of the heart questions

Interests: What do you like to read? What hobbies do you have?

Physical: How is this impacting you physically? How are you sleeping?

Emotions: What is the biggest emotion you struggle with?

Responses/reactions: How did you respond to this situation? How do you deal with this pressure in your life? What habits do you struggle with?[2]

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[2]Adapted from lecture notes by Ernie Baker.

APPENDIX 11

T-TEST RESULTS

The following tables display the t-test results from comparing the pre- and post-project BCA scores. This t-test demonstrated that the methods of biblical change course made a significant statistical difference in equipping the eleven participants who completed both BCAs.

T-TEST RESULTS

Table A1. Pre- and post-project BCA results

Participants	Pre-project BCA	Post-project BCA
1	140	153
2	121	141
3	133	139
4	129	124
5	148	149
6	112	132
7	167	157
8	118	135
9	134	141
10	149	150
11	137	142

Table A2. T-test: Paired two sample for means

	Variable 1	Variable 2
Mean	135.2727	142.0909
Variance	247.2182	94.29091
Observations	11	11
Pearson Correlation	0.796271	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	10	
t Stat	-2.28007	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.02289	
t Critical one-tail	1.812461	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.04578	

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ABSTRACT

EQUIPPING MEMBERS OF NEW LIFE CHURCH IN
WOODLAND HILLS, CALIFORNIA
TO COUNSEL BIBLICALLY

Thomas Kenji Sugimura, D.Min.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Stuart W. Scott

This project seeks to equip members of New Life Church in Woodland Hills, California to counsel biblically. Chapter 1 presents the history and ministry context of New Life Church and the goals of this project. Chapter 2 demonstrates the exegesis of five passages of Scripture (Rom 15:1-14; 2 Tim 3:14-17; Gal 5:16-25; Heb 10:19-25; Matt 28:18-20) to show that every Christian has sufficient spiritual resources to counsel biblically. Chapter 3 explains how equipping biblical counselors uniquely cultivates Christ-like character, applies theological foundations, and utilizes the abundance of soul care resources. Chapter 4 describes the project itself, recounting the content and teaching methodology of the specific course curriculum. Chapter 5 evaluates the efficacy of the project based on completion of the specified goals. Ultimately, this project seeks to equip Christians with the confidence and competency to minister to fellow sinners and sufferers with the truth of the gospel and the love of Jesus Christ.

VITA

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ORGANIZATIONS
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