EQUIPPING LEADERS FOR CARE AND COUNSELING AT

THE VILLAGE CHURCH IN DALLAS, TEXAS

_____

A Project

Presented to

the Faculty of

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

_____

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

_____

by

Dustin Brady Goodwin

December 2017

APPROVAL SHEET

EQUIPPING LEADERS FOR CARE AND COUNSELING AT

THE VILLAGE CHURCH IN DALLAS, TEXAS

Dustin Brady Goodwin

Read and Approved by:

_____
Jeremy P. Pierre (Faculty Supervisor)

_____
Robert D. Jones

Date_____

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

Many people have provided invaluable help in completing this project. First, I wish to thank my wife, Aimee, and our children, Hans and Boaz, for their continual love and support. It is one of the greatest privileges I have known to share my life with these precious three.

Second, I am grateful to the elders, staff, and members of The Village Church. Serving alongside you has shown me the beauty of Ephesians 4:15 firsthand. In particular, thank you to those with whom I labor side by side in Dallas, Texas. I love you and thank God in all my remembrances of you (Phil 1:3).

Third, I am thankful for the many faithful men who have helped shape my life as a pastor. Pastors Tim Wallace, Brandon Barker, Steve Hardin, and Matt Younger have modeled steadfast faithfulness and joy in service to the Lord. Professors Scott Horrell, Jeff Bingham, and Reg Grant (just to name a few) demonstrated love for Christ and a passion for his Word. Wise counselors like Michael Snetzer, John Henderson, and Stuart Scott have helped me grow in applying this Word to all of life.

Fourth, I must also thank my project supervisor, Jeremy Pierre, whose help, encouragement, and insight as I completed this project strengthened it in untold ways.

Words cannot express my gratitude to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I was dead, but he gave me life. May this project glorify his name and serve his bride.

Brady Goodwin

Dallas, Texas

December 2017

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The mission of The Village Church (TVC) is "to bring glory to God by making disciples through gospel-centered worship, gospel-centered community, gospel-centered service and gospel-centered multiplication." All four of these gospel-centered "discipleship traits" fulfill a progressive role in helping others grow in Christlikeness. Worship fuels the discipleship that occurs in the context of community. Service is the overflow of discipleship. Multiplication is the result, as new communities arise and new believers mature. Biblical counseling at TVC occurs in community, as men and women apply the truths of Scripture to life's problems. As they minister to one another, they speak the truth in love so that they might "grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ" (Eph 4:15).

Context

Biblical counseling at TVC occurs in three primary contexts: Recovery Groups, Steps, and Home Groups.[1] Recovery Groups are small group communities that form part of a biblically-based, discipleship-focused, repentance and reconciliation ministry. This ministry began as a program based upon a Christ-centered approach to the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, but has since developed into a setting committed to helping participants acquire a comprehensive biblical perspective on sin and suffering. Recovery Groups are gender-specific, issue-focused groups led by volunteers that

---

[1]TVC is a multisite church consisting of five campuses spread across the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex.

provide men and women a season of specialized care. Biblical counseling occurs in a

Recovery Group corporately (through large-group teaching) and individually (through

small-group relationships).

Alongside TVC's issue-focused Recovery Groups is Steps. Steps is a thirteen-

week discipleship program that teaches participants how to apply the truths of the gospel

of Jesus Christ to daily life. It includes instruction in a practical theology of sin, salvation,

and sanctification, to help participants explore heart issues contributing to life struggles.

This program provides a context for biblical counseling in both large and small group

settings, and in a one-on-one mentor relationship.

In addition to Recovery Groups and Steps, Home Groups provide long-term

care in the context of community.[2] These groups are dedicated to ongoing mutual

discipleship, fellowship and service. Home Groups meet in homes throughout the week

and are led by faithful shepherds committed to caring for group members. While

Recovery Groups are designed to provide short-term, focused care, Home Groups give

TVC members and attendees a regular setting where discipleship and informal biblical

counseling can occur.

The influence of these three ministries has resulted in significant awareness

among church members of biblical counseling concepts. This knowledge has led many to

pursue further training in the personal ministry of God's Word. Yet for all the successes

seen at TVC related to biblical counseling, two concerns threaten the overall

effectiveness of the church's current practices, while potentially hindering the prospect of

future efforts at pursuing care and counsel according to God's Word.

First, despite the presence of several ministries where biblical counseling can

occur, TVC is often unable to provide consistent training in biblical counseling concepts

---

[2]Lee Lewis and Michael Snetzer, "Biblical Counseling and Small Groups: Counseling in the Context of Community," in *Biblical Counseling and the Church: God's Care through God's People,* ed. Bob Kellemen and Kevin Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 138.

or methodologies to its volunteer leaders. Though there have been some historic efforts at comprehensive training (most notably for Recovery Group and Steps leaders), most training opportunities have been sporadic or were limited in scope. This limitation is due in part to TVC's organizational structure; in most instances, one pastoral team shares oversight, administration and leadership of TVC's Groups ministry (Home Groups and Recovery Groups), as well as implementation of Steps at each TVC campus. Thus, while TVC's Groups staff is able to offer biblical counseling training on an occasional basis, these efforts are limited because of other needed areas of focus in equipping TVC's group leaders. This lack of consistent training has had the unintended effect of marginalizing much of the biblical counseling that occurs at TVC to Recovery Groups and Steps. While it is encouraging that biblical counseling can occur despite a Home Group leader's lack of confidence or competency, the focused nature of these ministries unintentionally siloes a significant portion of the personal ministry of the Word, separating what would otherwise be the shared responsibility of Home Group leaders.

The second concern is that TVC possesses an incomplete conceptual and practical understanding of biblical counseling. This deficiency is evidenced in two primary ways. First is the regularity with which outside counseling referrals are offered for church members, and the significant number of church members and attendees who pursue counseling on their own initiative. Though the referrals that TVC provides typically involve formal biblical counseling, they are often made because TVC's pastoral staff and lay leadership are unable to provide consistent care due to a lack of capacity or counseling competency. Individuals who pursue other forms of counseling often turn to a mental health professional (MHP) or Christian Integrated counselor, due to either the severity of the problem being addressed or because of the competency assumed through professional licensure. The referrals TVC provides demonstrate that despite the acceptance and pursuit of biblical counseling generally, there is still much that remains to be accomplished in the way of formal training. The counseling relationships members

9

and attendees pursue reflect an assumption that formal, external counseling relationships are preferred for addressing significant problems in living, rather than comprehensive care provided by the church for its members.

Second are the ways in which TVC has provided care in more complex counseling scenarios where the sufficiency of Scripture may be called into question. While upholding the Scriptures' sufficiency generally, TVC has acknowledged that biblical counseling is not adequate for all counseling needs. This acknowledgement has led to occasional referrals for licensed counselors or MHPs (who counsel from either secular or Christian Integrated approaches) in order to address certain specialized situations. While not discounting the situational wisdom from which these MHPs approached the needs being addressed, the presuppositional differences between these forms of care and biblical counseling make their utilization potentially problematic.[3]

These concerns reveal the need for a foundational understanding of how biblical care and counsel should be defined and how it should be pursued in the church. Additionally, these observations reflect the importance of equipping leaders for effective biblical counseling at TVC, and the effect of insufficient efforts toward this end. Addressing these concerns adequately will require reevaluating TVC's current philosophy of biblical counseling, while strengthening its practical efforts at training leaders to provide this type of care.

Rationale

TVC's commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ and the ministry of God's Word has remained steadfast throughout its recent history. In addition, biblical counseling has flourished in many contexts at TVC, leading to changed lives and growth

---

[3]These differences include, but are not limited to, how people are understood on a cognitive, emotional, affective, and behavioral level; how origins of problems in living are understood; how one defines the nature of troubles such as mental illness and mental health issues; and the foundational role of Scripture in the counseling process.

in Christlikeness. Despite these successes, a philosophical and methodological gap exists that has hindered the church's overall effectiveness in biblical counseling ministry. This gap exposes two needs that inform this project's rationale; first, that of an improved conceptual understanding of biblical counseling, and second, the need for increased efforts at equipping leaders in the personal ministry of the Word.

As noted above, TVC's conceptual deficiencies in biblical counseling have led the church to outsource much of its member care. This lapse is due to confusion surrounding how biblical counseling is defined and how it should be pursued in the church. Addressing these deficiencies will improve the church's theological vision for biblical counseling by reexamining the scriptural basis for one-another ministry and providing appropriate parameters for its expression. Because of these efforts, TVC will possess greater awareness of its responsibility to provide such care. In light of its current practical limitations, the church will know in what circumstances external counseling resources should be utilized. As it addresses those limitations, the church will be equipped to strategize future initiatives to improve counseling competency among church leaders. The result will be a church grounded in the principles and aims of biblical counsel (2 Tim 3:16; Col 1:28-29), and which is able to pursue the personal ministry of the Word as a context-specific, nuanced expression of Christ's call to make disciples (Matt 28:18-20).

Alongside TVC's conceptual needs are its weaknesses in equipping leaders. While TVC's previous attempts at providing biblical counseling instruction have been helpful, there currently exists little in the way of consistent, scalable training. There is thus room for growth in how the church disciples its leaders in the personal ministry of the Word. This opportunity corresponds to an overall need for increased biblical counseling skills among TVC's leadership. As this need is addressed, these leaders will be more effective as they minister amidst difficult counseling scenarios, reducing the need for outside referral (Rom 15:14). As leaders grow in their ability to counsel others,

they in turn will better fulfill the calling to equip the saints for the work of ministry (Eph 4:11-16). As these saints grow in counseling competency, there will be a more even distribution of biblical counseling across TVC's various ministries (Gal 6:2). Future leaders will be identified as church members grow in their understanding and personal application of the truths of God's Word. The result will be a church strengthened in its comprehensive mission to "bring glory to God by making disciples."

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip leaders at The Village Church in Dallas, Texas, to care and counsel biblically.

Goals

The following four goals guided the project:

1. The first goal was to assess the knowledge and practice of biblical counseling among TVC leadership.

2. The second goal was to develop a conceptual framework for biblical counseling and two-semester curriculum that will equip TVC leadership in biblical counseling competency.

3. The third goal was to help equip TVC leadership in biblical counseling competency by teaching the curriculum.

4. The fourth goal was to contribute to a strategic plan to increase biblical counseling skills among TVC leadership.

The success of these goals was assessed using specific research methodology. The methodology and instruments used to measure the success of each of goal are described in detail in the following section.[4]

Research Methodology

Four goals determined the effectiveness of this project. The first goal was to

---

[4]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.

assess the knowledge and practice of biblical counseling among TVC leadership. This goal was measured by administering a Biblical Care and Counsel Assessment (BCCA) distributed to a random sampling of TVC leaders.[5] This survey assessed respondents' familiarity with the concepts of biblical counseling while also measuring their current counseling competency. The goal was considered successfully met when at least fifty people completed the BCCA. The survey results were then compiled and analyzed in order to assess the pre-project counseling knowledge and competency among TVC's leaders.

The second goal was to develop a conceptual framework for biblical counseling and a two-semester curriculum that would equip TVC leadership in biblical counseling competency. The conceptual framework the project produced took into consideration data gleaned from the results of the BCCA, and was to serve as a proposed philosophy of care and counseling for future biblical counseling ministry at TVC.[6] Alongside this written framework, the two-semester curriculum was developed by adapting the biblical counseling course *Equipped To Counsel* (ETC) as the basis for a twenty-three week course that trained TVC leaders in the foundations and practice of Christ-centered biblical counseling ministry.[7] This goal was measured by an expert panel who utilized a rubric to evaluate the conceptual framework for its biblical faithfulness and scope.[8] The same panel also utilized a similar rubric to evaluate the two-semester

---

[5]See appendix 1. This leadership group included TVC elders, deacons, ministry staff, groups coaches, group leaders, and those who have recently completed TVC's Training Program. The Training Program is a one-year course offered at TVC specializing in theological education.

[6]See appendixes 2 and 3. This written framework defined biblical counseling, described what it aims to accomplish (Col 1:28-29), and explained how the personal ministry of the Word serves as a comprehensive, nuanced, context-specific process for discipleship. It also considered if and in what situations it would be appropriate for TVC to pursue other modes of care outside of biblical counseling in addressing significant personal troubles among church members.

[7]John Henderson, *Equipped to Counsel: A Training Program in Biblical Counseling* (Fort Worth, TX: Association of Biblical Counselors, 2008).

[8]See appendix 4. The expert panel consisted of two TVC elders, two members affiliated with Association of Biblical Counselors (ABC), and three local pastors not affiliated with TVC.

curriculum for its biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability.[9]

This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 80 percent of the

evaluation criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level for both the conceptual

framework and the course curriculum. Should the initial feedback have yielded less than

80 percent for either the conceptual framework or course curriculum, the written

materials would have been revised until they met or exceeded the sufficient level.

     The third goal was to help equip TVC leadership in biblical counseling

competency by teaching the curriculum. The course curriculum developed for the project

was taught over two semesters (the first lasting twelve weeks and the second lasting

eleven weeks). The course was taught in an interactive classroom format and included

instruction, discussion, counseling observation and role-play for at least two hours each

session. At least twenty-five students would be chosen out of those who successfully

finish the BCCA administered earlier in the project and who also completed a subsequent

application process.[10]

     The first semester of the course addressed the foundations for biblical

counseling ministry while the second semester focused on the acquisition and

implementation of biblical counseling skills. The content aspect of this goal was

measured by re-administering the BCCA within two weeks after participants finished the

course. This aspect of the goal was considered successfully met when a t-test for

dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference in the pre

and post-course BCCA scores. As Salkind notes, a t-test is used to compare the results of

one group that is being studied under two different conditions.[11] Because all students

---

[9]See appendix 5.

[10]See appendix 6. Ideally, the course participants would have reflected a consistent distribution of the leadership groups who received the initial survey, thus representing men and women who minister across multiple contexts.

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

completed the BCCA before and after participating in the course, a t-test was the appropriate method of determining whether the goal had been satisfactorily met.[12]

In addition to assessing participants' content acquisition, growth in competency was gauged through an evaluation rubric that measured each student's counseling skills as exhibited through class discussions and role-play counseling scenarios. A course instructor and at least one other student completed an evaluation rubric for each student in the course. This aspect of the goal was considered successfully met when at least 75 percent of students scored at the sufficient or above level on the evaluation rubric.[13] As well, a post-course evaluation was administered through a survey that assessed students' satisfaction with the course content, instructors' presentation skills, and the course's applicability for future ministry.[14] This aspect of the goal was considered satisfactorily met when at least 80 percent of class participants completed the post-class evaluation.

The fourth goal was to contribute to a strategic plan to increase care and counseling skills at TVC. This project was completed alongside a broader initiative devoted to strengthening care practices at TVC.[15] This initiative included a thorough assessment of TVC's current and historic care practices. The result of the initiative was the development of a strategic plan (which suggested several recommended changes designed to bring alignment to TVC's care philosophy and methodology across its five campuses), as well as a care "playbook" to assist in the implementation of the plan. The

---

[12]Salkind, *Statistics for People Who (Think They) Hate Statistics*, 189.

[13]See appendix 7.

[14]See appendix 8.

[15]Work toward this initiative (which was an ongoing effort at the time of this project's completion) is being carried out by a team of ten TVC leaders (both lay and vocational). This team includes several TVC elders, deacons, and staff members, each of whom are either regularly involved in TVC's respective care ministries (Home Groups, Recovery Groups, Steps, etc.) or work vocationally as professional counselors.

contribution this project made was in assisting in the development of the initial written theological and philosophical documents for the playbook. The goal was considered successfully met upon the completion of these written documents, their evaluation by the care initiative team, and their inclusion in the playbook.[16]

Definitions and Delimitations

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

Biblical counseling. Biblical counseling is the personal, heart-focused application of God's Word to issues of sin and suffering in light of the hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This project utilizes Robert Kellemen's helpful definition of biblical counseling:

> Christ-centered, church-based, comprehensive, compassionate, and culturally informed biblical counseling depends upon the Holy Spirit to relate God's Word to suffering and sin by speaking and living God's truth in love to equip people to love God and one another (Matt 22:35-40). It cultivates conformity to Christ and communion with Christ and the body of Christ, leading to a community of one-another disciple-makers (Matt 28:18-20).[17]

Discipleship. Closely related to biblical counseling, discipleship is the process by which men and women come into relationship with Christ and are conformed to his image through the personal application of God's Word. This process of transformation is the central aim of the Christian life, and is intended to produce faith and obedience that results in increasing righteousness.[18] This project refers to biblical counseling as part of the overall process of discipleship in the church.

The sufficiency of Scripture. The doctrine of Scripture's sufficiency teaches

---

[16]The written philosophical framework from this project's second goal served as the initial basis for the written theological and philosophical documents described in this goal.

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

[18]John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1960), 685.

that the Bible contains all that is necessary for equipping Christians to live faithfully before God. John Frame's definition is illustrative for understanding this important concept as it relates to biblical counseling: "Scripture contains all the divine words needed for any aspect of human life."[19]

Christian Integrated Counseling. Christian Integrated Counseling is counseling that seeks to integrate the insights of modern psychology along with biblical truth in developing the presuppositional and methodological basis for the cure of souls. Stanton L. Jones' definition of *integration* is thus helpful for this project:

> 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 existence by our giving his special revelation—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.[20]

Four delimitations were placed on the project. First, the equipping component of the project was designed to strengthen skills in the *informal* ministry of biblical care and counsel at TVC (i.e., care provided by lay leaders in an informal setting), rather than to produce formal biblical counselors. Given that discipleship in the context of gospel-centered community is one of TVC's primary ministry foci, this area was the most appropriate setting in which to pursue further training, as opposed to the development of a formal counseling ministry.

Second, the invitation to complete the BCCA was only extended to select TVC staff members, lay leaders, and Training Program participants. Similarly, participation in the project's two-semester course was limited to members of the above groups who successfully completed the BCCA. These men and women comprise TVC's primary leadership base and therefore were those most in need of development in the areas of

---

[19]John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013), 618.

[20]Stanton L. Jones, "An Integration View," in *Psychology & Christianity: Five Views*, ed. Eric L. Johnson (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 102.

biblical care and counsel.

Third, the course curriculum was designed to address the basics of biblical counseling ministry, and as such excluded certain issues, that, though germane to biblical counseling at-large, were thus outside the scope of this project. For example, topics such as data gathering, assigning homework in counseling, and inducement in counseling (to name a few) were reframed and set in context for their appropriate understanding and utilization in community-based personal ministry of the Word.

Lastly, the project was implemented at The Village Church's Dallas Northway Campus only. The purpose for this delimitation was two-fold. On a practical level, this is where the author serves as a pastoral staff member, and was thus the logical location at which to implement the project. On a strategic level, implementing the project at only one campus allowed for evaluation and corrective adaptation in contributing to a strategic plan for future training at other TVC campuses.

Conclusion

God sent his Son to bring salvation, he gave his Word to guide his people, and he has called his church to make disciples. This project demonstrated how applying these truths to all of life results in effective disciple-making for God's glory. The following chapters thus establish the biblical, theological, and methodological basis for biblical care and counsel. Chapter 2 explores how God's Word provides the necessary foundation for biblical counseling in the church. Chapter 3 considers how Scripture provides a working methodology for this ministry.

CHAPTER 2

THE BIBLICAL FOUNDATION FOR CARE AND
COUNSELING AT THE VILLAGE CHURCH

Introduction

The purpose of this project was to equip leaders at The Village Church to care and counsel biblically. Chapter 1 described the various ways TVC has historically pursued biblical counseling ministry, as well as TVC's present conceptual and methodological needs that inform this project's rationale. The purpose of this chapter is to establish the biblical and theological basis for care and counsel within the church. The thesis of this chapter is that God's Word, which is sufficient to address the full breadth of human experience, contains all that is necessary to equip Christians to live faithfully before God in every circumstance, and to minister to others amid all forms of sin and suffering as an expression of the church's wider discipleship ministry.

This chapter therefore examines five biblical texts that establish a conceptual foundation for biblical counseling. First, a discussion of 2 Timothy 3:16-17 demonstrates that God's Word is the foundation for biblical counseling ministry. Second, an examination of Romans 15:14 and 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 reveals the calling that exists for Christians to pursue the mutual, one-another ministry of God's Word. Third, an exegesis of Ephesians 4:11-16 and Matthew 28:18-20 establishes that not only has God given leaders to the church who are called to equip its members in the personal ministry of the Word, but that such equipping is an expression of the church's mission to make disciples.

God's Word Is the Foundation for Biblical Counseling
(2 Tim 3:16-17)

Biblical counseling is rooted in the belief that inspired Scripture, because it accurately addresses all of human life before God, is the sufficient foundation for counseling ministry.[1] Yet not only is Scripture the foundation for counseling ministry as the supreme source of truth about God and people, it also specifically guides the counseling process, both in its content and methodology.[2] There is perhaps no biblical text that encompasses these two truths better than 2 Timothy 3:16-17, in which Scripture's inspired nature is affirmed, and thus its usefulness in ministering God's truth to others. In this section, a discussion of 2 Timothy 3:16-17 demonstrates how God intends to use his Word to shape the beliefs and actions of his people, and how such formation is in turn meant to equip Christians for the personal ministry of the Word to others.

God Speaks through His Word, and His
Word Is True (2 Tim 3:16a)

Second Timothy 3:16-17 flows from the larger context of 3:10-17, and the epistle as a whole. In 2 Timothy, Paul writes to his disciple Timothy on matters pertaining to Timothy's own life, as well as his ministry to others. In 2 Timothy 1-2, Paul focuses on Timothy's role a disciple and as a disciple-maker. In chapter 3, Paul begins to describe the significance of Timothy's discipleship and ministry amid a world beleaguered by human sinfulness. In contrast to the influences of the world, Paul calls Timothy to "continue in what you have learned and firmly believed (3:14)."[3] Timothy was to

---

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

[2]David Powlison, "Affirmations and Denials: A Proposed Definition of Biblical Counseling," *The Journal of Biblical Counseling* 19, no. 1 (Fall 2000): 19.

[3]Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations come from the English Standard Version.

continue to pattern his life after Paul's teaching and conduct, as well as the apostle's endurance in suffering and persecution (cf. 3:10-11).

Yet it was not simply Paul's instruction, or even his life's example, that proved essential for Timothy's discipleship. Rather, it was that Paul's ministry was grounded and rooted in God's Word, which is able to make one wise "for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus (3:15)." The broader emphasis of 2 Timothy, then, is that discipleship encompasses all of life, and Scripture is the comprehensive foundation for discipleship. This chapter proposes that biblical counseling is an expression of discipleship ministry. Therefore, the same principle applies: God's Word is the foundation for biblical counseling.[4] Paul's statements in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 establish and confirm this essential teaching that undergirds all biblical counseling ministry.

In 2 Timothy 3:16, Paul elaborates on the basis for viewing Scripture as the foundation for all of life and ministry: "All Scripture is breathed out by God." "All Scripture" (πᾶσα γραφὴ) refers to Scripture in its totality, which includes not only the Old Testament (OT), but also the teaching of Jesus and what would ultimately comprise the New Testament (NT) canon.[5] In referring to the whole of Scripture, Paul also emphasizes its inspiration, or source: the Bible is "breathed out by God" (θεὸπνευστος).[6] To speak of Scripture as inspired means to see it as the product of God's creative breath. In other

---

[4]This project's definition of biblical counseling is that biblical counseling is the personal, heart-focused application of God's Word to issues of sin and suffering in light of the hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Discipleship, generally understood, is the process by which men and women come into relationship with Christ and are conformed to his image through the personal application of God's Word. As will be discussed later in this chapter, biblical counseling is not distinct from discipleship, but is an expression of it in the life of the church. Thus, these terms will be used in close proximity to one another in their meaning. For more regarding biblical counseling as part of the wider ministry of the church, see Paul David Tripp, "The Great Commission: A Paradigm for Ministry in the Local Church," *The Journal of Biblical Counseling* 16, no. 3 (Spring 1998): 2-4.

[5]William B. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46 (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2000), 568.

[6]Gordon D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, New International Biblical Commentary, vol. 13 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988), 279.

words, that Scripture has God's breath as its source is its fundamental trait.[7] Because this

is the essential nature of Scripture, the Bible is therefore God's authoritative Word to his

people.[8] As William Mounce affirms, "To read it [Scripture] is to hear him speak."[9]

As it relates to biblical counseling ministry, that Scripture is God's inspired

Word establishes that it is the dependable foundation for counseling others. God's words

are true, and can be trusted for personal ministry. Therefore, as Mounce describes, the

underlying assumption behind Paul's declaration in 2 Timothy 3:16 is that "because

Scripture comes from God, it is therefore true, and because it is true, it is therefore

profitable."[10]

**God's Word Is Meant to Shape One's
Beliefs and Actions (2 Tim 3:16b)**

Because Scripture is God's inspired Word to his people, it is therefore

"profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness."

That the Bible is "profitable" (ὠφέλιμος) for these things flows out of its inspired

character.[11] The activities described in 2 Timothy 3:16 have two primary aims: growth in

one's knowledge of Christ, and conformity of one's character to Christ.[12] In other words,

God intends for Scripture to produce change in two areas of one's life: in one's

---

[7]George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 447.

[8]Andreas J. Köstenberger, *2 Timothy,* in vol. 12 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary,* ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 591, and Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 589.

[9]Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 570.

[10]Ibid., 566.

[11]Ibid*.,* 570; Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 590.

[12]Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus,* 590-91.

conception of orthodoxy (or accurate belief), and in one's pursuit of orthopraxy (or right action).[13]

"Teaching" (διδασκαλίαν) and "reproof" (ἐλέγμον) reflect both the positive and negative aspects of training in orthodoxy. To teach means to build out one's understanding of right doctrine and the knowledge of God through his Word. As Gordon Fee describes, teaching God's Word "was Timothy's primary responsibility—to use the Scriptures to give sound instruction in the gospel to God's people."[14] To reproof refers to convicting one of false doctrine so that his thoughts and beliefs might come in line with biblical truth. This loving form of rebuke exposes false teaching for what it is so that one may repent and embrace right doctrine.[15]

In the same way, "correcting" (ἐπανόρθωσιν) and "training in righteousness" (παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ) have orthopraxy as their focus. "Correcting" comes alongside the concept of reproof, yet does so by stressing behavior and ethical action.[16] To correct means to confront improper behavior in one's life. This process of loving confrontation is followed by "training in righteousness." To train toward righteousness represents the positive side to correction. It refers not only to possessing an accurate knowledge of God, but to growth in godliness as a visible testament to the truthfulness of God's Word.

Scripture, then, is God's inspired and true Word to his people. Because it is inspired and true, Scripture is sufficient for training others in their beliefs and actions. Therefore, biblical counseling rooted in such an understanding provides personal instruction in biblical truth, loving clarity in correcting false beliefs, gentle rebuke for

---

[13]Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 570.

[14]Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 279.

[15]Ibid., 280.

[16]Ibid.

sinful behavior, and practical training in godly living. Together, these four characteristics of the Bible's usefulness for ministry reveal the overall purpose of biblical counseling: to present every person mature in Christ (Col 1:28).

**God's Word Is Meant to Equip Others
for Life and Discipleship (2 Tim 3:17)**

Second Timothy 3:16 teaches that Scripture finds its origin in God's breath and is therefore useful in shaping the beliefs and actions of God's people. In verse 17, Paul stresses the intended result of Scripture's usefulness: "that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."[17] The phrase "man of God" (ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος) refers to leaders within the church but may also describe Christians in general.[18] In other words, the benefit of Scripture's usefulness applies equally to all believers, not just church leaders. The word for "complete" (ἄρτιος) occurs only here in Scripture, and means "complete, capable, proficient."[19] As a result of the ministry of God's Word, Christians and Christian leaders alike will be "equipped for every good work."

"Every good work" (πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν) refers to two primary areas of the Christian life, each of which bearing particular significance for biblical counseling ministry. First, Scripture produces increasing wisdom for all of life. Because Scripture is profitable to shape one's beliefs about God and the actions that flow from these beliefs, the believer can confidently rely upon God's Word to provide wisdom for all of life. George Knight captures this nuance when he says, "Since God created Christians for

---

[17]Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 280; Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 450.

[18]Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 450; Köstenberger, *2 Timothy*, 591; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 571.

[19]Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature,* ed. Frederick William Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), 136; Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 450.

good works and calls on them to do good works, he has given scripture to instruct them so that they may know in principle what God expects of them and thus be equipped to do that particular 'good deed' called for in each situation."[20] These deeds may involve acts of faith, trust, and worship, but they may also refer to concrete steps of obedience done out of submission to God's Word.

Second, Scripture grounds personal ministry in the truth God has revealed in his Word. Andreas Köstenberger, in discussing this principle from 2 Timothy 3:17, addresses three aspects of personal ministry that are foundational for biblical counseling.[21] First, ministry to others must be rooted in the teaching of God's Word as opposed to man-centered, humanistic principles.[22] In other words, biblical counseling must avoid unbiblical conclusions about people, their problems, and the solutions to those problems. Rather, counsel according to God's Word must be driven by biblical principles, so that in both concept and practice such counsel reflects a biblical outlook on life. Second, personal ministry is to focus on one's long-term spiritual growth, addressing both the building up of one's faith in God and the deconstruction of improper practical theology.[23] Biblical counseling is not concerned solely with addressing one's personal problems, but rather to see those problems as the context in which godly change occurs, and this within the overall process of progressive sanctification. The goal of biblical counsel, therefore, is to further one's growth in Christlikeness as it confronts sin and unbelief, while also exhorting one to faith and the pursuit of godliness. Third, such ministry does not terminate with the recipient's own growth, but overflows into the

---

[20]Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 450.

[21]Köstenberger, *2 Timothy*, 591.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Ibid.

pursuit of discipleship with others.[24] More will be said about this point later, but the point is that personal discipleship is to lead to further disciple-making for God's glory.

Second Timothy 3:16-17 thus establishes the biblical basis for counseling ministry. God has spoken through his Word. Therefore, his Word is inspired and true, and can be trusted as the basis for personal ministry. In addition, this Word is meant to shape the beliefs and actions of God's people. God intends for the application of Scripture to one's life to result in believers who are growing in their ability to respond faithfully in all of life and to pursue Christ-centered ministry with others. Thus God's Word is the foundation for biblical counseling.

Yet not only is Scripture the foundation for counseling ministry, it also delineates the specific calling that exists for God's people to pursue the personal ministry of the Word. Discussion will now turn to two passages that describe the two primary expressions of counseling ministry. First, an exegesis of Romans 15:14 will demonstrate that God's people are called to counsel others through biblical instruction and loving confrontation amid sin. Second, an exegesis of 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 will reveal that God's people are also called to comfort one another through compassionate care and counsel amid suffering.

God's People Are Called to Counsel One Another
(Rom 15:14)

Romans 15:14 is one of several NT passages that reveal the calling for God's people to counsel one-another amid issues of sin.[25] This passage describes both the context and qualifications for counseling ministry, and its essential process. Romans 15:14 teaches that biblical counseling occurs through "instruction" (νουθετεῖν) in the

---

[24]Köstenberger, *2 Timothy*, 591.

[25]Other passages depicting this calling include Gal 6:1-2; Col 1:28; 3:16; Jas 5:19-20.

context of community, and is to be pursued among believers whose lives are marked by loving other-centeredness, and an increasing knowledge of God's Word and the gospel.

Paul begins by describing his confidence in his readers' competency to minister the truths of God's Word to one-another: "I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers."[26] In the previous section of the epistle (Rom 12:1-15:13), Paul offered a series of exhortations rooted in the rich doctrinal teaching of Romans 1-11. Like several other NT books, the Epistle to the Romans follows a basic pattern of communicating *gospel indicatives* (truths about the gospel and one's union with Christ), followed by instruction in *gospel imperatives* (actions Christians are to pursue in Christ in light of the gospel).[27] However, because Paul had not yet visited his Roman audience, one of his purposes in affirming his readers' ministry competency was also to provide some explanation for the boldness of the preceding imperatives (Rom 15:15).[28] By making such an affirmation, Paul also acknowledges the principle that undergirds his exhortations, namely, that the church is called to pursue the mutual, one-another ministry of God's Word. In other words, Paul is confident that the Roman Christians could pursue the exhortations of 12:1-15:13 because he knew that they were both equipped and called to such a work. Thus, as C. E. B. Cranfield notes, "It is therefore both his right and his duty to expect them to be frank and sincere in their dealings and to have a firm grasp of the truth of the gospel, and so to be capable of admonishing one another."[29]

---

[26]Colin G. Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 535; Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 887.

[27]Robert Jones and Brad Hambrick, "The Problem of Sin," in *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, ed. James MacDonald, Bob Kellemen, and Steve Viars (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2013), 143.

[28]C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 2, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979), 752.

[29]Ibid., 753.

The Context and Qualifications for
Counseling Ministry

In observing the principle of mutual, one-another ministry, Romans 15:14 also describes the attributes that should characterize its implementation. First, such ministry is to occur in the context of community. That Paul is writing to a Christian community is both implicit and explicit throughout Romans. Paul has expressed his desire to visit the church at Rome, in order to minister to them and they in turn to him (Rom 1:11-12). In addition, each exhortation throughout the epistle is directed toward a community of believers rather than any one individual.

Second, the lives of those engaged in personal ministry are to be marked by the pursuit of "goodness" (ἀγαθωσύνης). Goodness in this passage refers to uprightness and kindness, in particular that which is concerned with the interests of others.[30] In other words, effective counseling ministry will be achieved by Christians who are opposed to evil and who demonstrate sincerity, honesty, and concern for others in life.[31] Paul's assurance to his audience was that he knew and appreciated this truth about them, and that this formed the basis for his confidence in them.[32]

Third, those who counsel biblically are to be full of "knowledge" (γνωσέως). Thomas Schreiner notes that γνωσέως, because it is modified by the adjective πασής ("all"), is a generic term that should not be limited to matters of salvation history, edification, or even the gospel.[33] While this conclusion has some support grammatically, given the context of Paul's argument (in particular the Christ-focused exhortations of 12:1-15:13), it seems best to consider the focus of γνωσέως in Romans 15:14 as

---

[30]Bauer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 4; John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 2, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 209.

[31]Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 209.

[32]John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Romans* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press: 1994), 378.

[33]Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 765.

pertaining (though not exclusively so) to Christ, the gospel, and the Word of God. Indeed, as Colin Kruse details, such knowledge is found "supremely in Christ, in whom he [Paul] says 'are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge' (Col 2:3)."[34] Thus, Christians who engage in the personal ministry of God's Word are to do so in the context of community, as they pursue love toward others and growth in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

The Focus of Counseling Ministry

It is on the basis of the above attributes that biblical counseling through instruction or admonition should occur. The verb νουθετέω refers to a type of counsel designed primarily to correct improper or sinful behavior in one's life.[35] This type of counseling occurs with respect to matters of personal sin, and is designed to effect change that leads to the increasing pursuit of godliness through repentance and renewed trust in Christ. However, such counseling patterned after Romans 15:14 is not harsh or unduly confrontational. Rather, the sense in this passage is that it proceeds out of genuine concern for another, and is offered only on the basis of a thorough knowledge of God's Word. By implication, a knowledge of Scripture would also produce an understanding of how God speaks of people and their problems, which would then be applied to one's specific circumstances. In other words, admonition is preceded by love for the person being counseled and a thorough knowledge of his or her situation.

When one considers Romans 15:14 in light of how Paul discusses Scripture's usefulness in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, it becomes apparent that the instruction mentioned to the Romans would have likely addressed matters of doctrine in addition to Christian living. This is consistent with how νουθετέω is used elsewhere, most notably in

---

[34]Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 536.

[35]Bauer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 679.

Colossians 1:28 and 3:16.[36] In these passages, νουθετέω addresses both internal belief and external actions, and is meant to produce personal change and Christian maturity. Thus, while biblical instruction does and should address matters of personal sin in a corrective sense, it is also meant to shape one's belief in and understanding of God as revealed in his Word. The result of such instruction is maturity in Christ that reflects inward change in the heart, and which overflows into greater godliness in one's life.

Romans 15:14 emphasizes that mature Christians are capable (and indeed, called) to pursue the personal ministry of the Word through loving biblical instruction. In other words, God's people are called to counsel one-another. Yet, as an exegesis of 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 will demonstrate, God's people are also called to care for one-another amid suffering and affliction of all kinds as an expression of God's abundant mercy.

God's People Are Called to Care for One Another
(2 Cor 1:3-4)

Where Romans 15:14 provides the calling for mutual ministry amid issues of sin and brokenness, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 describes the ministry believers are to pursue as they care for one-another in suffering. In this passage, care for sufferers is built on two foundational principles. First, God, who is called "the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort," is the source of all comfort. He is therefore able to minister his mercy in the direst situations. Second, those whom God comforts are called to care for others with the same comfort they themselves have received.

---

[36]In Col 1:28, the text reads, "Him we proclaim, warning (νουθετοῦντες) everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ." In Col 3:16, νουθετέω is used similarly: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing (νουθετοῦντες) one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God."

God Is the Source of All Comfort (1:3-4a)

Paul begins this passage by blessing "the Father of mercies and God of all comfort." Paul refers to God in this way in order to communicate to his readers something of God's essential character. God is the "Father of mercies" (ὁ πατὴρ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν). As Murray Harris describes, God is the divine Father characterized by "tender mercy" and "a gracious and gentle compassion toward his children."[37] Yet not only is God known as the Father of mercies, he is also the "God of all comfort" (θεὸς πάσης παρακλήσεως).

"Comfort" (παρακλήσεως) is the key term of 2 Corinthians 1:3-7.[38] The noun παράκλησις is closely related to the verb παρακαλέω, which together refer to making an appeal, either for the consolation and comfort of the distraught, or for encouragement, exhortation or admonition.[39] Mark Seifrid notes that Paul's description of God's character was meant to teach his audience to know God "as nothing other than as a merciful and comforting father."[40] Thus God is full of mercy and characterized by encouragement and comfort.

Yet that God is merciful and comforts his children is no mere theological proposition. Rather, as David Garland states, the emphasis in this blessing is knowing God "through his direct action of comforting and showing mercy."[41] This is the God who has personally shown mercy through his Son to those overcome by their own creaturely limitations and sinfulness.[42] He has met them in their sorrows, and spoken true hope amid

---

[37]Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 142.

[38]Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 69.

[39]Bauer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 765-66; David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 60.

[40]Mark A. Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 19.

[41]Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 59.

[42]Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 142.

brokenness. He consoles the hearts of his children, bringing comfort, encouragement, and healing. Mercy and comfort are thus innate to the character of God.

The meaning of the designation "Father of Mercies and God of all comfort" is therefore two-fold. First, God is to be seen as the lone and sufficient source of all mercy and comfort.[43] Ralph Martin calls God "the fountain of mercy"; he is the one from whom all comfort proceeds.[44] As Seifrid puts it, God is the "creator and source of all human experience of mercy and comfort."[45] He is thus the sole source of true comfort and consolation, for he is the giver of all that is good.[46] By implication, other supposed sources of mercy and comfort cannot equal the One from whom these graces truly originate.

Second, God's comfort applies to every situation people experience; he is the "God of *all* comfort" (emphasis added). The adjective "all" ($πάσης$) broadens the scope of application of God's comfort, so that the emphasis is on "the sufficiency of divine comfort for every human need."[47] This emphasis can only be true because the comfort found in God is intrinsically bound to the revelation of Jesus Christ (cf. 1:5-7). Because the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ fundamentally answer the problems of human sinfulness and the universality of suffering, there is therefore no circumstance in which the hope of the gospel is irrelevant. In Christ, God the Father has demonstrated his promise to deliver in both the past (to bring salvation) and the future (to bring about the consummation). He is thus faithful to comfort in every situation in the present as well.[48]

---

[43]Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 69.

[44]Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 40, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 142.

[45]Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 20.

[46]Ibid.

[47]Ibid., 20-21.

[48]Scott J. Hafemann, *2 Corinthians*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 61.

As Seifrid powerfully affirms, "No loss is too deep, no sorrow or pain too great, for the overwhelming and transcendent comfort that God freely gives in Christ."[49]

Just as God is the "God of all comfort," he therefore comforts "in all our affliction" (ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ θλίψει ἡμῶν). "Affliction" (θλίψει) describes both external and internal suffering, whether as a result of outward circumstances or inner troubles, whether they be mental, emotional, or spiritual.[50] Thus, the God's whose comfort is sufficient for every situation also provides this comfort to his children amid all manner of suffering.[51] Such comfort may lead to (but is not guaranteed to produce) circumstantial deliverance. However, it will always empower one for endurance amid suffering, regardless of circumstance.[52] Therefore, God comforts in every type and situation of suffering. He will also encourage and comfort his children by giving grace sufficient for their needs.[53] In other words, in every circumstance, God comforts fully and sufficiently.

God is therefore the source of all comfort and mercy, and his comfort is sufficient for every kind of suffering people experience. Yet this comfort is not meant to terminate on its recipients. Rather, it is intended to overflow into ministry to others, as they too experience suffering.

**God Comforts So That We Might
Comfort Others (1:4b)**

Second Corinthians 1:4 continues by describing the purpose behind God's sufficient mercy and comfort. Paul was comforted in order that he would "be able to

---

[49]Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 20-21.

[50]Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 61; Hafemann, *2 Corinthians*, 62.

[51]Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 103.

[52]Colin G. Kruse, *2 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1987), 61.

[53]Ibid.

comfort [παρακαλεῖν] those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God (1:4b)." In other words, the comfort Paul received was meant to overflow into ministry to others who were also experiencing suffering. As Garland remarks, "God's comfort is not intended to stop with us."[54] Paul knew that one of God's purposes in comforting him was so that he could in turn comfort others with the hope of Christ.[55] Though it seems Paul has in mind a specific set of circumstances that informed his letter to the Corinthian church, the principle thus applies to all. As believers receive comfort amid suffering, they too are to minister this same mercy to others in their troubles.

There is an intrinsic verbal aspect to such comfort. Christians who minister to one another in their sorrow do so by way of helping speech designed to point to the comfort that comes from God. Indeed, the very meaning of παρακαλέω describes one who speaks a word of encouragement or exhortation to another, and is always connected in some way to the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.[56] Seifrid elaborates on such a definition when he says that such comfort is "help that *speaks*."[57] When Christians speak in this way to one another, they do so in ways that are broader than pointing to the hope of mere external relief. Rather, they speak in a manner that encompasses the knowledge of the God who sees fully the troubles of his people, and who responds with loving care and compassion.[58] It is therefore the calling of the Christian to offer such counsel to fellow believers in their time of need. Not only are believers called to counsel

---

[54]Kruse, *2 Corinthians*, 64.

[55]Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 63-64.

[56]Johannes Thomas, "Παρακαλέω," in *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 3:26.

[57]Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 21. Emphasis original.

[58]Ibid.

one another in the battle against sin (Rom 15:14), they also offer Christ-like care as
fellow sufferers comforted by God.

Nouthetic and Parakaletic Counseling
Ministry

It is at this point, based on the preceding discussion of Romans 15:14 and 2
Corinthians 1:3-4, that one can recognize two primary expressions of biblical counseling
ministry. First is the ministry of *nouthetic* confrontation. This type of counsel is also
known as *nouthetic counseling.*[59] Nouthetic counseling, following the example set forth
in Romans 15:14, seeks to lovingly and wisely apply the truths of Scripture to matters of
the heart involving inward belief and to external behavior related to one's struggles with
sin.

Second is *parakaletic* ministry, in which Christians encourage and comfort
others amid suffering with God's comfort. This form of care is also known as *parakaletic*
counseling.[60] Parakaletic counseling, as depicted in 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, deepens the
concept of biblical counseling by emphasizing comfort and consolation as an essential
aspect of counseling ministry.[61] It pursues personal presence amid another's suffering,

---

[59]Jay Adams coined the term *nouthetic counseling* in his book *Competent to Counsel*. Adams, considered the founder of the modern biblical counseling movement, promoted a form of counseling that stressed the priesthood of all believers as it relates to counseling ministry. In particular, Adams viewed texts such as Rom 15:14 as outlining the essential qualifications of would-be counselors, as well as providing the basic process of nouthetic confrontation. The label *nouthetic counseling* eventually gave way to the term *biblical counseling*, in order to better capture the understanding that such counsel consists of both loving confrontation *and* gracious comfort in the gospel. See Jay E. Adams, *Competent to Counsel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970).

[60]Robert W. Kellemen utilizes this phrase in his work *Gospel Conversations: How to Care Like Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015).

[61]This type of care has also been promoted by some Christian Integrated counselors to describe ministry that is led by the Holy Spirit and centered on the person of Christ, and which seeks to assist others across a wide spectrum of needs. See Tim Clinton and George Ohlschlager, "Competent Christian Counseling: Definitions and Dynamics," in *Competent Christian Counseling*, vol. 1, *Foundations & Practice of Compassionate Soul Care* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press, 2002), 52.

with the hope of bringing God's mercies to bear on one's problems.[62] Both nouthetic and parakaletic expressions of counseling ministry are grounded in an understanding of God's Word reflected in texts like 2 Timothy 3:16-17, where Scripture is said to shape the beliefs and actions of God's people for the purpose of maturity in Christ. Based on this understanding, as well as the insights gleaned from Romans 15:14 and 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, Scripture portrays the calling that exists for God's people to lovingly counsel and provide compassionate care for one-another.

Thus far discussion has centered on the basis for biblical counseling in God's Word, and the two primary expressions of counseling ministry among God's people. Christians are to offer the comfort of the gospel amid suffering (parakaletic counseling) and they are to help others as they pursue the growth God brings by the Spirit-led application of the Word (nouthetic counseling). These two aspects of counseling contribute to this project's overall definition of biblical counseling: biblical counseling is the personal, heart-focused application of God's Word to issues of sin *and* suffering in light of the hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Two final passages discussed below describe how the church is to grow in its ability to offer such counsel, and how biblical counseling is to be understood as an expression of the church's wider mission to make disciples. A discussion of Ephesians 4:11-16 will describe the leadership God has given to the church, and how and to what end they are to equip others for the work of ministry. Matthew 28:18-20 will then be considered in order to understand how biblical counseling comes alongside discipleship for the good of the church.

---

[62]Kellemen, *Gospel Conversations,* 88. Speaking to the breadth with which Scripture describes one-another ministry, Kellemen notes that in addition to νουθετέω and παρακαλέω, 1 Thess 5:14 identifies at least three other terms for counseling ministry: παραμυθέομαι ("to encourage"), ἀντέχω ("to help"), and μακροθυμέω ("to be patient").

God's Leaders Are Called to Equip God's People for
Biblical Counseling Ministry (Eph 4:11-16)

Ephesians 4:11-16 further establishes the basis for biblical counseling ministry
by describing the leaders God has given to the church, the purpose for which they are
given, and the resultant growth that is to be known among the people of God because of
their ministry. This passage asserts that God has blessed the church with leaders called to
equip all believers for the work of the ministry, that their mutual service is specially given
to the personal ministry of God's Word, and that the purpose of their ministry is the
maturity of God's people.

God Has Given Leaders to the Church
(Eph 4:11)

Ephesians 4:11 states that Christ "gave the apostles, the prophets, the
evangelists, the shepherds and teachers." As Peter O'Brien notes, the diversity of the
leadership gifts given to the church is meant to assist the church as Christ's "instrument
in carrying out his purposes for the cosmos."[63] Not only were these gifts designed for this
end (Eph 1:22-23), but they are also sufficient for ministry in the life of the church,
leading to "the growth and perfection of the body."[64] Therefore, just as God has provided
his sufficient Word to shape the beliefs and actions of his people, he has given specific
gifts (in the form of specially called leaders) to the church for her growth in godliness.[65]
Though not an exhaustive list, the gifted persons mentioned in verse 11 were primarily
those called to pursue the edification of the body (v. 12) and to protect it against false
teaching (v. 14).[66]

---

[63]O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 297.

[64]Ibid.

[65]Ibid.; cf. Ernest Best, *Ephesians*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh; T&T Clark, 1998), 388; Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 42 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 248-49; Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 547.

[66]O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 298.

Two primary groups of gifted people are described. First are "the apostles" (τοὺς . . . ἀποστόλους) and "the prophets" (τοὺς . . . προφήτας). Apostles were responsible for the furthering of the gospel through the establishment of new churches. They were, as Andrew Lincoln describes, "divinely commissioned missionaries."[67] Prophets were those who were "specialists at mediating divine revelation."[68] In other words, prophets delivered the mystery of the gospel, declaring God's words and message for the building up of the church. Apostles and prophets therefore served a foundational role in the establishment of the church universal. Indeed, earlier in Ephesians Paul says that they formed part of the foundation upon which the church was built, as they pointed to the cornerstone, the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph 2:20-21).[69] In this sense then, apostles and prophets were gifts God gave for the establishment and expansion of the church. They are therefore spoken of with respect to their past function in the spread of the gospel.[70]

Second are "the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers" (τοὺς δέ εὐαγγελιστάς, τοὺς δέ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους). This group generally corresponds to the office of elder or overseer.[71] However, the ministries associated with these roles are not limited to these individuals alone.[72] Unlike the apostles and prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers have a present function in the life of the church. This function is

---

[67]Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 249.

[68]Ibid.

[69]O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 298.

[70]Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 249. This is not to say that apostolic or prophetic ministry in a manner similar to that pursued by these men is not present in the church today, but rather that the Apostles and Prophets as referred to in Eph 2:20 and in 4:11 describe a distinct, historic group God gave for the initial delivering of the gospel and the expansion of the church.

[71]O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 299-300.

[72]Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 10 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 255. Arnold notes that "the resurrected Christ has bestowed his grace on every member of his body, but he has especially gifted certain individuals within the community to establish churches, minister the word of God, and equip others for service in the church."

expressed through the continued proclamation of the gospel through teaching God's Word and by exercising oversight in the church.[73] Specifically, evangelists seek to build up the body by pursuing both extensive and intensive growth through the proclamation of the gospel.[74] Shepherds exercise leadership over the church by nurturing, caring for, and providing counsel for those in the church.[75] Teachers exposit and apply Scripture, being concerned not only with doctrinal instruction, but also with empowering godly living among their hearers.[76]

Christ therefore provided gifted men who pursued apostolic and prophetic ministry for the expansion of the gospel and the establishment of the church. He has also given leaders called to provide for the church's growth, care, and oversight. Church elders are concerned with the continuous, ongoing ministry of the Word for the building up of the body of Christ. While elders engage in the public ministry of the Word, they also provide care and counsel for the church. In addition, they are also called to equip others for ministry, in order that the entire church would grow further into the likeness of her savior, Jesus Christ.

God's Leaders Are Called to Equip Believers for Ministry (Eph 4:12)

The leaders mentioned in verse 11 were given to the church so that they might "equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (v. 12). The prepositional phrase "to equip" (πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμόν) describes the purpose for which Jesus gave these leaders to the church. Καταρτισμός is found only here in the NT, and refers to the process of training and discipline that would result in works of service to

---

[73]Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 250.

[74]O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 299; cf. Best, *Ephesians*, 390-91.

[75]Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 251.

[76]O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 300-301; Arnold, *Ephesians*, 261.

others.[77] Church leaders, therefore, are to train and disciple fellow Christians so that they can be competent in "the work of ministry" (ἔργον διακονίας).[78] As Harold Hoehner notes, "This preparation includes instructing and equipping believers so that they may minister effectively in the church."[79] The work of ministry referred to in Ephesians 4:12 is broad and comprehensive in scope. Ernest Best describes this work in general terms, as the "ongoing activity seen in service," that refers "to the activity of ministering."[80] Similarly, Hoehner states that this work consists of "serving the Lord by ministering to one another."[81] In other words, rather than focusing on the exercise of specific gifts (Rom 12:7-8; 1 Cor 12:4-11), Ephesians 4:12 states that God's people are to be equipped to minister to others in a comprehensive way in the life of the church.

The result of the church's ministry to itself is the "building up of the body of Christ." "Building up" (οἰκοδομὴν) refers both to extensive and intensive growth.[82] Thus, as the church uses its gifts in ministry, it grows numerically through the proclamation of the gospel. Yet, as Hoehner states, this ministry also leads to "the development of the church as an organism from within, by means of its own God-given life."[83] In this way, ministry in the life of the church is not individualistic, but collective. It is not static, but ongoing and organic. Thus, as Hoehner remarks, "[The church] is not an inanimate structure but a living and growing organism composed of living believers."[84]

---

[77]Bauer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 526.

[78]Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 549, and O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 302; contra Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 253, who states that this phrase and the two prepositional phrases that follow only refer to the activity of ministers in the church.

[79]Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 550.

[80]Best, *Ephesians*, 396.

[81]Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 550.

[82]O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 305.

[83]Ibid.

[84]Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 551.

Ephesians 4:12 thus describes why God gave leaders to the church (to equip the church), and the purpose for which the church is equipped (growth among the body of Christ). Just as God gave the church leaders to provide oversight and to ensure its care, these leaders are to equip others to pursue personal ministry in like manner. As the following discussion of Ephesians 4:13-14 will demonstrate, the ultimate goal of the church's mutual, one-another ministry is enduring maturity in Christ as a means of protection against teaching opposed to the gospel.[85]

**The Church's Ministry Is Shared by All
and is Meant to Lead to its Growth (Eph
4:13-14)**

If Ephesians 4:12 describes the near result of the church's ministry, verse 13 points to its ultimate purpose, "until we all attain the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." This verse does not describe three different goals, but rather three different aspects of one goal, namely, maturity in Christ.[86] This goal is the focus of the ministry described in verses 11-12, and it is to be pursued by both church leaders and the saints at large. As O'Brien states, "Those given by Christ as 'ministers' (v. 11), along with the 'saints' (v. 12), render their service so that God's people might reach this objective, and they are to continue serving *until* it is attained."[87] Additionally, all within the church are to benefit from its collective, mutual ministry. To this point, Hoehner adds, "The 'all' is mentioned because we are all being prepared for the work of the ministry with the goal of building up the body of Christ of which we are all a part."[88] Thus the goal of the

[85]Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 551.

[86]Arnold, *Ephesians*, 264; Best, *Ephesians*, 403; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 553.

[87]O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 305. Emphasis original.

[88]Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 552.

church's ministry is maturity in Christ (Col 1:28), and this goal is to be pursued by all within the church until it is attained.

As previously stated, the singular goal of the church's ministry consists of three aspects. The first aspect is unity.[89] Specifically, the church is to be united as it relates to its understanding of the faith once received and to its beliefs regarding the person and work of Jesus Christ. Both faith and the knowledge of Christ are to be understood here in an objective sense.[90] As O'Brien (referencing Lincoln) notes, such an understanding means that the goal of unity involves the "ongoing appropriation . . . of 'all that is involved in the salvation which centers in Christ.'"[91] The second aspect is the church's corporate maturity. Though "mature manhood" (ἄνδρα τέλειον) is a singular form, Paul refers "to the church as a unified whole, the corporate body of believers."[92] The third aspect expands and qualifies the second: "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."[93] In other words, the church's maturity is to be characterized by increasing Christlikeness. As Clinton Arnold states, Paul "points to Christ in all of his 'fullness' as the standard that believers are to seek to attain."[94]

The next verse adds a compelling rationale for the church's ministry: "so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes" (v. 14). The image presented in this verse is of the immaturity that results when believers do not possess a firm grasp of gospel truths. Thus, as Hoehner describes, believers characterized

---

[89]Best, *Ephesians*, 400.

[90]Arnold, *Ephesians*, 264; Best, *Ephesians*, 400; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 255; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 553; O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 306.

[91]O'Brien*, The Letter to the Ephesians*, 307; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 255.

[92]Arnold, *Ephesians*, 265; O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 307.

[93]O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 307.

[94]Arnold, *Ephesians*, 266.

by such immaturity can therefore become "easily confused in their thinking and are easily influenced by others."[95] In contrast, as the church's ministry to itself results in a deeper maturity through the knowledge of Christ, so it also protects against the threat of false doctrine spurred on by human sinfulness and deceit. As Lincoln states, "Through the building up and bringing to completion that the gifts effect, immaturity and instability can increasingly be left behind."[96]

"Every wind of doctrine" (παντὶ ἀνέμῳ τῆς διδασκαλίας) refers to false teaching that "threatened to assimilate, and thereby dilute or undermine" the gospel.[97] These teachings are ultimately the result of "human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes." For Paul and the Ephesians, there was concern surrounding the presence of aberrant doctrine, which was introduced by people who sought to manipulate those who were weaker, but which was also driven by the plan of Satan.[98] This false doctrine included abject denials of Christian orthodoxy, but may also have described more subtle, yet no less subversive teaching from within the church by people claiming to be Christians.[99] Because these teachings were ultimately a threat to the purity of the gospel and the knowledge of Christ, they represented not only a threat to one's growth as a Christian, but also to the presence of unity within the church at-large. Therefore, as Arnold states, "Paul regards it as of utmost importance to have a clear and correct knowledge of who Jesus is . . . and of the core convictions shared by all the churches."[100]

[95]Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 561.

[96]Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 257.

[97]Ibid., 258.

[98]O' Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 309.

[99]Best, *Ephesians*, 405; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 562.

[100]Arnold, *Ephesians*, 267.

The threat of false doctrine is no less a concern for the church today. Not only must church leaders protect against clear denials of biblical truth, but they must also guard against subversive teaching (even that which may arise from within the church). This may include assaults on Scripture's basic truthfulness or authority. Yet it may also include attempts to cast doubt on Scripture's sufficiency or relevance for one's life, particularly as it relates to problems in living.

To protect against these influences requires careful study of God's Word. Such study will result in a thorough understanding of the Bible's teaching on its own inspired character, the human heart, the deceitfulness of sin, the various ways sin's effects are expressed in one's life, the provision of Christ in the gospel, and the biblical process for change. Protecting against the influence of subversive teaching also requires a deep awareness of and interaction with the various worldviews and philosophies that exist today as a threat to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. As it relates to biblical counseling, one must seek to understand the influence of modern psychology in the church and the practice of modern psychotherapies (by Christians and non-Christians alike). Obtaining such an understanding is necessary because each articulated psychology offers an explanation for the problems humans face and the relative hope that exists for suffering people. And while each approach may possess a certain plausibility, each will, outside of a Christ-centered biblical approach, substitute the grace of God in Christ for other resources as a person's hope and means of change. Additionally, unless these methodologies are informed and grounded in the true and sufficient revelation of God's Word, they will replace Scripture as one's standard of truth.[101]

---

[101]Some within the biblical counseling movement have argued that Christian Integrated counseling reflects a modern example of the type of false teaching described in Eph 4:14. On the surface this seems to be an uncharitable claim, especially given the clearly articulated and undeniable Christian belief of many Christian Integrated counselors and psychologists. However, upon closer examination, it is clear that this claim flows out of a philosophical conflict between the two counseling systems. At its core, the conflict arises from a disagreement regarding the degree to which the insights of secular psychology may be appropriated for use by Christians in the care of souls. Ultimately, this disagreement is symptomatic of the different ways the respective systems understand the concept of Scripture's sufficiency. While both Christian Integrated counselors and biblical counselors claim that Scripture is sufficient

Ephesians 4:13-14 therefore describes the goal of the church's ministry to itself, as well as a negative example of what such ministry is meant to prevent. Not only are a church's leaders to equip the saints for ministry, but the saints' collective ministry is meant to produce spiritual growth, and to protect against immaturity and instability driven by a lack of doctrinal clarity and unity. For biblical counselors, this text provides a clear goal for the counseling process: increasing Christlikeness. This passage also points to the importance of lovingly engaging alternative worldviews that promote extrabiblical aims and practices.

As men and women pursue ministry, they follow the lead and example of those called to shepherd the church (vv. 11-12). As all minister out of the grace of the gospel, the entire church grows into the image of Christ (vv. 13-14). The discussion of Ephesians 4:11-16 will conclude by considering how the rightly exercised ministry of the Word is the means by which Christ accomplishes the goal of maturity in the church.

**The Ministry of the Word Is the Means of
the Church's Growth (Eph 4:15-16)**

Paul concludes Ephesians 4:11-16 with a positive image of the church's ministry, contrasting the negative scene pictured in verse 14.[102] "But rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ." As with verse 13, the result of speaking the truth in love is maturity and growth, rather than instability resulting from incorrect doctrine. As Lincoln remarks, "[Paul] describes

generally, they nonetheless disagree on what exactly the Scriptures are sufficient to do. Christian Integrated counselors (often quoting 2 Tim 3:15) usually state that the Bible is able to bring about knowledge of Christ leading to salvation, but that it is not designed to serve as a comprehensive resource for addressing the complex problems in one's life. Biblical counselors, on the other hand, have argued that Scripture is not only sufficient for knowledge of the gospel, but for counseling ministry as well. For a recent brief survey of Christian Integrated and biblical counselors regarding their respective understandings of the sufficiency of Scripture, see Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling,* 35-64, and Eric L. Johnson, *Foundations for Soul Care: A Christian Psychology Proposal* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), 167-95. For an excellent historical summary of the basic philosophical and methodological conflict that exists between biblical counseling and Christian Integrated counseling, see David Powlison, *The Biblical Counseling Movement: History and Context* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2010).

[102]Arnold, *Ephesians*, 268; Best, *Ephesians*, 406; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 564; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 259; O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 310.

growth instead of immaturity, a growth which takes place as believers speak the truth in love instead of being taken in by those who propagate error through their unscrupulous craftiness."[103]

While some have translated the phrase "speaking the truth in love" (ἀληθεύοντες δὲ ἐν ἀγάπῃ) as "being truthful" or "confessing the truth,"[104] it seems better to view the participle ἀληθεύοντες as describing verbal testimony about the gospel.[105] In other words, the truth that believers are to speak is the truth of the gospel.[106] This truth is to be found in God's Word, which stands alone as a sufficient resource.

Ultimately, God's Word is concerned with communicating the full scope of redemptive history, centered on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Scripture tells the story of how salvation, redemption, and transformation can be accomplished, and all this in light of God's glory. Thus, as O'Brien rightly observes, Christians are "to be members of a 'confessing' church, with the content of their testimony to be 'the word of truth', the gospel of their salvation."[107] For the Ephesian Christians, to confess such a gospel was to "stand firm against the corruptions tempting them to deviate from it."[108] For Christians today, the practice of ministering the truth of the gospel as revealed in God's Word affords the same protection. Such ministry provides a secure foundation for Christians who live amid the enduring brokenness of this world and the remaining sin that indwells their hearts.

---

[103]Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 259.

[104]Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 565 and Arnold, *Ephesians*, 268, respectively.

[105]Best, *Ephesians,* 407; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 259; O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 310-11.

[106]Best, *Ephesians*, 407.

[107]Ibid.

[108]Ibid., 408.

Proclaiming the word of the gospel is something that occurs through one's speech, but which must not be divorced from one's life and character (Rom 15:14). Thus, believers are to speak God's Word "in love" (ἐν ἀγάπῃ). Their speech is to be informed by the pursuit of humility, the very opposite of what drives false teaching opposed to the gospel. It is to be characterized by love and a heart of tenderness toward others.[109] The goal is that such ministry would lead the church to "grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ." It is growth that includes one's beliefs about God and the gospel, but which also effects change in each area of one's life.[110]

The growth that will come as a result of the church's ministry finds its source only in Christ: "*from whom* the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love (v. 16, emphasis added)." The basic sense of this statement is that as the church engages in ministry, it finds its energy from the Lord himself.[111] Additionally, the ministry of the church must be pursued by all within the church if it is to produce its desired end. In other words, individuals within the church are not to negate their calling to minister to God's Word to one another, nor are they to assume primary responsibility for this task.[112] Rather, the burden is shared by all under the careful leadership of a church's elders, so that all may grow in Christ. Just as God gave the church ministers of the Word, so too are Christians called to minister that same Word to

---

[109]As Arnold says, "The truth of the gospel needs to be proclaimed and upheld within the community of believers. But it needs to be done with a heart that is tender and concerned about the feelings, growth, and well-being of fellow believers." Arnold, *Ephesians*, 269.

[110]Ibid.

[111]See O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 316, when he says that "every member of the body, to whom grace has been given by the ascended Christ (v. 7), receives the necessary enabling power to perform his or her proper function so that the growth of the whole body is in proportion to and adapted to each."

[112]Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 576.

others.[113] Therefore, through the church's service to one another, Christ brings about change. This is a process that occurs "in love." Thus, it not just the ministry of the Word that produces such change, but the ministry of the Word driven by love for one another.[114]

**Ephesians 4:11-16 and Biblical
Counseling Ministry**

The discussion of Ephesians 4:11-16 reveals several principles that inform the pursuit of biblical counseling ministry in the church. First, God has given leaders to the church, and these leaders are to equip other believers for ministry. In particular, it is the responsibility of a church's elders to ensure that its members are being equipped for the work of ministry, and this includes the ministry of the Word through biblical care and counsel.

Second, the personal ministry of the Word is the calling of all believers. Where the authoritative public ministry of the Word is limited to church leaders, personal ministry is the responsibility of the entire church.[115] Though a believer's ministry may be broad, incorporating various works of service as befits one's gifting (Eph 4:16), it is also to include biblical counseling in some form or fashion. And though this ministry may occur in varying degrees depending on giftedness and competency, all are to pursue biblical counseling to the degree to which they are able. Thus, while some counseling situations will require more direct elder involvement due to their complexity or severity, all members of a church are called to pursue the personal ministry of the Word to the extent that it would be helpful for the church's growth in godliness.

---

[113]O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 311.

[114]Ibid., 316.

[115]John Henderson, *Equipped to Counsel: A Training Program in Biblical Counseling* (Fort Worth, TX: Association of Biblical Counselors, 2008), 29.

Third, the personal ministry of the Word is meant to result in the church's increasing spiritual growth and Christlikeness. The ministry that is to occur by all believers in the church emphasizes the proclamation of the gospel and the application of gospel truths. The personal ministry of the Word that informs this change is always to be pursued in a manner characterized by love (Eph 4:15), and motivated from a posture of humility (Eph 4:2).

Fourth, true change comes only from Christ, and is characterized by a deepening awareness of the gospel through God's Word that effects change in one's life. Other counseling systems (even when pursued by Christians), if they do not utilize Scripture in this way, fall short of God's prescribed method of change for his church. If counseling is to lead to growth in Christlikeness, then it is to be patterned after the Bible's methodology for counseling ministry.

To this point, this chapter has sought to demonstrate that biblical counseling is the personal, heart-focused application of God's Word to issues of sin and suffering in light of the hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is grounded in the truth of God's Word (2 Tim 3:16-17), and occurs when Christians apply Scripture to issues of sin (Rom 15:14) and suffering (2 Cor 1:3-4) in the context of caring relationships. Biblical counseling occurs under the loving oversight of church elders, and is a ministry pursued by all, for the good of all (Eph 4:11-16). The discussion will now conclude with an exegesis of Matthew 28:18-20, in order to demonstrate that biblical counseling is ultimately an expression of discipleship. Biblical counseling is a form discipleship rooted in a concrete biblical foundation and which contributes to the process of sanctification in one's life through conformity to God's Word in one's beliefs, thoughts, feelings, and actions.

Biblical Counseling Is an Expression of Discipleship
(Matt 28:18-20)

This project defines discipleship as the process by which men and women come into relationship with Christ and are conformed to his image through the personal

application of God's Word. In this chapter's final section, an examination of Matthew 28:18-20 will demonstrate that because biblical counseling has at its center a type of Christ-centered biblical instruction, it is to be understood as an expression of holistic discipleship ministry in the life of the church.

Matthew 28:18-20 represents both the climax and conclusion of Matthew's gospel.[116] In this passage, the resurrected Lord Jesus commissions his disciples for service in God's inaugurated kingdom. This commission is prefaced by Christ's assertion of his authority, which he received from God the Father: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."[117] The basis upon which Jesus' authority rests is two-fold. First is Jesus' obedience to the Father, which led to his exaltation and glory.[118] Second, his resurrection vindicated his identity not only as the Son who exhibited perfect submission to God throughout his earthly ministry, but also as the sovereign Lord and King over heaven and earth.[119]

On the basis of Jesus' authority, his disciples were to "go therefore and make disciples of all nations (πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη; v. 19)."[120] The main verb in this statement is μαθητεύσατε, which means to bring someone as a pupil in relationship to a teacher.[121] Yet the relationship Jesus envisions is not simply one with any

---

[116]Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 431.

[117]Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 33b (Dallas: Word Books, 1995), 886.

[118]R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 1113.

[119]Ibid.; D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, in vol. 8 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), 594.

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

[121]Bauer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 609; Carson, *Matthew*, 595.

teacher. Rather, he calls his disciples to bring others into an intimate, dynamic, and transformative bond with *him*. As Leon Morris puts it, this relationship necessarily brings change to the life of the pupil, for the disciple who comes to Jesus by faith has not simply sought "nominal adherence to a group," but rather, "wholehearted commitment to a person."[122] Thus, "the life of a disciple is different because of his attachment to Jesus."[123] He or she is different because, as D. A. Carson states, "Disciples are those who hear, understand, and obey Jesus' teaching."[124]

Jesus' call to make disciples is not limited to one people group, but is meant to occur among all people everywhere. His disciples are to go, not only to their respective localities, but to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).[125] Thus, in Matthew 28:19, the eleven (and by implication, all who have become disciples since) were called to reproduce their discipleship in the lives of others, irrespective of background or ethnicity. This new relationship that disciples experience with Christ is therefore to be characterized by transformation, both individually and among specific people groups.[126]

Jesus continues in verse 19 by describing the basic process by which discipleship occurs: "Go therefore and make disciples, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, *teaching* them to observe all that I have commanded you" (vv. 19-20a; emphasis added).[127] Baptism (βαπτίζοντες) marks one's entrance into the community of faith, and is the fruit of evangelistic outreach.[128] Teaching

---

[122]Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 746.

[123]Ibid.

[124]Carson, *Matthew*, 596.

[125]As Hagner describes, the participles πορευθέντες, βαπτίζοντες and διδάσκοντες carry with them an imperatival force. Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 886.

[126]Carson, *Matthew*, 597.

[127]France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1115.

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

51

(διδάσκοντες) is the process of biblical instruction by which new Christians are lovingly brought into the knowledge of all that God has revealed in his Word.[129] The objective of such teaching is to bring to the lives of Jesus' disciples obedience and increasing Christlikeness. Not only are disciples to pursue the knowledge of God revealed in Scripture, but they are, as Donald Hagner observes, to make his commands "their way of life."[130] As disciples follow Christ, they can do so with the knowledge that they are not alone in their efforts: "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (v. 20b). By means of the Holy Spirit, the risen Christ promises to be present with his followers. As Morris remarks, "the disciple is not going to be left to serve God as well as he can . . . [he] will find that he has a great companion as he goes on his way through life."[131]

As it relates to a conceptual understanding of biblical counseling, Matthew 28:18-20 provides a connection point between the discipleship mission of Christ's church and the emphasis on biblical instruction and the pursuit of Christlikeness inherent to biblical counseling ministry. Just as 2 Timothy 3:16-17 describes the way God's Word, as a sufficient counseling resource, is meant to effect change in one's beliefs and actions, Matthew 28:18-20 describes the essential teaching function of the church, and its purpose in producing increasingly obedient followers of Christ. Similarly, as Romans 15:14 portrays the essential calling that exists for believers to counsel, or instruct one another from God's Word, Jesus' words in Matthew ("Go therefore and make disciples . . .") echo this mission. Additionally, such instruction would have included teaching on the character of God, up to and including how his mercies are expressed in suffering, consistent with the witness of 2 Corinthians 1:3-4. And all this, from discipleship to instruction to the ministry of comfort, occurs as believers in the church speak the truth to one another in

---

[129]Blomberg, *Matthew*, 432.

[130]Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 888.

[131]Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 749.

love in a way consistent with the pattern set forth in Ephesians 4:11-16. Thus, biblical counseling, as the personal, heart-focused application of God's Word to issues of sin and suffering, is a distinct expression of discipleship in the life of the church.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to establish a conceptual foundation for the ministry of biblical care and counsel at TVC. The exegesis of the five biblical passages considered in this chapter reveals that biblical counseling (1) is rooted in God's sufficient Word, (2) consists of loving biblical instruction in response to one's sin, (3) includes compassionate comfort in the midst of one's suffering, (4) is to occur by all within the church under the careful oversight of church leaders, leading to increasing maturity, and (5) is an expression of the church's wider discipleship ministry. The next chapter discusses the essential elements of a training model for biblical counseling at TVC. This discussion will demonstrate that effective equipping in biblical counseling develops a comprehensive and compassionate counseling methodology that is grounded in Scripture, explores the biblical dynamic of the heart, applies God's Word in specific ways, and focuses on progressive sanctification.

CHAPTER 3

TOWARD A PROCESS FOR EQUIPPING LEADERS
FOR CARE AND COUNSELING AT
THE VILLAGE CHURCH

Introduction

The purpose of this project was to equip leaders at The Village Church to care and counsel biblically. Chapter 2 established the biblical foundation for care and counsel at TVC. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the necessary elements for developing a training process in biblical care and counsel for leaders at TVC. The thesis of this chapter is that effective equipping in biblical counseling develops a comprehensive and compassionate counseling methodology that is grounded in Scripture, explores the biblical dynamic of the heart, applies God's Word in specific ways, and focuses on progressive sanctification.

This chapter will therefore examine five areas essential for effective training in biblical counseling. First is the importance of a comprehensive and compassionate counseling methodology. Second is the necessity of a knowledge of Scripture and Christian theology when counseling others. Third is a robust conception of the biblical heart, including an understanding of the various influences and responses that characterize one's life before God. Fourth is the application of Scripture to problems in living. Fifth is establishing and maintaining the goal of biblical counseling as progressive sanctification, or increasing Christlikeness in all of life.

Developing a Comprehensive and Compassionate
Biblical Counseling Methodology

Without a workable plan for equipping the church in biblical care and counseling, it will be difficult to see God's vision in Ephesians 4:11-16 become a reality.[1] Those who counsel need a model of care that will empower ministry that results in biblical change.[2] They must therefore be equipped with an effective counseling methodology. Such a methodology will be comprehensive, focusing on the counselor's character as well as holistic ministry to counselees. It will also be compassionate, emphasizing the relationship between counselor and counselee as well as the context in which God intends such care to occur.

The Character of the Counselor

Comprehensive equipping in biblical counseling begins with an emphasis on the character of the counselor. This emphasis represents one natural application of Romans 15:14. In Romans 15:14, the Apostle Paul describes the qualifications for personal ministry when he says, "I myself am satisfied about you brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another."[3] Two points stand out from this passage related to the counselor's qualifications: biblical counselors are to be "full of goodness", and to be "filled with all knowledge."

---

[1]See ch. 2 of this project, pp. 48-50.

[2]The goal of biblical counseling is Christ-centered change. Rather than external or circumstantial change alone, biblical counseling aims for increased Christlikeness in one's life. Robert Kellemen synthesizes this point when he says, "The goal of biblical counseling is *our inner life increasingly reflecting the life of Christ.* Our goal is not simply symptom relief, but Christlikeness." Robert W. Kellemen, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church: The 4E Ministry Strategy* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2011), 210. Emphasis original.

[3]Jay Adams, alluding to Rom 15:14*,* acknowledges three qualifications for the biblical counselor: "These [the qualifications for Christian counselors] may be summed up as extensive knowledge of the Scriptures, divine wisdom and good will toward others." Jay E. Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual: The Practice of Nouthetic Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973), 13.

To be "full of goodness" means that one's inner life reflects the goodness of God himself, which is evidenced through increasing personal Christlikeness.[4] For the biblical counselor, Christlikeness is the foundational qualification for ministry. As Robert Kellemen states, "We will be fruitful biblical counselors to the degree that we increasingly reflect Christ and relate increasingly like Christ."[5] Therefore, it is the counselor's character, and his ability to relate to others with the grace of Jesus that serve as the foundation for his efforts. Biblical counselors are to concern themselves with change in the lives of those they counsel. However, this concern cannot be pursued apart from an approach to ministry that reflects inward Christlikeness and the externally-focused love of Jesus himself.[6]

To be "filled with all knowledge" corresponds to the pursuit of Christlikeness in one's life. To be filled with knowledge means that one possesses biblical wisdom. Biblical wisdom is the maturity necessary to apply God's Word to one's own life as well as to the lives of others.[7] Such wisdom reflects the fruit of knowing God personally. As Jeremy Pierre states, "People must know God to change."[8] Biblical change is characterized by a deepening knowledge of God from his Word, which results in inner transformation and external faithfulness.[9] As the counselor pursues personal change, he grows in the knowledge of God, which adds to his skill in wisely applying Scripture to

---

[4]Robert W. Kellemen, *Gospel Conversations: How to Care Life Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 84.

[5]Ibid.; Kellemen, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church*, 187.

[6]Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2002), 108. Regarding the focus and practice of biblical counseling, Tripp states, "Whatever you do must have the goal of heart change. Second, whatever you do must follow the example of the Wonderful Counselor."

[7]Kellemen, *Gospel Conversations*, 86.

[8]Jeremy Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life: Connecting Christ to Human Experience* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2016), 177.

[9]Ibid.

the lives of others. Knowledge of God and personal Christlikeness are thus interrelated, yet foundational elements necessary for effective equipping in biblical counseling.

The Holistic Focus of Counseling
Ministry

Effective equipping in biblical counseling must help would-be counselors in their pursuit of Christlikeness and biblical wisdom. Christlikeness allows the counselor to move toward the counselee in love, while the knowledge of God and his Word empowers the wise application of Scripture to one's life. When combined, these two characteristics will result in a counseling methodology focused on the holistic ministry needs of a counselee.

To view others holistically acknowledges the diverse counseling needs that may be expressed in one's life. It includes helping a counselee to see that all of life's problems, though perhaps relating to multiple layers of human experience, are nonetheless spiritual in nature.[10] As Ron Allchin and Tim Allchin put it, "Biblical counseling tears down the wall between 'religious problems' and 'everyday problems,' pointing to Christ as the answer for life's deepest struggles."[11] Scripture groups a person's spiritual needs into two broad categories: suffering and sin. Suffering and sin, as comprehensive domains of human life, are thus the primary focus of personal ministry. This is because all people are sufferers, and all are also sinners.[12] Into these holistic and

---

[10]Pierre, commenting on the complexity of human experience, while upholding the simplicity of life as spiritual creatures before God, remarks, "Whatever the complexity of social, biological, or developmental factors, all those things are different contexts and influences on a spiritual heart operating before God. People are simple, in that they are wholly spiritual persons." Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, 15-16.

[11]Ron Allchin and Tim Allchin, "Equipping Biblical Counselors for Your Church," in *Biblical Counseling and the Church: God's Care through God's People*, ed. Bob Kellemen and Kevin Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 192.

[12]To say that humans are sinners does not ignore the reality that a constitutive change occurs at conversion, whereby people who were once only known as sinners are now known as saints (2 Cor 5:17ff.). Rather, to acknowledge the sinfulness of humanity following one's salvation refers to the presence of remaining or indwelling sin, against which believers must fight in the pursuit of sanctification. In other words, though believers are now known as saints, they still sin, and can therefore still be described as sinners with respect to one's inner and outer life. When counseling other Christians, it is important to

complex (and at times overlapping) categories, the counselor makes it his goal to bring Christ and his grace to the counselee's weaknesses, sin struggles, sorrows and joys.[13] As the counselor acquaints himself with the counselee's needs, he seeks to skillfully speak God's truth to one's situation, whatever the issue or problem being faced (Prov 18:13; Eph 4:15).[14]

The Relationship between the Counselor and Counselee

Effective equipping in biblical counseling works to develop a comprehensive methodology. Such a methodology emphasizes the character of the counselor as well as the counselor's holistic ministry focus. Yet such a methodology must also be compassionate. Thus, in addition to the character of the counselor and the holistic ministry needs of the counselee, a comprehensive *and* compassionate counseling methodology will also consider the counseling relationship. It will also emphasize the context in which biblical counseling is to occur: the community of God's people, his church.

Effective equipping in biblical counseling therefore encourages the pursuit of compassionate care relationships. These relationships are essential for biblical counseling ministry. Indeed, as Pierre explains, counseling is, "a *relationship* that is temporarily arranged around the task of helping people respond to particular difficulties that have arisen in life."[15] As the counselor moves toward the counselee, she does so to build a

---

remember that the believer simultaneously possesses three functional "identities" (sufferer, sinner, saint), and that this understanding does not diminish the transformative positional change that occurs when one is rescued out of the domain of darkness and is transferred into the kingdom of God (Col 1:13). For more on viewing counselees through these three categories, see Michael Emlet, *CrossTalk: Where Life and Scripture Meet* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2009), 75-77, 95-101.

[13]Allchin and Allchin, "Equipping Biblical Counselors for Your Church," 192.

[14]Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, 177; Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, 111-12.

[15]Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, 177. Emphasis added.

relationship in which she may provide biblical help to specific needs. And though counseling relationships are intended for such help, they are to be engaged in humility, with the understanding that the pursuit of change is the counselor's responsibility just as it is the counselee's.

Counseling in Community

The relationships that exists between counselors and counselees are not isolated, however. Rather, they are expressed within the body of Christ. That counseling occurs within the church reflects the vision of every-member ministry depicted in Ephesians 4:15, "Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ."[16] As Kellemen states, "God's end goal is for every member to be a disciple-maker who speaks and lives gospel truth in love to help every member grow in content, character, competence, and community."[17]

Therefore, biblical counseling, as an expression of discipleship, occurs in community. It intends to produce disciples that in turn become disciple-makers, who thus fulfill Paul's instructions to his disciple Timothy (2 Tim 2:2): "What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." Such discipleship as described in this passage can only occur within the context of Christian community. It is in this same context that the vision of Ephesians 4:11-16 will be made known, as men and women grow together in Christ as a result of faithful personal ministry.

---

[16]Kellemen states that "truth and love are the united framework and heart commitment out of which we counsel." Kellemen, *Gospel Conversations*, 44-45. Truth and love, as pictured in Eph 4:15, serve as helpful diagnostic criteria for assessing the biblical effectiveness of the relationship between counselor and counselee. The counselor must not presume to offer biblical insight without having had one's heart formed by the truth of God's Word, nor should she offer help until such assistance is motivated by love. These two guideposts help shape the focus and expression of personal ministry. As the counselor strives toward personal growth in biblical wisdom, he or she does so to bring such truth to bear on one's life in love, with the knowledge that loving relationships are essential to the change process.

[17]Kellemen, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church*, 35.

The foundation of effective equipping in biblical counseling is the development of a comprehensive and compassionate counseling methodology. Such a methodology focuses on the character of the counselor and the holistic ministry needs of the counselee. It also emphasizes compassionate relationships within the context of Christian community. In the following sections, four additional elements will be discussed that form the framework for this methodology: a growing understanding of Scripture, a biblical understanding of the heart, skill in applying Scripture to problems in living, and a focus on progressive sanctification as the goal of biblical counseling ministry.

Growing in the Knowledge of Scripture

Christians who care and counsel biblically must be equipped with a thorough knowledge of Scripture. This knowledge is necessary because it is from God's Word that we learn a biblical understanding of people and their problems. Scripture provides an accurate assessment of human nature and human need before God, while also revealing God's redemptive power through Jesus Christ. Because Scripture is the foundation for counseling ministry, those who pursue biblical care and counsel must therefore be capable students of Scripture. In addition, a knowledge of Scripture assists the biblical counselor in developing consistent theological categories of human experience, thus providing a necessary conceptual framework for ministry to others.

Developing such a knowledge of Scripture begins by equipping counselors to understand some of the various characteristics of Scripture relevant to counseling ministry.[18] These characteristics include Scripture's inspiration, truthfulness, and authority. Such a knowledge will also include a clear conception of the sufficiency of Scripture for counseling ministry.

---

[18]Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations for Counseling Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 36.

The Nature of Scripture: Inspired, True, Authoritative

Scripture is God's inspired Word. Paul, in 2 Timothy 3:16, describes this characteristic of Scripture when he says, "All Scripture is breathed out by God, and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness." To say that Scripture is inspired means that Scripture finds it source in God.[19] God, through a process of divine and human authorship, has given his Word to his people so that they might know Him, be transformed by him, and live lives characterized by love for and service toward Him. As Kevin Carson states, "God supernaturally gave His very words by the Spirit to the authors of Scripture for them to write and for us to have and obey."[20] Scripture is inspired by God and is therefore his Word to humanity.[21]

If God's Word is inspired, finding its source in God, then it is also true, reflecting God's character and trustworthiness (Titus 1:2; Jas 1:17).[22] The truthfulness of God's Word means that the Bible's conception of God, human nature, human need and redemption are accurate. Scripture's presentation of these concepts must therefore shape not only the way one sees his or her world, but also his or her response to God within it.[23] To say that the Bible is true is therefore to acknowledge its authority over human life. Michael Emlet describes the authoritative character of Scripture when he says, "Because the Bible is God's truthful word and not the flight of human fancy, it has authority (applicational weight) for God's people."[24]

---

[19]See discussion on 2 Tim 3:16 in ch. 2, pp. 20-22.

[20]Kevin Carson, "The Richness and Relevance of God's Word," in *Scripture and Counseling: God's Word for Life in a Broken World*, ed. Bob Kellemen and Jeff Forrey (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 44.

[21]Dan McCartney and Charles Clayton, *Let the Reader Understand: A Guide to Interpreting and Applying the Bible*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1994), 32.

[22]Carson, "The Richness and Relevance of God's Word," 44.

[23]Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 36: "The authority of the Bible means that the Bible is our supreme standard for what we should believe and how we should behave because it comes from God, who cannot lie."

[24]Emlet, *CrossTalk*, 6.

The inspiration, truthfulness, and authority of Scripture are essential doctrines for biblical counseling. This is because together these doctrines reveal the trustworthiness of the Bible as an epistemological foundation for life and ministry. God has spoken, and his Word is true. Because his inspired Word is true, it is therefore authoritative over the lives of his people. However, alongside these doctrines is another that is crucially related to equipping in biblical counseling: the sufficiency of Scripture.[25]

The Sufficiency of Scripture for Counseling

As mentioned in chapter 1, the doctrine of Scripture's sufficiency teaches that the Bible contains all that is necessary to equip Christians to live faithfully before God. Wayne Grudem describes the sufficiency of Scripture when he says that the Bible "contains all the words of God we need for salvation, for trusting him perfectly, and for obeying him perfectly."[26] Though Scripture is not exhaustive in what it addresses, it is nonetheless able to provide an accurate understanding of God's world. Scripture is able to supply the necessary resources for God's people to live faithfully within that world, regardless of circumstance.

There are two primary ways in which the sufficiency of Scripture relates to equipping in counseling ministry. First is Scripture's ability to provide a framework for understanding human experience before God. Pierre, commenting on the scope of Scripture's sufficiency, says that Scripture is sufficient to do three things.[27] First, Scripture is sufficient for teaching everything necessary for doctrine and salvation.[28] In

---

[25]Lambert calls the sufficiency of Scripture "the doctrine on which the biblical counseling movement will succeed or fail." Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 37.

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

[27]Jeremy Pierre, "Scripture Is Sufficient, But to Do What?," in *Scripture and Counseling: God's Word for Life in a Broken World*, ed. Bob Kellemen and Jeff Forrey (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 95.

[28]Ibid.

other words, Scripture contains all that is necessary to communicate all that people need to know about God. Second, Scripture is sufficient to provide people with all that is necessary to know salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.[29] By the Holy Spirit's working, Scripture is sufficient to bring about redemption in the lives of those who trust in Christ by faith.[30] Third, Scripture is able to provide a lens through which one may see "all of creation from a God-ordained perspective."[31] In other words, though Scripture does not address every possible topic that could be addressed, it nonetheless possesses all the divine words necessary for God's people regarding every topic to which it speaks.[32] And while Scripture is not exhaustive in the knowledge it presents, it is able to provide "an exclusively true perspective" on any other source of knowledge.[33] Scripture therefore contains all that is necessary to establish a sufficient framework for understanding life before God and in view of the transformative power of the gospel of Jesus Christ.[34]

---

[29]Pierre, "Scripture Is Sufficient, But to Do What?," 95.

[30]Ibid., 96.

[31]Ibid.

[32]John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013), 618.

[33]Pierre, "Scripture Is Sufficient, But to Do What?," 96; cf. David Powlison, "Cure of Souls (and the Modern Psychotherapies)," *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 25, no. 2 (2007): 13. An exhaustive examination of the degree to which extrabiblical information (such as the observations of modern psychologies) may be incorporated in counseling ministry is outside the scope of this project. However, it is worth noting that the perspective presented here does not imply that extrabiblical resources are of no value when considering the care of one's soul. Rather, it is to say that the Bible contains all that is necessary to fully address human life in light of the revelation of Jesus Christ. Where other resources are considered, they must therefore always be seen as subordinate and subject to the corrective lens of Scripture. If they are utilized (perhaps to gain a greater descriptive understanding of certain problems or complex care scenarios), they should be employed with biblical goals for counseling (i.e., progressive sanctification) in view. This understanding of the role of extrabiblical resources contrasts most Christian Integrated positions on the sufficiency of Scripture, which view Scripture as sufficient for matters of doctrine and salvation, but see extrabiblical insights as *necessary* for counseling, both in developing a framework for human experience and in supplying the content for counseling ministry; cf. Stanton L. Jones, "An Integration View," in *Psychology and Christianity: Five Views*, 2nd ed., ed. Eric L. Johnson (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 101-2, 104.

[34]Pierre summarizes this point when he says that "Scripture is sufficient to frame the entirety of both human experience and the context in which that experience occurs according to God's essential purpose for people to reflect his personhood by means of the gospel of Jesus Christ." Pierre, "Scripture Is Sufficient, But to Do What?," 105.

The second way the sufficiency of Scripture relates to equipping in counseling ministry is its material sufficiency. The material sufficiency of Scripture describes the degree to which Scripture is able to address specific areas of human life.[35] This aspect of Scripture's sufficiency for counseling depends on the framework described above. Just as Scripture is able to construct a cohesive understanding of human experience, it is also able to provide what is necessary for counseling others within such a perspective. David Powlison describes such provision when he says, "In content, method, and institutional locus the Bible overflows with counseling instructions and implications, not just in proof-texts, but in the whole body of Scripture."[36] Scripture therefore shapes one's conception of the world, and it also informs how one is to apply its truths to the problems people face.[37] Such application serves to reorient one's perspective in light of the grace of Jesus, no matter how difficult or complex the issue.[38] Fundamentally, the purpose of Scripture in counseling is to address one's problems with God's perspective, in order to help a counselee love and trust Christ more fully within his or her situation. To that end, Scripture is sufficient.[39]

---

[35]Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 48.

[36]Powlison, "Cure of Souls (and the Modern Psychotherapies)," 14.

[37]Emlet describes some of the particular expressions of Scripture's material sufficiency when he states, "Although the Bible does not give an exhaustive, step-by-step approach to modern problems unforeseen by the biblical writers, it does provide a comprehensive view of people and problems that allows us to wisely dive into the thorniest issues of contemporary life. It treats sin and suffering in such profound and multifaceted ways that no struggle, no matter how complex, stands outside the gospel light it sheds. It is wisdom that unravels the Gordian knots of twenty-first-century struggles." Emlet, *CrossTalk,* 21-22.

[38]Heath Lambert, "Introduction: The Sufficiency of Scripture, the Biblical Counseling Movement, and the Purpose of This Book," in *Counseling the Hard Cases: True Stories Illustrating the Sufficiency of God's Resources in Scripture*, ed. Stuart Scott and Heath Lambert (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2012), 21. Lambert asserts that "Scripture is relevant to the counseling task like a compass that reorients every problem. The grace of Christ is a master key that allows access to even the most difficult issues of life."

[39]More will be said in following sections regarding how this understanding of Scripture's purpose should be applied in personal ministry.

Thus, God's Word is inspired, true, authoritative, and sufficient. The first three of these doctrines provide the foundation for understanding what is true about God and the world he created. The doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture establishes the means by which biblical truth may be applied to one's life in personal ministry. The focus of such personal ministry is the biblical heart. For biblical counseling to achieve the goal of Christ-centered change, the counselor must have an accurate understanding of the heart.

Understanding the Biblical Heart

Christians who care and counsel biblically must be equipped with a biblical understanding of the heart, for it is here that all godly change originates. Such equipping is important for several reasons. First is the sheer proliferation of variant perspectives on human personality.[40] Second is the tendency to emphasize one aspect of personality over another: emotions over cognition, behavior above motivation, systems over responses, and the like.[41] Third is the clarity that a biblical understanding of the heart provides regarding the focus for counseling ministry.[42] The Bible describes people as a complex whole comprised of physical and immaterial parts. In other words, humans are physical and spiritual beings—body and soul (or heart). Our hearts, however, respond actively to our world. Personal ministry therefore seeks to explore such responses in light of the

---

[40]Robert W. Kellemen, *Gospel-Centered Counseling: How Christ Changes Lives* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 98; cf. Powlison, "Cure of Souls," 2. Powlison describes the proliferation of different psychological viewpoints when commenting on the ascendency of the modern psychologies: "The twentieth century had witnessed the birth and proliferation of the modern secular psychologies, and of those mental health professions that mediated such theories into lives." Powlison goes on to note the diverse counseling focus of many of these psychologies: "Modern forms of self-knowledge were psychological, or social, or somatic, or psycho-social, or psycho-somatic, or psycho-social- somatic, per se. In other words, intrapsychic, interpersonal, and bodily phenomena pointedly did not operate vis-à-vis God. Religious beliefs, practices, and experiences might be privately engaging and meaningful, but the God of the Bible was insignificant for objectively explaining and addressing the human condition." In light of the many different understandings of human functioning present in the world, it is therefore essential that those who counsel have a firm grasp on Scripture's teaching on the heart.

[41]Kellemen, *Gospel-Centered Counseling*, 98.

[42]Ibid.

gospel, in order to encourage faith in God amid the various influences (whether ourselves, our relationships, or our circumstances) we face.[43]

Effective equipping in biblical counseling will therefore focus on four areas to develop such an understanding of the heart and personal ministry. First is a knowledge of the Bible's teaching on the nature of the heart. Second is the nature of sin's corruption of the heart. Third is the relationship between the heart and one's responses to his or her world. Fourth is how Jesus Christ redeems and restores the biblical heart.

The Nature of the Heart

Understanding the nature of the heart begins with understanding God's original design for his image bearers. Humans are whole beings, consisting of both physical and immaterial aspects. Put another way, humans are a complex duality of body and heart; people are embodied souls.[44] A person's physical body serves as the primary context in which the functions of the heart are carried out.[45] What people think and feel are thus expressed through what they say and do. However, the relationship between the body and the heart is complex and interrelated. Human emotional responses are often visceral, and deeply felt on a physical level. Physical weakness can also inform and influence one's responses to his or her world.[46]

---

[43]Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, 9.

[44]Edward T. Welch, *The Counselor's Guide to the Brain and Its Disorders*, rev. ed. (Glenside, PA: CCEF, 2015), 12-13. This ontological perspective is also known as *dichotomy,* yet as Welch notes, the term *duality* is preferred because of its emphasis on the essential unity between body and soul: "We consist of a unity between body and soul, in which soul overlaps with words such as spirit, heart, mind and inner person."

[45]Jeff Forrey and Jim Newheiser, "The Influences on the Human Heart," in *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, ed. James MacDonald, Bob Kellemen and Steve Viars (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2013), 127.

[46]Welch, *The Counselor's Guide to the Brain and its Disorders*, 29-36. However, Welch is careful to point out that the body's influence on the heart is not determinative: "The body or brain cannot affect the heart in such a way as to deprive it of moral responsibility or spiritual vitality" (34).

God's design for the heart includes several interrelated responsive faculties.[47] Though at times variously described, these faculties include the areas of cognition, affection, and volition.[48] Cognition refers to one's thoughts and beliefs, and includes functions like remembering, knowing, reasoning, and interpreting.[49] Affection encompasses a person's desires and emotions, but also describes the way one assigns value or experiences his or her world.[50] Volition is the area of the heart that includes one's choices, actions, commitments, and decisions.[51] Each of these functions, when viewed collectively, reflect God's created design for his image bearers: humans were created to worship God with all of one's "heart, soul, mind, and strength" (Deut 6:4; Matt 22:37).

The Effect of Sin on the Heart

Understanding the nature of the heart also includes the important task of exploring the impact of sin on God's original design for the heart. Timothy Lane and Paul David Tripp, commenting on the importance of the understanding the effect of sin, explain that, "your diagnosis of what is wrong will determine what you think the cure is."[52] In other words, a right understanding of what is wrong in one's life is necessary for

---

[47]Kellemen, *Gospel-Centered Counseling*, 98.

[48]Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, 16; Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 194; Kellemen, *Gospel-Centered Counseling,* 100-101; Michael R. Emlet, "Understanding the Influences on the Human Heart," *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 20, no. 2 (2002): 48; Elyse Fitzpatrick, *Idols of the Heart: Learning to Long for God Alone* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2001), 93-98; John Henderson, *Equipped to Counsel: A Training Course in Biblical Counseling*, 2nd ed. (Fort Worth, TX: Association of Biblical Counselors, 2014), 163-64.

[49]Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, 19; Emlet, "Understanding the Influences on the Human Heart," 48.

[50]Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life,* 19-20; Emlet, "Understanding the Influences on the Human Heart," 48.

[51]Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, 21-22; Emlet, "Understanding the Influences on the Human Heart," 48.

[52]Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp, *How People Change* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2008), 129.

a right application of what will bring change.[53] And while not every counseling issue is the result of a person's direct sin, every counseling issue is at a minimum the result of sin's effects. Therefore, a right understanding of these effects on the heart is necessary if effective biblical counseling is to occur.

Just as the heart's designed functions are interrelated, so too is sin's effect on those functions. Sin's effect on the heart's faculties are severe: self-deception, spiritual blindness, and idolatrous belief (cognition); sinful desire and unrestrained emotion (affection); and behavioral enslavement (volition).[54] Because of these effects, rather than worshiping God, the heart impacted by sin is bent inward in self-worship. Self-worship begins by doubting God's goodness and trustworthiness, and results in the external worship of a god-substitute (Gen 3:1-8).[55] This false worship is perhaps best captured using the metaphor of idolatry.[56] Brad Bigney defines an idol as "anything or anyone that captures our hearts, minds, and affections more than God."[57] Similarly, Elyse Fitzpatrick describes the nature of idolatry when she says, "Loving anything more than God is idolatry, and idolatry always breeds a deceived heart."[58] Though sinful idol worship is ostensibly directed toward a particular object, idolatrous lusts are actually expressions of pride, or self-exaltation.[59] Their presence in one's life thus reflects the reversal of God's

---

[53]Lane and Tripp summarize this point, saying, "When we rightly identify the source of our problem, we are on our way to a solution that celebrates the grace of Christ. But we must first acknowledge that the problem is us! It is inside us, deep in the recesses of our hearts." Lane and Tripp, *How People Change*, 134.

[54]Kellemen, *Gospel-Centered Counseling*, 138-48, 160-68.

[55]Ibid., 135-36.

[56]David Powlison, "Idols of the Heart and Vanity Fair," *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 13, no. 2 (1995): 35. Powlison describes the priority Scripture gives to the problem of idolatry: "Idolatry is by far the most frequently discussed problem in Scripture."

[57]Brad Bigney, *Gospel Treason: Betraying the Gospel with Hidden Idols* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2012), 24.

[58]Fitzpatrick, *Idols of the Heart*, 100.

[59]David Powlison, "The Sufficiency of Scripture to Diagnose and Cure Souls," *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 23, no. 2 (2005): 10.

design. As Powlison puts it, "Idols define good and evil in ways contrary to God's definitions."[60]

The Heart in Context

Not only are sin's effects experienced in the human heart, they are also acutely manifest in creation. External forms of suffering, one's relational context (both with God and with others, past as well as present), biological illness, disease, loss, histories of abuse, and trauma are all situational factors that will impact the counseling process.[61] That these factors would affect one's pursuit of care should be expected, for each of the above issues reflects deeply impacting events that will necessarily bear an influence on one's life. However, if a counselor does not possess a biblical understanding of the heart, he or she may potentially confuse the true nature of the counselee's need. Thus, instead of exploring the relationship between the heart and these influential factors, the counselor may err in one of two ways.

First, the counselor may ignore the impact of the counselee's context. To ignore one's context would be to deny that one's circumstances influence his or her heart responses, an assertion that is unsupported by Scripture.[62] The effect of such a denial is the failure to truly understand the nature of one's heart responses amid the influences in one's life. Second, he or she may ascribe a determinative role to one's circumstances that equally runs contrary to biblical evidence. A deterministic interpretation of one's external influences would deny the centrality of the heart, and thus minimize the power of Christ to bring change. Effective equipping in biblical counseling must therefore take into

---

[60]Powlison, "Idols of the Heart and Vanity Fair," 42.

[61]Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, 88.

[62]On the contrary, human suffering can be intensely shaping on one's heart responses before God. For examples, see 2 Sam 13, Pss 4, 11, 22, 88.

consideration the influence of one's situation, while also upholding the priority of the biblical heart as the focus of counseling ministry.[63]

The Restoration of the Heart

God's image bearers are a duality of body and heart. The heart is composed of interrelated faculties of cognition, affection and volition, and is set in context among several diverse influences. Biblical counseling explores the relationship between one's heart responses and his or her world. This exploration, however, has one singular purpose: to help a person toward a response of faith in the only One who can bring change, the Lord Jesus Christ.[64]

That counseling's purpose is to encourage faith in Christ reflects the fundamental result of sin's corruption: alienation from God, enslavement to sin, and affliction through suffering. Into these diverse areas of human need, hope enters in through the person of Jesus. Tripp, explaining the necessity of the person of Jesus as the source of restoration, says,

> We cannot simply offer people a system or give advice on how to deal with their past. We must point them to a powerful and present Redeemer. *He* is our only hope. He has conquered sin on our behalf! He willingly offers us his heart-transforming, life-altering grace![65]

Yet this life-altering grace that Jesus brings has in view more than just restoration, or the replacement of what was lost because of sin. Rather, Jesus' grace results in

---

[63]Cf. Prov 4:23, Mark 7:21-23; Luke 6:45. As Paul Tripp states, "Whatever rules the heart will exercise inescapable influence over the person's life and behavior." Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, 68.

[64]Cf. Col 1:28: "Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ."

[65]Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, 12. Emphasis original. Powlison, remarking on the inability of other counseling modalities that do not emphasize the person of Christ to bring meaningful help to one's situation, says, "Truth mediates a Person, a working Redeemer . . . . Scripture is so radically about persons-vis-à-vis-a-Person that it utterly shatters and wholly reconfigures the culture's stock categories for thinking about personhood." David Powlison, *Seeing with New Eyes: Counseling and the Human Condition through the Lens of Scripture* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2003), 4.

transformation, or a new constitutive reality and relationship with God that is somehow greater than that which existed between God and humanity before the fall.

As Kellemen has described, the work of Jesus brings transformation to God's original design in four different ways.[66] First, where people were originally created with innocence and righteousness before God, the entrance of sin brought condemnation. However, through faith in Jesus and his work, God justifies the believer, imputing to him not just humanity's original righteousness, but the righteousness of Jesus himself.[67] Second, where humanity once enjoyed unfettered communion with God, sin's shattering of this relationship resulted in separation and alienation. Jesus, by his death and resurrection, has made reconciliation with God possible. The believer is now known as God's son or God's daughter.[68] Third, where humans were originally created to reflect God's image to the world he created, sin has corrupted that image. By the Spirit, God has brought regeneration, and with it a new power and ability to image Christ in one's life.[69] Fourth, where God's image bearers were originally called to exercise dominion over creation, sin brought humans in bondage to its rule. Now, through the redemptive work of Jesus, the believer is no longer enslaved to his former master, but has become a servant of God, freed to live a life of worship and obedience before him.[70]

Personal ministry that is rooted in God's Word must be pursued with a biblical understanding of the heart. From this understanding, those who care and counsel proclaim the restorative and transformative grace of Jesus. This ministry of Christ's grace

---

[66]Kellemen, *Gospel-Centered Counseling*, 152-59.

[67]Ibid., 152-53.

[68]Ibid., 153-54.

[69]Ibid., 156-58.

[70]Ibid., 158-59.

occurs through the application of Scripture to one's life in specific ways as reflects the specific needs of the counselee.

Applying the Bible to Specific Problems

Alongside exploration of the biblical heart, biblical counseling endeavors to apply the truths of Scripture in specific and redemptive ways. However, the use of Scripture in counseling is not a simplistic exercise. Rather, it is an attempt to carefully study the Bible's meaning through the redemptive lens of Christ and his gospel, and to bring these truths to bear on one's life in a way that is both biblically faithful and situationally sensitive. Effective equipping in biblical counseling will therefore help counselors grow in how they apply Scripture to their own lives. It will also assist them in developing a process for applying Scripture to the specific ministry needs of their counselees. This process will also take into consideration the diversity and magnitude of the various human problems inherent to life lived in a world fractured by sin.

The Art of Personal Application

Applying the Bible in personal ministry begins with applying the Bible in private ministry. Private ministry refers to the counselor's application of Scripture to his or her own life. Such self-directed counsel involves self-examination, personal repentance, and the pursuit of faith, cultivated through the nourishing of the Word read and applied.[71] Faithful self-counsel is necessary for effective personal ministry, and is thus evidenced through wise personal application of Scripture in private ministry. If a biblical counselor desires to help others in the pursuit of Christ-centered change, he or she must also demonstrate personal growth through the gospel.[72] Private ministry that

---

[71]Kevin Carson, "The Personal, Private and Public Ministry of the Word," in *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, ed. James MacDonald, Bob Kellemen, and Steve Viars (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishing, 2013), 264.

[72]Robert Smith, "Spiritual Discipline and the Biblical Counselor," in *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically*, ed. John MacArthur (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 88.

results in effective biblical counseling therefore begins with the development of faculty in the study and application of Scripture. In other words, the counselor must possess a process for reading God's Word that results in biblical literacy, while fostering personal, Christ-centered application to one's own life.

Biblical literacy begins with understanding the nature of Scripture. As was mentioned earlier, the doctrines of Scripture's inspiration, truthfulness, and authority provide the foundation for the knowledge of God and the world he created. Biblical literacy deepens however, when the biblical counselor reads Scripture in such a way that his knowledge of God faithfully reflects that which is revealed about God in his Word.[73] For the counselor to grow in the knowledge of God, he must be able to ably establish what a biblical passage says through exegesis. He must then grow in hermeneutical skill in determining what a passage means through interpretation. On an interpretive level, the counselor must not only be able to pinpoint the meaning of the passage in its original grammatical and historical context, but he must also place this meaning within the context of God's redemptive story centered on Christ. As the counselor grows in his interpretive faculties, he will develop both a consistent biblical theology (or an awareness of the overall story of Scripture) and systematic theology (a categorical framework for understanding what the Scriptures say about God, people, salvation, and ministry).[74]

However, comprehensive biblical literacy must not refer to the knowledge of Scripture alone. It but must also encompass the personal application of that Word to one's own life. Scott Duvall and Daniel Hays, commenting on the necessity of personal

---

[73]McCartney and Clayton, *Let the Reader Understand*, 9. As McCartney and Clayton explain, "*The key to interpreting the Bible is to allow it to change and mold our presuppositions* into an interpretive framework compatible with the Bible." Emphasis original.

[74]However, as Emlet helpfully notes, the counselor should avoid viewing Scripture primarily as a system of doctrines to be learned: "But what are some problems with functionally viewing Scripture *primarily* as a series of doctrinal formulations? First, it can minimize the depth and breadth of biblical wisdom. Systematic theology helps to distill the Bible's teaching, but it does not exhaust the complexity of what God means to say to the church." Emlet, *CrossTalk*, 36. Emphasis original.

application, state that, "When we grasp God's Word, we not only understand its meaning; we also take the final steps and live out that meaning in our lives."[75] In other words, true knowledge of Scripture is always reflected through application in action: "Knowledge by itself is not enough; it should lead to action."[76] Thus, the process of personal application is the natural extension of growth in the knowledge of God's Word.

This process will be characterized by a series of steps that move from understanding what a passage says, what it means, and how it may be applied to one's life.[77] Duvall and Hays list five such steps: uncovering the text's original meaning, exploring the situational differences between the original audience and today's readers, identifying the theological principle, placing this theological principle in the redemptive context of the whole of Scripture, and applying the contextualized principle to one's specific situation.[78] When pursued in the context of personal application and faithful self-counsel, the above steps involve two broad activities. First is study and reflection of a verse, passage, or biblical book, in order to establish the primary message God intends to communicate to his people. Second is the pursuit of an accurate awareness of how that message is best applied to one's own life. The purposes of application are the same as the parameters established in 2 Timothy 3:16: to shape one's thoughts and beliefs about God (one's inner life), and to conform one's life to the image of Christ (one's outer life).[79]

---

[75]J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting and Applying the Bible*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 235.

[76]Ibid.

[77]Regarding the meaning of a text, Duvall and Hays state, "*Meaning* refers to what the author intended to communicate through the text. Because a text's meaning is tied to the author, it will be the same for all Christians. The reader does not determine meaning, nor does meaning change from reader to reader." Ibid., 236. Emphasis original.

[78]Duvall and Hays explain that "application," refers "to the response of the reader to the meaning of the inspired text. Application reflects the specific life situation of the reader and will vary from Christian to Christian, although it will still have some boundaries influenced by the author's meaning." In other words, while the meaning of a text and the theological principle are fixed, the application varies as a reflection of the changing variables of one's own life circumstances. Ibid., 236-37.

[79]See ch. 2, pp. 22-24.

Applying Scripture in Personal Ministry

The above process for private biblical application is to be similarly utilized in personal ministry. The counselor must first take ample time to get to know his or her counselee. It is only when the counselor can identify the counselee's ministry needs that the redemptive truths of Scripture can be rightly applied in the counseling relationship. Once the counselor knows the counselee's situation, he can begin to verbally apply biblical truth. Building upon the depth of biblical knowledge gained over time through private application, the counselor can take the same timeless theological truths uncovered through personal study and begin to apply them in specific ways in the lives of those she counsels.

Such application of Scripture in personal ministry will consist of two primary practices. First, the counselor will work to minister *gospel truths*, or those biblical truths that reflect God's character, his care for his people, the hope of Christ in the gospel, and the new identity the believer possesses in Christ.[80] Second, the counselor will equip his or her counselee in *gospel pursuits*, or those activities that Christians are to pursue in worship, obedience, and devotion to God based upon his saving work through Jesus Christ.[81] Here the counselor must be careful to reflect Scripture's emphasis on God's love as the impetus for change. As Emlet remarks, "The Bible never separates imperatives from their basis in God's redeeming love. To create a wedge between the two is a recipe for discouragement and ultimately strips the gospel of its power for change."[82]

---

[80]Stuart W. Scott, "The Gospel in Balance," in *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, ed. James MacDonald, Bob Kellemen, and Steve Viars (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2013), 169. These truths are also commonly called *gospel indicatives*.

[81]Ibid. These exhortations are often called *gospel imperatives*.

[82]Emlet, *CrossTalk,* 28

The Breadth and Depth of
the Problems We Face

        Alongside a process for private and personal application of Scripture, the

biblical counselor must be equipped with an understanding of common counseling

problems. This understanding is in many ways a natural extension of the counselor's

growth in application, and should reflect an increasingly biblical approach to approaching

one's situation. Though one's problems cannot be isolated within one's experiential

context, Scripture provides three broad categories for understanding the breadth and

depth of the problems we face: problems caused by personal sin, the sins of others, or

general suffering.[83] Though the problems biblical counseling aims to address often

overlap in their expression, it is nonetheless necessary and beneficial that counselors be

aware of the causes of such problems in general, so that they can in turn apply the truths

of Scripture in specific ways to those in need. As with the elements of application

described above, such ministry is never to be removed from the redemptive context of the

gospel. Just as the person of Jesus is the One who brings restoration to the heart, so too is

he the one to whom the application of Scripture in personal ministry must point.

        Thus, effective equipping in biblical counseling must help counselors grow in

their skill in biblical application. This growth includes not only private ministry, but also

the application of God's truth to another's situation in specific, redemptive ways. In the

final section of this chapter, the goal of such application will be explored. Biblical

counseling is to be pursued with the goal of progressive sanctification, or increasing

Christlikeness in all of life.

---

[83]A non-exhaustive sampling of problems that are the result of personal sin includes addictions, abuse (for perpetrators), anger, many expressions of anxiety and depression, eating disorders, ruling fears, the fear of man, sexual sin including lust, adultery, homosexuality, and pornography, pride, and various other expressions of sinful desire. Problems stemming from the sins of others include abuse (for victims of abuse), adultery, betrayal, conflict, deceit, the indirect effects of the sexual sin of others, wayward children, divorce, and trauma. General suffering includes problems such as illness, certain forms of anxiety and depression, the effects of trauma, death, grief, infertility, miscarriage, and organic mental illness.

Sanctification as the Goal of Biblical Counseling

Christians who care and counsel biblically must work toward the goal of progressive sanctification in their ministry, for it is this process that the Scriptures depict as the genuine result of effective discipleship.[84] While compassionate biblical ministry that addresses one's heart often brings genuine situational help to one's problems, the primary goal of biblical counseling is sanctification, or increasing Christlikeness (1 Thess 4:3).[85] As counselors pursue this goal with their counselees, they must possess an understanding of the nature of and means by which sanctification occurs. The counselor must also be able to help the counselee pursue the Bible's process for change within his or her specific life context.

**Lifelong Change in Cooperation
with the Spirit**

In order to help the counselee toward the goal of sanctification, the counselor must have a clear conception of the Bible's teaching on this doctrine. On one level, sanctification describes the new identity that comes to those who trust in Christ. Where before Christ, one was known only as a sinner, the Christian is now called a saint, set apart for the glory and purposes of God (Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 1:2; 2 Tim 2:21). Elyse Fitzpatrick and Dennis Johnson observe this aspect of the doctrine when defining sanctification: "Sanctification or being *set apart* is to be made holy as consecrated for God's use. It describes the transformation of the believer into the image of Christ."[86] This type of sanctification is also known as *definitive sanctification*. Definitive sanctification

---

[84]David Powlison, "How *Does* Sanctification Work? (Part 1)," *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 27, no. 1 (2013): 49.

[85]Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling*, 234.

[86]Elyse M. Fitzpatrick and Dennis E. Johnson, *Counsel from the Cross: Connecting Broken People to the Love of Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2009), 113. Emphasis original.

occurs at conversion, whereby God declares the believer holy on the basis of one's union with Christ.[87]

Yet on another level, sanctification is ongoing, occurring throughout one's life. This aspect of sanctification is known as *progressive sanctification*. Lambert conveys the progressive nature of sanctification when he says, "Sanctification is the lifelong process in which Christians strive by divine grace to grow in Christlikeness in their entire person."[88] As Lambert's definition emphasizes, not only is progressive sanctification a lifelong process, it is also cooperative, involving both the Christian's effort and the Spirit's working in the pursuit of change (Phil 2:12; 1 John 3:3).[89] In particular, in progressive sanctification the believer is seeking to apply the various aspects of his or her union with Christ in such a way that one's inner life increasingly reflects the life of Jesus Christ.[90] This occurs through meditation on God's truth as revealed in his Word, and the Spirit-led application of that Word in one's life.[91]

The predominant metaphor the New Testament uses to describe this cooperative process is employed through the language of "putting off" and "putting on"

---

[87]Frame, *Systematic Theology*, 986.

[88]Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 290.

[89]Ibid. However, as Adams helpfully notes, human effort in sanctification is not to be confused with effort that comes apart from the Spirit: "All of the stress that the Bible puts on human effort must not be misunderstood; we are talking about grace-motivated effort, not the work of the flesh. It is not effort apart from the Holy Spirit that produces godliness. Rather, it is through the power of the Holy Spirit alone that one can endure." Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling*, 244.

[90]Kellemen emphasizes the balance between union with Christ and the pursuit of Christlikeness in his definition of sanctification: "Sanctification is the grace-motivated and grace-empowered art of applying our justification, reconciliation, regeneration, and redemption to our daily lives and relationships through wisdom from the Word of God, through relational dependence on our triune God, through the encouragement of the people of God, and through the motivation from our future with God so that our inner life increasingly reflects the inner life of Christ (relationally, rationally, volitionally, and emotionally) as we put off the old dead person we no longer are and put on the new person we already are in Christ (relationally, rationally, volitionally, and emotionally) for God's glory." Kellemen, *Gospel-Centered Counseling*, 269-70.

[91]Adams, commenting on the process of biblical reflection and application, says, "Godliness does not come by osmosis. Human ideas and efforts will never produce it. There is no easier path to godliness. It always requires the prayerful study and obedient practice of the Word of God." Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling*, 245.

(Eph 4:17-32; Col 3:5-17). Putting off reflects the believer's new nature in Christ. To put off means to acknowledge that the believer has been identified with Christ's death, and has thus died to his former way of life (Rom 6:4,6). Putting off such former ways of living is therefore the process by which one turns away from sinful patterns of thought, belief, desire, and action.[92]

To put on describes the practical pursuit of godliness in the believer's life. It is the reflection in the believer's life of identification with the resurrected Christ. As Kellemen notes, as we put on such pursuits, "We start living like the new alive person that we are in Christ. We make actual in practice what is already actual in our regeneration."[93] Such practice is evidenced by obedience to Scripture, but is always dependent upon one's clear awareness of the profound power of the gospel. In this sense, the gospel always undergirds the cooperative human and divine effort seen in sanctification, just as it is the foundation for one's position before God. As Fitzpatrick and Johnson state, "The gospel is as necessary to our sanctification as it was to our initial justification."[94] To put off reflects the power of Christ to bring freedom from sin's dominion. To put on reveals the Spirit's power to bring life through faith, repentance, and obedience.

Counseling toward Life Change

Sanctification reveals the Bible's process for change. As people are transformed by faith in Christ, they pursue obedience to God's Word by means of the Spirit's indwelling power. The result however, is about far more than behavioral change, but increasing Christlikeness in every area of life.[95] Lambert affirms this purpose when

---

[92]Kellemen, *Gospel-Centered Counseling*, 270.

[93]Ibid., 270-71.

[94]Fitzpatrick and Johnson, *Counsel from the Cross*, 116.

[95]Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 291.

he says, "Biblical sanctification, which reflects Christlikeness, is not about mere behavior change, but about a completely new person changing from the inside out."[96] Sanctification, therefore, is about heart change that brings about a different life in Christ.[97] Though the change that occurs in the counselee's life will be gradual, it will reflect the care of the counselor, but most importantly the nourishing ministry of God's Spirit.[98]

That Scripture contains general principles for life change does not preclude careful and specific application of those principles in the life of the counselee. Just as a counselor must know his counselee to apply the truths of the gospel to his or her situation, so too is this knowledge necessary in equipping one's counselee in the pursuit of sanctification. Because each person and every counseling situation is different, biblical counseling ministry must strive toward personal relevance in pursuing change. As Powlison puts it, "The task in any ministry moment is to choose, emphasize and 'unbalance' truth for the sake of relevant application to particular persons and situations."[99] To "unbalance" simply means to take biblical truth reflected in a specific Scriptural context, and to make it relevant to one's specific need.

However, such ministry must also be reincorporated into Scripture's comprehensive redemptive message, to maintain a balanced approach to ministry rooted in the totality of the gospel. Thus, as Powlison continues, "The task of theological

---

[96]Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 291.

[97]As Paul Tripp says with respect to the goal of sanctification in counseling ministry, "Our goal is not to pressure people into behavior changes, but to encourage heart change that impacts the life. Repentance means turning to go in the other direction, and that turning must begin with the heart." Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, 213.

[98]Adams, on the gradual nature of change, the partnership of the counselor, and the power of the Spirit, says, "Growth is gradual; man can assist in producing it, but cannot initiate it or assure its production. Fruit cannot be manufactured, but growth may be promoted by providing such important elements such as light, water, nutrients, etc. The growth of fruit depends upon care and cultivation. Counselors, ministering the Word, work under the Spirit in His orchard to provide such care." Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling*, 249.

[99]Powlison, "How *Does* Sanctification Work? (Part 1)," 54.

reflection is to abstract, generalize, and 'rebalance' truth for the sake of comprehensiveness.[100] Counseling toward life change therefore requires the counselor to consider how he or she may precisely encourage his or her counselee toward Christlikeness. This means uncovering what gospel truth is most needed for the counselee, and applying Scripture accordingly. It will also mean reincorporating that truth into the entirety of the scope of God's Word, to better empower a counselee's specific response of faith within his or her situational context. The result will be increasing Christlikeness that reflects more and more the character of Jesus through faith, wisdom, righteousness, mercy and service.[101]

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to examine the necessary elements for developing a training process in biblical care and counsel for leaders at TVC. Effective equipping in biblical counseling requires a comprehensive and compassionate counseling methodology. The foundation of this methodology is an emphasis on the character of the counselor, the holistic ministry needs of the counselee, the relationship between counselor and counselee, and the context of community in which such ministry is to occur. The framework for this methodology is growth in the knowledge of Scripture, an understanding of the heart, skill in biblical application, and a focus on progressive sanctification. The next chapter will discuss the implementation of this ministry project. This discussion will include the development and implementation of a training curriculum for informal biblical counseling ministry, as well as the development of a proposed philosophy of care and counsel for TVC.

---

[100]Powlison, "How *Does* Sanctification Work? (Part 1)," 55.

[101]Ibid., 49.

CHAPTER 4

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

Introduction

The purpose of this project was to equip leaders at The Village Church to care and counsel biblically. Chapter 2 established the biblical and theological basis for biblical counseling a TVC. Chapter 3 examined the necessary elements of a training process for care and counsel at TVC. The goal of this chapter is to describe the development and implementation of this project's training curriculum and written philosophy of biblical care and counseling. First, the preparation period for the project will be described, including the initial distribution of the Biblical Care and Counsel Assessment (BCCA), the design of the biblical counseling course curriculum, and the class selection process. Second, the project's implementation will be detailed, including the ongoing development and teaching of the curriculum as well as the writing of the proposed philosophy of biblical care and counseling. Third, the post-implementation period of the project will be explained, which included the post-course evaluations provided by class participants, as well as those completed by an expert panel for both the course curriculum and the proposed written philosophy.

The Preparation Period: Summer 2016

The impetus for this project was the presence of an observable gap in TVC's philosophy and methodology of biblical counseling. This gap reflected two significant areas of need within the church: an improved conceptual understanding of biblical care and counseling, and increased efforts at equipping leaders in the personal ministry of the Word. The purpose of the preparation period for this project was to identify the specific

areas where improvement was needed in equipping TVC's leaders with biblical counseling knowledge and skills. This period consisted of four primary elements: the initial communication to leaders at TVC's Dallas campus about a two-semester course in biblical counseling, the distribution of the BCCA to a group of TVC's staff and leaders, the selection of course participants, and the design of the course curriculum.

**Communicating to TVC's Leaders
about *Foundations of Care and Counsel***

The project's preparation period began by informing leaders at TVC's Dallas campus about the offering of a two-semester course in biblical care and counseling, titled *Foundations of Care and Counsel* (FCC). An email was sent to every person at TVC Dallas who fell into one of the following leadership categories: elder, deacon, Home Group leader, Recovery Group leader, Steps leader, or Training Program participant. A total of 365 individuals received this email, which also included a link to a brief, one-question survey designed to gauge respondents' interest in participating in FCC. To those who requested more information about the course, a follow-up email was sent with a link to both the course application and the BCCA.

**The Biblical Care and Counsel
Assessment**

An invitation to complete the BCCA was also sent to the staff, elders, and deacons of TVC Dallas. The BCCA consisted of two sections.[1] The first included sixteen questions designed to gather demographic data and to gauge respondents' present pursuit of spiritual disciplines and personal ministry. The second section included twenty-five questions that surveyed respondents' understanding of key biblical counseling concepts and current counseling competency.

---

[1]The BCCA is included in its entirety in appendix 1.

83

Between the two groups invited to complete the BCCA (TVC's lay leaders and its staff), a total of 72 respondents completed the survey. Of these respondents, 38 (52.8 percent) were male, and 34 (47.2 percent) were female. Respondents' ages ranged from 22 to 66, with a median age of 32. Nearly all respondents (98.6 percent) were covenant members of TVC, with the sole exception being a new staff member who had not yet completed TVC's membership process. The distribution of respondents' leadership roles included Home Group leader/coach (50.8 percent), Recovery Group or Steps leader/Steps mentor (15.4 percent), staff member (20 percent), elder (7.7 percent), deacon (10.8 percent), or leader serving in another ministry context (21.5 percent).

The first section of the BCCA revealed a significant degree of spiritual maturity and ministry involvement among respondents. Nearly all who completed the BCCA were engaged in regular bible study and prayer, and most were significantly involved in personal discipleship relationships (either as a mentor or as a mentee) or external discipleship ministries.[2] Within the discipleship relationships where respondents served as mentors, 80 percent included at least monthly discussion of personal problems. A majority indicated that the church (whether the church corporate, church leaders, or church members) bears primary responsibility for the discipleship and care of its members.[3]

---

[2]All respondents indicated at least weekly involvement in bible reading (91.7 percent stated that they read Scripture daily or several times a week). Similarly, nearly all respondents (98.6 percent) indicated that they prayed either daily or several times a week. Forty-three respondents (59.7 percent) indicated that they served as a mentor in a discipleship relationship. Forty respondents (55.5 percent) were involved in an additional ministry context (i.e., local/global missions, outreach/mercy ministries, etc.) outside of their leadership role at TVC.

[3]In response to the question, "To what degree is the church responsible to make disciples?," 63.9 percent replied, "Completely responsible." When asked, "To what degree is the church responsible to provide care and counsel for its members?," 58.3 percent said, "Completely responsible." In reply to the question, "To what degree does church leadership (elders, deacons, and staff) bear responsibility to equip the church for discipleship and care and counsel?," 56.9 percent stated that church leaders were completely responsible. When asked, "To what degree do church members bear responsibility to pursue discipleship and provide care and counsel for one-another?," 65.3 percent of respondents replied, "Completely responsible."

The first section of the BCCA also asked respondents to define the terms *discipleship*, *biblical counseling*, and *secular counseling*.[4] When compared against this project's definitions of discipleship and biblical counseling, respondents emphasized similar themes, including the role of Scripture and the goal of Christlikeness. Overall, respondents' definitions of secular counseling emphasized the impartation of wisdom apart from Scripture, with the goals of changed circumstances or personal improvement. That most respondents specifically mentioned the role of Scripture in discipleship and care and the goal of Christlikeness indicates the presence of solid foundation for personal ministry at TVC.

Thus, the first section of the BCCA revealed a consistent understanding and pursuit of discipleship among respondents. In contrast, the BCCA's second section demonstrated greater diversity in how respondents viewed biblical counseling and its practice. Three examples help illustrate this diversity.

First was the respondents' perspective on the sufficiency of Scripture for counseling. Respondents indicated a high level of agreement with the claim that Scripture teaches that Christians should disciple or counsel one-another.[5] However, the responses were more varied when participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with the statement that Scripture is a sufficient resource for counseling others.[6] Thus, while

---

[4]See ch. 1, pp. 16-17. This project defined *discipleship* as "the process by which men and women come into relationship with Christ and are conformed to his image through the personal application of God's Word." The project defined *biblical counseling* as "the personal, heart-focused application of God's Word to issues of sin and suffering in light of the hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ."

[5]The second section of the BCCA utilized a six-point Likert scale to rate respondents' level of agreement regarding several propositional statements related to biblical care and counseling.

[6]In response to the statement, "The Bible teaches that Christians should disciple one another," 94.4 percent of respondents selected "Strongly Agree." Similarly, 81.9 percent chose "Strongly Agree" related to the claim, "The Bible teaches that Christians should provide biblical care and counsel for one another." However, when asked to affirm whether the Scriptures were sufficient for counseling, or contained all that was necessary for counseling ("The Bible is a sufficient resource for all forms of care and counsel."), the percentage of those selecting "Strongly Agree" was lower (66.6 percent and 51.3 percent of respondents, respectively). While the decrease in those indicating strong agreement regarding Scripture's sufficiency for counseling may be the result of a lack of agreement with the above statement, it may also be informed by two other factors: (1) the delicacy and nuance required for affirming the sufficiency of Scripture for counseling, and (2) the limitations of the above question in aiding in such an affirmation. Whatever the cause for the discrepancy, the lack of consistency in respondents' level of agreement

respondents clearly affirmed the biblical prescription for discipleship and counseling, they were less confident that Scripture was sufficient for this task.

In a second example, the BCCA indicated a moderate lack of confidence in respondents' assessment of their counseling competency. Respondents indicated a broad level of agreement with the statements, "I am confident in my ability to disciple another believer;" "I am confident in my ability to compassionately care for and comprehensively counsel another believer;" and "I know how to ask questions designed to uncover heart issues related to discipleship and biblical care and counsel." However, the percentage of people indicating strong agreement with these statements was much lower (18 percent, 6.9 percent, and 4.1 percent, respectively) than statements regarding Scripture's teaching that Christians should disciple or counsel one another. Though subtle, there seemed to be a gap in what respondents believed Scripture teaches about counseling and how confident respondents were in their discipling and counseling skills.

A third and final example revealed that while respondents felt comfortable providing care for problems such as anger, anxiety, or sexual temptation, they were less confident as one's problems grew in complexity.[7] In addition, many respondents affirmed the necessity of secular counseling for certain problems.[8] While these responses could

---

nonetheless provided the necessary basis for addressing this topic in the course curriculum and written care philosophy.

[7]The highest percentage of respondents indicated moderate disagreement when asked to affirm that they would first encourage someone to talk with a pastor or professional counselor if he or she was struggling with anxiety and depression, anger or sexual temptation (40.2 percent, 37.5 percent and 36 percent, respectively). That there was disagreement to these statements would seem to indicate a willingness to engage in ministry to such people before referring to outside help. However, when asked a similar question about a couple struggling in their marriage, or whether they felt confident in caring for someone diagnosed with a psychological disorder, the responses indicated less confidence in either willingness to pursue ministry (31.9 percent of respondents indicated moderate agreement that they would refer a couple struggling in the marriage to a pastor or counselor), or in their respective level of competence in complex care scenarios (54.1 percent either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, "If approached by a friend who recently received a psychiatric or psychological diagnosis [e.g., ADHD, obsessive-compulsive disorder, bipolar disorder, borderline personality disorder, schizophrenia, etc.], I would feel equipped to provide loving, biblical care and counsel.").

[8]In response to the claim, "Certain forms of secular counseling are necessary to adequately address some problems," 56.9 percent of respondents affirmed at least moderate agreement or higher.

reflect respondents' awareness of their own limitations in complex situations, they may also indicate an inconsistent view of Scripture's sufficiency for providing care, as well as in what situations and by whom such care should be provided.

The above three examples from the BCCA reveal that while leaders at TVC affirmed the necessity of discipleship and counseling in the church, they were less certain regarding the situations where such care is to be provided, and the appropriate resources to be utilized for care. As it relates to this project, these conclusions indicated an opportunity for greater equipping in counseling knowledge and practical skills among leaders at TVC. This opportunity therefore served as the focus for developing the two-semester course curriculum in biblical care and counsel.

Designing the Course Curriculum

In addition to the initial distribution of the BCCA, the preparation period also included the design of the two-semester course curriculum. First, materials were chosen that would serve as the primary course textbooks for FCC. The main textbook chosen was John Henderson's *Equipped to Counsel* (ETC), published through the Association of Biblical Counselors (ABC).[9] Because ETC has served as the basis for past courses on biblical counseling at TVC, and because Henderson's leadership has helped shape TVC's approach to care, it was therefore an appropriate choice for utilization in this course.

Alongside ETC, two other books were selected as required reading for class participants: Michael Emlet's *CrossTalk: Where Life and Scripture Meet*, and Paul David Tripp's *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*.[10] Emlet's book was assigned because of its emphasis on developing a consistent approach to using Scripture when caring for others.

---

[9]John Henderson, *Equipped to Counsel: A Training Course in Biblical Counseling*, 2nd ed. (Fort Worth, TX: Association of Biblical Counselors, 2014). Henderson graciously allowed use of the unpublished second edition of ETC for this course.

[10]Michael R. Emlet, *CrossTalk: Where Life and Scripture Meet* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2009); Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2002).

Tripp's work was selected because it introduces a basic model for care ("Love, Know, Speak, Do"). Alongside these three published books, several articles were chosen from the *Journal of Biblical Counseling* (JBC), which were to serve as a supplement to ETC, *CrossTalk*, and *Instruments*.

Second, the basic course outline was designed and the course syllabus was written. The course was divided into two semesters of twelve weeks (one session for a course introduction and eleven teaching sessions) and eleven weeks (ten teaching sessions and one session for a course conclusion), respectively. Topics for each class session were selected in accordance with the primary course goals: to equip students with a biblical and theological foundation for counseling, and to provide them with an applicable process for personal ministry. The schedule for the first semester covered the biblical and theological foundations for care, while the second semester addressed a theology of the heart and the development of the counseling relationship.

The syllabus also included information about reading and written assignments. Course participants were expected to read approximately one to two chapters from ETC in preparation for each week's session. They were also assigned one to two JBC articles, and one to two chapters from either *CrossTalk* or *Instruments*. Three short papers were assigned for each semester: two reading responses that asked students to reflect upon the JBC articles they read, and one book review for Emlet's and Tripp's books, respectively.

Selection of Course Participants

As was mentioned earlier, a large group of leaders at TVC received an email during the project's preparation period informing them of FCC and inviting them to indicate their interest in the course. Of the 365 individuals who received this initial email, seventy-one indicated their interest participating in FCC. Of these seventy-one, forty-eight completed the course application along with the BCCA.[11] Forty-three individuals

---

[11]The course application is included in its entirety in appendix 6.

ultimately decided to sign up for FCC and began the course in September 2016.[12] The initial group of students reflected a similar distribution as that seen in the BCCA. Most were Home Group leaders or coaches, but several other ministry roles and contexts (i.e. deacons, Recovery Groups and Steps leaders or coaches) were also represented.

The Implementation Period:
September 2016 – May 2017

In the preparation period for the project, leaders at TVC Dallas received communication about FCC, the BCCA was distributed, the curriculum was designed, and students were selected for the class. The purpose of the implementation period of the project was to develop and teach the course curriculum, and to complete the proposed written philosophy of care and counseling. This section will describe the four primary components of the project's implementation period: the class structure and teaching process for FCC, the ongoing development of the course curriculum, the progression of the course through its two semesters, and the writing of the proposed philosophy of care and counseling.

FCC's Class Structure
and Teaching Process

FCC began in September 2016, meeting for two hours on Sunday mornings at TVC's Dallas Campus. The first semester met from September to December 2016. The second semester met from February to May 2017. This project's author served as one of the course instructors (teaching thirteen of the course's twenty-three sessions), along with Eric Bryant (who taught ten sessions overall). Bryant is a member of TVC, and works vocationally as a licensed professional counselor (LPC). His professional qualifications,

---

[12]The original goal for this project stated that twenty-five participants would be chosen to participate in FCC. However, between the writing of Chapter 1 and the implementation of the project, a classroom space at TVC Dallas became available that could accommodate a larger class size. The opportunity for a larger classroom, as well as a higher than anticipated interest in FCC influenced the decision to permit a larger than group of students to the course.

commitment to biblical counseling and experience teaching ETC in other contexts made him an appropriate choice to serve as a co-instructor for the course.

One hope for this class was to foster community through group participation. Thus, at the commencement of the class, participants were divided into discussion groups by gender. Each group included five to seven students. Initially, there were four women's groups and three men's groups. As the class progressed, participant attrition reduced this number to three women's groups and two men's groups.

Each class meeting was divided into two main sections. In the first section (lasting approximately one hour), an instructor taught the content written for that week's lesson. Ample time was given each week for discussion and questions from students regarding the lesson content. In the second section (also lasting around an hour), students were typically assigned group exercises designed to strengthen skill in personal ministry. In the first semester, these "labs" often included case studies that reinforced the concepts being taught, and group discussion questions related to the case study or to one's personal spiritual needs. In the second semester, greater attention was given to longer case study scenarios (discussed over multiple weeks) that allowed for implementation of the specific ministry skills being introduced. Toward the conclusion of the course, the second section of each week's class-time was dedicated to counseling practice. This practice allowed students to counsel one another through either a personal problem or a previously prepared role-play scenario.

**The Ongoing Development
of the Course Curriculum**

The writing of the course curriculum occurred alongside weekly class meetings. Utilizing ETC as a starting point, each lesson was written in order to introduce a specific topic germane to counseling ministry. The lessons composed during the first

semester served to establish a biblical foundation that provided the theological basis for the practical skills introduced in the second semester.[13] Because there were two instructors for the course, each lesson had to be detailed enough that an outside instructor could teach it with minimal difficulty. It was therefore necessary that each lesson be completed with enough time to allow for editing and feedback based upon interaction between the course instructors. To this end, lessons were completed at least one to two weeks in advance to allow for adequate study and preparation by each respective instructor.

Lessons 1–3. Lesson 1 sought to cast a vision for care and counsel in the church as a specific expression of discipleship. Lesson 2 was concerned with arriving at a definition for biblical counseling that explained what counseling is, what resources it utilizes, and what it aims to accomplish. Lesson 3 was dedicated to establishing the broad goals of counseling ministry: salvation for the unsaved and sanctification for the Christian. Class exercises for lessons 1 through 3 included case study discussions from ETC and an exercise where students were asked to share a brief written testimony with their table groups, and to respond to the written testimonies of classmates.

Lessons 4–5. Lessons 4 and 5 established a theology of Scripture as it relates to care and counsel. Lesson 4 considered the characteristics of Scripture and how believers can know God through the narrative of Scripture. Lesson 5 covered how to study and apply the Bible to one's life. Class exercises for lessons 4 and 5 consisted of group discussion over classmates' application of Scripture to their own life, with practice in applying two biblical passages as a group.

---

[13]A total of twenty-one lessons were written. Several resources in addition to ETC were utilized in crafting the course curriculum, including Jeremy Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2016); Robert W. Kellemen, *Gospel-Centered Counseling: How Christ Changes Lives* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014); and Robert W. Kellemen, *Gospel Conversations: How to Care Like Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015).

Lessons 6–7. In lessons 6 and 7, students were reminded of the specific truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Covered in these discussions were sections on God and his attributes, humanity and sin, the message of the gospel, and the implications of the gospel for those who call on Christ by faith. Class exercises for these sessions included reading and discussing two case studies from ETC as a class.

Lessons 8–9. Lessons 8 and 9 introduced the various influences that impact a person in the counseling process, namely that of suffering and the spiritual conditions of the heart. While the concept of the biblical heart was introduced in lesson 9, most of the discussion in this area was reserved for the second semester. Class exercises for lessons 8 and 9 included reading and discussing a case study as a class, and reading through a related case study in table groups.

Lessons 10–11. In lessons 10 and 11, students were presented with a biblical process for change. Beginning with an overview of progressive sanctification, students were taught about sin and guilt, repentance and faith, forgiveness, reconciliation, renewal, and the biblical process of putting off and putting on (Eph 4:22-24). Exercises for these lessons consisted of small group discussion around the nature of change, and reading and discussing a case study as a class.

Lessons 12–15. Lesson 12 marked the beginning of the second semester. Lessons 12 through 15 introduced a framework for understanding human experience and the biblical heart. Building on Jeremy Pierre's work in *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, the class discussed the composition of the heart, its expressions in the lives of counselees, the impact of sin on the heart, and the hope for counselees through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Class exercises included an extensive, multi-week case study to be read together as a class each week, followed by discussion either as a class or in table groups.

Lessons 16–17. Lessons 16 and 17 addressed the influence on personal ministry of one's relationships, self-perceptions, and external circumstances. Class exercises included reading through four different case study vignettes and brainstorming specific questions in table groups designed to uncover heart issues related to case-study characters' responses to their situation.

Lessons 18–21. The final four lessons were devoted to introducing a basic model for biblical counseling ministry. This model was a combination of the four elements of personal ministry introduced in Tripp's *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands* ("Love, Know, Speak, Do") and Pierre's *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life* ("Read, Reflect, Relate, Renew"). The exercise section for each week included group counseling exercises, where class participants could practice each ministry element with another table member. For each pair of class participants serving as "counselor" or "counselee," other students at the table observed and provided feedback and encouragement to each "counselor."

The Progression of the Course

During the first week of the course, students were invited to share briefly with the class about their backgrounds, ministry areas of service, and their hopes for the course. Overwhelmingly, students shared that they hoped to gain from FCC a knowledge of how to care biblically, in light of the many situations where their leadership roles provided an opportunity for such ministry.

As the first semester unfolded, class participation occurred at a high level. Students were diligent to complete the initial reading and writing assignments, and were faithful in participating in all group exercises during class. The course content also generated numerous questions from students, which in turn propelled class discussions. For many, this course was the first time they explored biblical counseling as an expression of discipleship designed to lead to increased Christlikeness. This introduction

to biblical counseling prompted many students to ask thoughtful, probing questions related to the implications of such an understanding for personal ministry.

However, despite this initial level of participation, as the first semester progressed, attention to writing assignments waned, and students' overall attendance suffered.[14] In addition, the course suffered in the first semester from relatively high rate of attrition. While this rate of attrition plateaued in the second semester, it was much higher overall than anticipated at the course's commencement.[15]

In the second semester, as with the first, there was a high degree of engagement and participation in class discussion and group activities. For many students, considering the Bible's teaching on the heart in detail was a new, but welcome way to see human existence and one's responses to his or her world. However, despite the benefits of this teaching, many students continued to struggle with written assignments. As with the first semester, a similar fluctuation in weekly attendance remained.[16] In response to these difficulties, the course requirements were lessened from three papers in the second semester to two. Students were still encouraged to remain faithful in attendance and course participation.

In the final week of the course, students were given an opportunity to share feedback about the class. They also completed two evaluation forms. The first form asked students to evaluate the course itself. Class members were asked to evaluate the course's

---

[14]This variance in attendance was somewhat anticipated, and addressed by scheduling two holiday breaks for each semester. However, even with these breaks some students struggled to attend each week's class consistently.

[15]Of the forty-three students that began the course, around thirty remained actively involved at the course's conclusion (most of those who left the course did so during the first semester). The reasons students gave for withdrawing from the course varied. For some, the rigor of the course proved unmanageable when combined with other personal responsibilities. For others, the vulnerability the course required revealed an overall lack of readiness for such ministry. In these latter instances, it was encouraging to see how such students sought care for their own soul rather than force participation in a course that would have been potentially unhelpful.

[16]On average, twenty to twenty-five students attended each class session in the second semester.

content, instructor effectiveness, and applicability of the course to future ministry.[17] The second form prompted students to evaluate another member of their class table group. Class members were asked to assess another student's counseling knowledge and counseling competency as a result of their participation in the course.[18]

In addition to the design, development, and implementation of FCC, the implementation period of the project also included the writing of a proposed philosophy of care and counseling for potential inclusion at TVC.

Writing the Proposed Philosophy
of Care and Counseling

As was mentioned earlier, the results of the BCCA indicated an opportunity to strengthen TVC's understanding of biblical care and counsel, as well as its practical implementation. The two-semester course FCC was designed to serve as a training model for equipping leaders in biblical counseling. The written philosophy this project produced was meant to move TVC toward a consistent definition of biblical counseling and a philosophical framework for its practice.

The written philosophy was written early during the second semester of FCC.[19] The first section was dedicated to defining biblical counseling, and included a discussion of the presented definition's individual components and the specific goals of counseling ministry. The second section described the philosophical framework for care at TVC. This section first addressed the biblical foundation for care and counsel, as well as the appropriate personnel that should be involved in counseling ministry.[20] The section next addressed the role TVC should play in developing and training leaders in biblical

---

[17]This evaluation form is included in appendix 8.

[18]This evaluation form is included in appendix 7.

[19]The written philosophy of care and counseling is included in its entirety in appendix 2.

[20]This section of the philosophy was based on ch. 2 of this project.

counseling, and the contexts (both formal and informal) in which biblical counseling should occur.[21] The final section of the philosophy described the potential limitations for care at TVC. Based upon the results of the BCCA related to respondents' confidence in providing care in complex situations, this section sought to acknowledge the limitations of TVC's leaders while affirming the value of equipping for counseling ministry. This section also included discussion on two broad areas (mental illness and brain disorders, and trauma and domestic violence) where TVC can benefit from external help in providing biblical care and counsel to its members. The final aspect of this section was a statement regarding TVC's relationship with external counseling resources. This statement affirmed that in certain situations TVC can faithfully partner with professional counselors and MHPs, while also moving toward the goal of equipping the saints for the work of ministry.

The Post-Implementation Period: May 2017

FCC concluded in early May 2017. The purpose of the post-implementation period of the project was to compile and analyze data from course participants related to the effectiveness of FCC, and from an expert panel related to the course curriculum and written philosophy. The post-implementation period included two primary elements. First, FCC participants were invited to complete a post-course distribution of the BCCA. Second, the course curriculum and written philosophy were sent for evaluation to an expert panel comprised of TVC elders, LPCs affiliated with ABC, and three pastors at churches outside of TVC.

---

[21]This section was based on ch. 3 of this project. An additional document describing the potential application of biblical counseling ministry in informal and formal care contexts at TVC is included in its entirety in appendix 3.

**The Post-Course BCCA
and Instructor Evaluations**

During the final week of FCC, class participants were sent an email with a link to complete a post-course distribution of the BCCA. Of the nearly thirty who remained active in the course through both semesters, twenty-seven students completed the second BCCA. In addition to the BCCA, a course instructor filled out the same peer evaluation form as was completed by FCC students, in order to provide feedback for each member of the course.

Expert Panel Evaluations

Alongside participants' course evaluations, seven members of an expert panel provided evaluative ratings and commentary for the written philosophy and course curriculum. This panel included two TVC Dallas elders, Marshall Smith and Matt Younger; two LPCs with either present or historic affiliations with ABC, Eric Bryant (FCC's co-instructor) and Greg Wilson; and three pastors serving at churches outside of TVC: Mike Dsane, John Elmore and Tim Wallace.[22]

The expert panel was sent separate evaluation forms for the course curriculum and written philosophy. For the course curriculum, the expert panel was asked to rate the course's biblical and theological faithfulness, the course's scope in covering the topics it addressed, the effectiveness of the methodology the course introduced to participants, and the applicability of the course in equipping for future ministry. For the philosophy, the panel was asked to rate its biblical and theological faithfulness, and its scope in describing an applicable process for care and counsel at TVC.[23]

---

[22]Marshall Smith serves as a lay elder at TVC Dallas, while Matt Younger is one of TVC Dallas' staff pastors. In addition to his professional service as a LPC, Greg Wilson also serves as a deacon of care at TVC's Flower Mound Campus and is the director of TVC's larger care initiative (see ch. 1, pp. 15-16). Mike Dsane is the lead pastor at King's Harbor Church in Torrance, California. John Elmore is the director of Recovery ministries at Watermark Community Church in Dallas, Texas. Tim Wallace is the senior pastor of Grace Bible Church in Rainbow City, Alabama.

[23]The data compiled through the post-course BCCA, student evaluations, and the results of the expert panel is discussed in ch. 5 of this project.

Conclusion

The implementation of this ministry project included three periods: the preparation period, the implementation period, and the post-implementation period. In the preparation period, the BCCA was distributed, the initial course design was completed, and course participants were selected. In the implementation period, the course was written and taught, and the written philosophy was completed. In the post-implementation period, evaluations and a post-course BCCA were completed by students, and an expert panel evaluated both the course curriculum and written philosophy. The final chapter discusses the project's results and provides concluding reflections about the project's overall effectiveness in equipping leaders for care and counseling at TVC.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

Introduction

The purpose of this project was to equip leaders at The Village Church to care

and counsel biblically. The previous chapter described the implementation of the project,

including the process of developing a two-semester biblical counseling curriculum and a

written philosophy of care, and teaching the curriculum to a group of leaders at The

Village Church's (TVC) Dallas Northway Campus. The goal of this final chapter is to

evaluate the overall effectiveness of the project. First, the project's purpose will be

considered. Second, whether the project met its designed goals will be explored. Third,

several strengths and weaknesses of the project will be presented. Fourth, some suggested

changes will be offered based upon reflection at the project's conclusion. Fifth, and

finally, some theological and personal reflections on the project will be provided.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

This project began by acknowledging the long history of faithful biblical

counseling ministry at TVC. It also observed that despite this historical foundation, a

philosophical and methodological gap hindered the church's overall effectiveness in

providing care for its members. This gap, and the needs it exposed, informed the rationale

of the project: to improve TVC's conceptual understanding of biblical counseling

ministry, and to strengthen the church's efforts at equipping leaders in the personal

ministry of the Word. This project's written philosophy of care and counseling sought to

address TVC's conceptual deficiencies. It did so by providing a definition for biblical

counseling, establishing an applicable framework for its implementation at TVC, and

discussing its potential limitations. The project's two-semester course curriculum established a model for equipping leaders in the personal ministry of the Word.

The purpose of this project was to equip leaders at TVC to care and counsel biblically. By addressing TVC's philosophical weaknesses through the written care philosophy, and by equipping approximately thirty leaders at TVC Dallas in biblical counseling skills, the purpose of this project was thus fulfilled.

Evaluation of the Project's Goals

The first goal of the project was to assess the knowledge and practice of biblical counseling skills among TVC's leadership. This assessment occurred by administering a Biblical Care and Counsel Assessment (BCCA) to a select group of leaders at TVC Dallas (including elders, deacons, staff members, and Home Group, Recovery Group, and Steps leaders).[1] The BCCA consisted of sixteen questions that collected demographic data and surveyed respondents' pursuit of spiritual disciplines and discipleship ministry. The BCCA also included twenty-five questions that gauged respondents' biblical counseling knowledge and competency. This goal was successfully met when seventy-two individuals completed the BCCA. The results of the BCCA were compiled and analyzed to form the basis for this project's written philosophy of care and the two-semester course curriculum in biblical counseling.

The second goal of the project was to develop a conceptual framework for biblical counseling and a two-semester curriculum designed to equip TVC leadership in biblical counseling competency. The conceptual framework was developed by writing a proposed philosophy of care and counseling that defined biblical counseling, established the parameters for its implementation, and discussed its potential limitations.[2] The two-

---

[1]The BCCA is included in its entirety in appendix 1.

[2]The written philosophy of care and counseling is included in its entirety in appendix 2.

semester course curriculum was developed by adapting John Henderson's *Equipped to Counsel* as the basis for a twenty-three-week course that trained a group of TVC leaders in the foundations and practice of biblical care and counsel.[3] Upon completion of both the written philosophy and two-semester curriculum, these resources were submitted for evaluation by an expert panel.[4] For the written care philosophy, the panel was asked to complete an evaluation rubric that rated the philosophy's biblical and theological faithfulness, and its scope in describing an applicable framework for care and counseling at TVC.[5] The panel was also asked to complete a similar rubric to evaluate the course curriculum's biblical and theological faithfulness, its scope in covering the topics it addressed, its counseling methodology, and its applicability in equipping leaders for future ministry.[6] This goal was successfully met when 100 percent of the expert panel's responses met or exceeded the sufficient level of the evaluation criterion for both the written philosophy and two-semester course curriculum.

The third goal of this project was to help equip TVC leadership in biblical counseling competency by teaching the curriculum. The course *Foundations of Care and Counsel* (FCC) was taught over two semesters (September to December 2016 and February to May 2017). FCC was taught by two instructors, and included a combination of instruction, group discussion, counseling observation, and counseling practice.[7] The first semester of FCC established the biblical and theological foundation for personal ministry, while the second semester presented an applicable model for biblical

---

[3]John Henderson, *Equipped to Counsel: A Training Course in Biblical Counseling*, 2nd ed. (Fort Worth, TX: Association of Biblical Counselors, 2014).

[4]The expert panel consisted of two licensed counselors with present or historical affiliations with ABC (Greg Wilson and Eric Bryant), two TVC elders (Marshall Smith and Matt Younger), and three pastors not affiliated with TVC (Mike Dsane, John Elmore, and Tim Wallace).

[5]For the evaluation rubric for the written care philosophy, see appendix 4.

[6]For the evaluation rubric for the two-semester course curriculum, see appendix 5.

[7]This project's authors served as one of the course instructors. Eric Bryant, LPC, served as the additional instructor. Eric is a biblical counselor and covenant member of TVC Dallas.

counseling. Class participants included TVC deacons, Home Group leaders, Recovery Group leaders, Steps leaders, and other ministry leaders.

The success of this goal was measured in the following ways. First, twenty-six students completed a pre-course and post-course BCCA to measure the effectiveness of the course curriculum in equipping for biblical counseling knowledge. A t-test for dependent samples determined that there was a statistically significant change ($t_{(9)}$=3.147, p<.004) between the pre-course and post-course BCCA results, indicating an overall growth in students' comprehension of biblical counseling concepts. Second, growth in class participants' counseling competency was measured by the completion of an evaluation rubric for each student by one course instructor and one other class member. This aspect of the goal was considered successfully met when 100 percent of students' responses and 95 percent of the instructor's responses met or exceeded the sufficient level of evaluation criterion for each class member, respectively.[8] Third, course participants were asked to complete a course evaluation form that rated students' satisfaction with the course content, instructors' presentation skills, and the course's applicability for future ministry.[9] This aspect of the goal was considered successfully met when 80 percent of course participants completed the post-class evaluation form.

The fourth goal of this project was to contribute to a strategic plan to increase care and counseling skills at TVC. The conclusion of the project overlapped with a broader, ongoing initiative at TVC designed to strengthen the church's overall care practices. The initiative will produce a strategic plan designed to bring alignment to TVC's care philosophy across its five campuses, as well as an accompanying care "playbook" that will assist in implementing the plan. The project's contribution to this initiative consisted in assisting in the development of the initial theological and

---

[8]For the evaluation rubric for course participants, see appendix 7.

[9]For the evaluation rubric for the biblical counseling course, see appendix 8.

philosophical sections of the playbook. This goal was considered successfully met when specific sections of this written project were evaluated by the care initiative team and adapted for inclusion in the playbook.[10]

Strengths of the Project

The first strength of the project was the effectiveness of the two-semester course curriculum in increasing biblical counseling knowledge and skills among participants. That there was such an increase in counseling competency was demonstrated by comparing class participants' pre- and post-course BCCA results in four areas.

First, the post-course BCCA revealed that there was an increase in students' overall confidence in the sufficiency of Scripture for counseling, and in their belief that Christians possess the necessary resources to care for and counsel one another.[11] Second, students noted an improvement in how they viewed their own ability to disciple and provide care for others.[12] Third, the post-course BCCA demonstrated a greater emphasis

---

[10]Sections adapted for inclusion in the playbook included portions of the written care philosophy (see appendix 2), discussion of the two primary expressions of counseling ministry (*parakaletic* and *nouthetic* care; see ch. 2, pp. 35-36), and the descriptions of informal and formal care contexts at TVC (see appendix 3).

[11]This increase was observed by creating averages of the pre- and post-test scores for each of the twenty-five statements in the BCCA that utilized a 6-point Likert scale to rate participant responses. The pre- and post-test scores were then compared to determine the percentage difference for each question.

For the statement, "The Bible contains all the necessary information for providing wise, godly counsel," the pre-test average was 87.82 percent, while the post-test average was 98.08 percent (a difference of 10.26 percent). For the statement, "The Bible is a sufficient resource for all forms of care and counsel," the pre-test average was 81.41 percent and the post-test average was 91.67 percent (a difference of 10.26 percent). For the statement, "Christians possess the necessary spiritual resources to care for and counsel one another," the pre-test average was 80.77 percent and the post-test average was 94.23 percent (a difference of 13.46 percent). For the statement, "The Bible provides principles that help believers respond to every type of problem in a godly way," the pre-test average was 86.54 percent, and the post-test average was 94.23 percent (a difference of 7.69 percent).

[12]For the statement, "I am confident in my ability to disciple another believer," the pre-test average was 64.10 percent, while the post-test average was 81.41 percent (a difference of 17.31 percent). In response to the statement, "I know how to ask questions designed to uncover heart issues related to discipleship and biblical care and counsel," the pre-test average was 63.46 percent and the post-test average 84.62 percent (a difference of 21.15 percent). For the statement, "I possess a biblical method for discipling or for offering care and counsel for another believer," the pre-test average was 55.77 percent, while the post-test average was 84.62 percent (a difference of 28.85 percent).

among students on the biblical heart as the focus for counseling ministry.[13] Fourth,

students reported greater confidence in providing care for those struggling with specific

problems.[14]

The second strength of the project was the emphasis in FCC on developing a

consistent methodological framework for understanding people and their problems

biblically. This framework in turn produced an increased concern to provide patient,

loving care and counsel. In completing the post-course evaluation form, several students

remarked that the most valuable aspects of the course were the tools they received that

equipped them view people biblically, to ask thoughtful questions, and to explore one's

heart responses to his or her situation in light of the truths of the gospel. Others stated that

the course showed them how to care more deeply in difficult situations, and to see

counseling and discipleship as shared processes that each require patience, prayer, and

love for others. In addition, the feedback of the expert panel affirmed that the curriculum

provided students with an effective counseling methodology.

The third strength of the project was students' enthusiasm for the material

taught in FCC. Throughout the course, students eagerly interacted with course instructors

---

[13]For the statement, "The heart is the focus for all forms of discipleship and biblical counseling," the pre-test average was 81.41 percent and the post-test average was 95.51 percent (a difference of 14.10 percent).

[14]For the statement, "If approached by a friend struggling with anxiety or depression, I would first encourage him or her to talk to a pastor or a professional counselor," the pre-test average was 55.13 percent, while the post-test average was 45.51 percent (a decrease of 9.62 percent). For the statement, "If approached by a friend struggling with sexual temptation, I would first encourage him or her to talk to a pastor or professional counselor," the pre-test average was 48.08 percent and the post-test average was 44.32 percent (a decrease of 3.85 percent). For the statement, "If approached by friends struggling in their marriage, I would first encourage them to talk to a pastor or a professional counselor," the pre-test average was 58.97 percent and the post-test average was 50.64 percent (a decrease of 8.33 percent). For the statement, "If approached by a friend struggling with anger, I would first encourage him or her to talk to a pastor or a professional counselor," the pre-test average was 48.08 percent and the post-test average was 42.95 percent (a decrease of 5.13 percent). For the statement, "If approached by a friend who recently received a psychiatric or psychological diagnosis (e.g. ADHD, obsessive-compulsive disorder, bipolar disorder, borderline personality disorder, schizophrenia, etc.), I would feel equipped to provide loving, biblical care and counsel," the pre-test average was 41.03 percent, but the post-test average was 57.69 percent (an increase of 16.67 percent). Though at times subtle, the average difference for each response (whether stated positively or negatively) seems to indicate a greater overall confidence in ministering to people wrestling with common or complex counseling problems.

in a way that demonstrated significant interaction with and reflection upon the course material. The depth of their questions, the maturity of their observations, and the consideration extended in the classroom to other students with diverging viewpoints all demonstrated the relevance of the course material for students' lives. In the post-course evaluation, many participants stated that this course changed the way they viewed ministry relationships. Others stated that the course clarified the confusion they felt when thinking about counseling as a specific ministry expression, and helped bridge the gap between care and discipleship. In the final class session, students were invited to provide feedback based upon their experiences in the course, and offered similar statements (along with gracious critiques) that revealed an overall appreciation for the time spent in FCC.

The fourth strength of the project was the opportunity, through the development of the written care philosophy, to contribute to TVC's broader initiative to strengthen care practices within the church. In many ways, this project began based on my observations related to TVC's pursuit of care, and from a growing awareness that continued education in biblical counseling would benefit me in my pastoral role. However, the commencement of the project also coincided with an elder-led initiative dedicated to examining TVC's care processes. Early in the development of the project, I was invited to join this elder-led initiative, which afforded me the opportunity to present the written care philosophy for the benefit of this larger team. While I am confident that the project would have positively impacted TVC's pursuit of care regardless of its affiliation with the larger care initiative, its inclusion has now provided a more direct opportunity to contribute in meaningful ways to the pursuit of Christ-centered care within the church.

Weaknesses of the Project

Though the project was effective in meetings its specified goals, there were also some weaknesses. The first was the insufficient amount of class time dedicated to counseling practice, and the lack of class sessions specifically devoted to developing counseling skills. Several students stated in the post-course evaluation that they desired more time to practice the skills they learned in class sessions. In addition, others remarked that they felt the course was too heavily weighted on theology and counseling concepts than on counseling methodology.

The second weakness was the limited scope of the counseling curriculum. At the conclusion of the course, many students expressed a desire to apply the framework they learned in FCC to specific problems regularly encountered in their respective care contexts. Additionally, some on the expert panel remarked that though the course curriculum was sufficient for teaching the basics of biblical counseling, it needed to go farther in addressing specific counseling problems. Though the limited scope of the course was intentional (to focus on establishing a biblical and theological foundation for counseling), it seems that greater attention could have been given to the application of such a foundation to specific problems faced in ministry.

The third weakness was the absence of meaningful accountability for course assignments, along with an overall excess of assigned reading and written assignments. At the course's conclusion, several students stated (both in the evaluation form and during the last class session) that the amount of assigned reading was too great to engage at a deep level. Additionally, as was discussed in the previous chapter, students' faithfulness in completing the course's written assignments waned as the class progressed. However, because the course was voluntary in nature, it was difficult to enforce a meaningful measure of accountability for students to complete written papers as assigned.

The fourth weakness was the class location. FCC met on Sunday mornings in order to facilitate involvement from the widest leadership group possible. Because of the high initial interest in the course, the class met in the church's gymnasium in order to accommodate the number of students initially enrolled. The gym was the largest and most prudent space to host a class that overlapped so significantly with TVC's Sunday morning services.[15] Though the gym provided ample space for the class, its size proved difficult for students to hear one another or course instructors if these individuals did not speak clearly or at a relatively high volume level.

What I Would Do Differently

Upon reflection at the conclusion of this project, there are four things I would do differently. First, I would restructure the lessons of FCC to provide more opportunity for counseling observation and practice. At least half of four lessons at the end of the second semester were devoted to practicing counseling skills among small groups of class members. Increasing the number of lessons that included specific counseling practice from four to six or eight would provide not only greater opportunity to develop counseling skills, but also more time for instructor feedback for students.

Second, I would include more instruction on specific counseling problems. While the limited scope of the course was intentional, both students and members of the expert panel mentioned that they wished the material included more discussion of specific problems faced in ministry. In the future, I would either condense some of the course material to allow for more discussion on the application of the course to practical

---

[15]The class met from 9:00a.m. to 11:00a.m. most Sunday mornings from September to December 2016 and February to May 2017. TVC Dallas' Sunday morning services meet at 9:00a.m. and 11:15a.m.

ministry contexts, or I would consider creating an additional course dedicated specially to training for typical counseling problems people face.[16]

Third, I would reduce the overall amount of assigned class homework. For each class session, students were assigned an average of at least one chapter from the ETC curriculum, one article from the *Journal of Biblical Counseling* (JBC), and one chapter from one of the assigned books for the course. In addition, students were assigned three written papers per semester (with an additional biographical paper assigned in the first semester). If FCC were to be offered again, I would assign less reading per week and fewer written assignments, and would perhaps vary the type of assignments to avoid unnecessary student fatigue in completing course requirements.[17]

Fourth, I would utilize a different room for class meetings. While TVC Dallas' gymnasium was an acceptable venue for the course, it was one with significant limitations related both to course instruction and class participation. During one class week, the course met in another room at the church campus because of a scheduling conflict. This temporary venue change prompted many students to make known their preference for a different location for class meetings. In the future, I would think more strategically about where the course would meet, and would prioritize the overall class experience rather than a venue that allowed for a greater number of students but limited overall enthusiasm for the course.

---

[16]While much of the content taught was applied to specific counseling problems through case-studies and class discussion, the foundational nature of the course prohibited organized instruction around particular topics. If an additional course were offered, FCC would be a required prerequisite for participation.

[17]Potential options for alternative assignments would be brief written reports completed after viewing counseling observation videos (such as those produced by the Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship), providing written descriptions of an assigned counseling relationship for reflection and instructor feedback, or a brief paper that addresses the application of counseling skills to a specific problem faced in ministry or in one's own life.

Theological Reflections

Several theological emphases have been reinforced through the development and implementation of the project. First are the depths of Scripture to provide meaningful help to the problems people face. The concept of Scripture's sufficiency for counseling ministry is a complicated issue; counselors must be able to both understand the meaning of God's Word as well as its appropriate application in the lives of counselees. In addition, the complexity of a person's life and the problems he or she may face requires that caregivers approach such ministry with caution and sensitivity. However, though humans are complex creatures, God's Word anticipates the complexities of one's life (while not dismissing them), and speaks to the greatest areas of human need with clarity and grace. Scripture is able, above any other resource, to accurately account for human dignity as God's image bearers, to diagnose the true impact of human depravity because of sin, and to genuinely offer the hope for redemption through the person and work of Jesus Christ. Regardless of the depth or complexity of the problem faced, the Bible is able to provide what is needed to faithfully respond to God in every circumstance one may experience.[18]

Second is the "long game" of discipleship that surfaces upon thorough reflection on Scripture. Change unto Christ, while at times sudden and dramatic, is characteristically a slow process, and is nearly always met with more challenges than originally expected. Just as the Scriptures are able to anticipate the complexities of human life, they also portray God's patience in guiding his people toward holiness and increasing Christlikeness. In so doing God's Word provides necessary encouragement for

---

[18]With this statement, I would affirm that though not every type of human problem is explicitly detailed in Scripture, the Bible speaks to the core issues that inform all human suffering (both that which results from the effects of sin on creation, and what results from human sin, either one's own or another's). Thus, the Scriptures are sufficient for counseling, because the Scriptures address the whole of human life before God.

counselors as they contemplate long-term growth and sanctification, both in their own lives and in the lives of those they counsel.

Third is the biblical responsibility of pastors, elders, and other church leaders to equip church members for the work of ministry. FCC provided a unique opportunity for extended equipping in a way distinct from most other current training avenues at TVC.[19] Despite periodic attempts in years past at providing this type of instruction, FCC represented the first extended course offering of its kind in the history of TVC Dallas. The diversity of course instructors (a lay leader and a staff elder) also reflected the breadth of equipping roles described in Scripture (Eph 4:11-12). Based upon the feedback from course participants and the expert panel, the content presented in FCC provides a strong foundation for future equipping, not only at TVC Dallas, but at the church's other campuses as well.

Fourth is the shared calling of the church to care for and counsel one another. Participants in FCC left the course with a greater awareness of their responsibility to pursue Christlike care that results in Christ-centered change. As an elder and as a course instructor, I felt the distinct privilege and burden of providing care to our church members through the development of the course curriculum. In both the completion of the written philosophy and through my involvement in TVC's larger care initiative, I have been able to witness the manifold ways TVC is seeking to grow in how it equips all levels of church leadership in the ministry of biblical care and counseling.

Fifth, and finally, is the faithfulness of God to bless the study of his Word. This entire process (from the written project, to the development of the care philosophy and the two-semester curriculum) has been imbued with the personal study of God's Word.

---

[19]This historic weakness is being actively addressed, however. For example, TVC's Training Program is in its third year, and offers a year-long program focused on theological education. In addition, similar classes to FCC focusing on biblical counseling training have also occurred at TVC's Flower Mound and Plano campuses. Additionally, TVC's larger care initiative will result in the development of care training for several levels of church leadership.

FCC course participants spent considerable time reading and reflecting on Scripture throughout the course. In both my preparation, and in students' engagement with the Bible, God was faithful to bring new insights from his Word to our collective understandings of his grace in the gospel of Jesus and his presence through the ministry of his saints to one another.

Personal Reflections

I began this doctoral program because of an interest in and growing love for biblical counseling ministry. Still new to full-time pastoral ministry, I sensed a need for continued training in light of the many care needs present in my ministry context. In the same way, this ministry project began as the result of observing areas of needed improvement in counseling competency among TVC staff and leaders. I was hopeful that through the ongoing development and implementation of the project, I would experience personal growth in ministry skills, and that the specific interventions described in the preceding pages would impact the overall culture of care at TVC.

During the approximately two years that have elapsed since the inception of this project, God has regularly exceeded my initial expectations of the project's impact, both on me personally and on TVC corporately. I am leaving this project with a renewed fervor for the gospel of Jesus Christ and belief in God's power to bring change. I am also humbled by the opportunity to participate in shaping and strengthening TVC's overall pursuit of care for its members. At this project's conclusion, I am more confident than ever that God intends to use his children to minister the glorious truths of the gospel to one-another. I am even more assured that he will empower his people for this effort by his grace.

Conclusion

The purpose of this project was to equip leaders at TVC to care and counsel biblically. The overall effectiveness of this project to fulfill its purpose and meet all

assigned goals was assessed by utilizing specific research methodology. The project possessed several strengths, as well as several areas of weakness that will help shape future efforts for equipping at TVC. Throughout the project, God was faithful to remind all involved of his power to produce life change in Jesus Christ through the Spirit-led ministry of his Word.

"Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen" (Eph 3:20-21).

APPENDIX 1

BIBLICAL CARE AND COUNSEL ASSESSMENT

The following instrument is the Biblical Care and Counsel Assessment (BCCA). Sixteen general questions are asked followed by a twenty-five question biblical care and counsel survey that utilizes a six-point Likert scale. The instrument's purpose is to assess respondents' familiarity biblical counseling concepts while also measuring current counseling competency.

BIBLICAL CARE AND COUNSEL ASSESSMENT

Agreement to Participate

The assessment you are about to complete is designed to identify the current understanding and practices of biblical care and counseling of the participant. This assessment is being administered by Brady Goodwin for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project.

The information gleaned from these questions will be utilized for a project designed to increase effectiveness in biblical care and counsel by leaders at The Village Church. Depending on the degree of involvement you wish to have in the project, you may be also asked to answer the same set of questions at the project's conclusion. Those who complete this assessment will also be invited to participate in a two-semester class designed to increase skills in providing biblical care and counsel.

Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. Participation in both the assessment or the class is strictly voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. By completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

Date: _____

Please designate a four-digit ID number: _____

Age: _____   **Gender:** _____

Directions

Please answer the following multiple choice questions by choosing the most appropriate response.

1. Are you a covenant member of The Village Church (TVC)?
   a. Yes
   b. No

2. Do you serve in any of the following leadership roles at TVC (select all that apply)?
   a. Home Group Leader
   b. Recovery Group Leader
   c. Steps Leader
   d. Elder
   e. Deacon

f. Staff member
g. None of the above

3. Do you serve in any of the following ministry contexts outside of TVC (select all that apply)?
    a. TVC's Partner ministries (Champions of Hope, Young Life, Reconciliation Outreach, Seek the Peace, Involved for Life, Communities in Schools)
    b. Other Outreach/Mercy ministries
    c. Local/Global missions (short or long-term)
    d. Discipleship/Evangelism ministries (i.e. Campus Crusade)
    e. Other

4. On average, how often do you read Scripture?
    a. Daily
    b. Several times a week
    c. Weekly
    d. Monthly
    e. I do not regularly read Scripture

5. On average, how frequently do you pray?
    a. Daily
    b. Several times a week
    c. Weekly
    d. Monthly
    e. I do not regularly pray.

6. Are you currently being discipled by anyone?
    a. Yes
    b. No

7. Are you currently serving as a mentor in a discipleship relationship?
    a. Yes
    b. No

8. If answering **yes** for question 6 or 7: How often do you discuss personal struggles or problems with your discipleship mentor/mentee?
    a. Several times a week
    b. Weekly
    c. Monthly
    d. I do not discuss personal struggles with my mentor/mentee
    e. Not Applicable

9. Approximately how many conversations have you had **in the last month** where someone has approached you for guidance regarding a personal problem?
    a. None

b. 0-3
c. 4-7
d. 8-10
e. 10 or more

Please answer the following questions in the space allotted below.

10. Provide a short definition for the term *discipleship.*

_____
_____
_____

11. Provide a short definition for the term *biblical counseling.*

_____
_____
_____

12. Provide a short definition for the term *secular counseling*.

_____
_____
_____

Please answer the following questions by choosing the most appropriate answer.

13. To what degree is the church responsible to make disciples?
    a. Not responsible
    b. Partially responsible
    c. Completely responsible

14. To what degree is the church responsible to provide care and counsel for its members?
    a. Not responsible
    b. Partially responsible
    c. Completely responsible

15. To what degree does church leadership (elders, deacons, and staff) bear responsibility to equip the church for discipleship and care and counsel?
    a. Not responsible
    b. Partially responsible
    c. Completely responsible

16. To what degree do church members bear responsibility to pursue discipleship and provide care and counsel for one-another?
   a. Not responsible
   b. Partially responsible
   c. Completely responsible

Please respond to the following statements with most appropriate response from the options below:

SD = Strongly Disagree
D = Disagree
DS = Disagree Somewhat
AS = Agree Somewhat
A = Agree
SA = Strongly Agree

1. The Bible teaches that Christians should disciple one another. SD D DS AS A SA

2. The Bible teaches that Christians should provide biblical care and counsel for one another. SD D DS AS A SA

3. The Bible contains all the necessary information for providing wise, godly counsel. SD D DS AS A SA

4. The Bible is a sufficient resource for all forms of care and counsel. SD D DS AS A SA

5. Christians possess the necessary spiritual resources to care for and counsel one another. SD D DS AS A SA

6. I am confident in my ability to disciple another believer. SD D DS AS A SA

7. I am confident in my ability to compassionately care for and comprehensively counsel another believer. SD D DS AS A SA

8. The heart is the focus for all forms of discipleship and biblical counseling.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

9. I know how to ask questions designed to uncover heart issues related to discipleship and biblical care and counsel.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

10. I possess a biblical method for discipling or for offering care and counsel for another believer.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

11. If approached by a friend struggling with anxiety or depression, I would first encourage him or her to talk to a pastor or professional counselor.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

12. If approached by a friend struggling with sexual temptation, I would first encourage him or her to talk to a pastor or professional counselor.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

13. If approached by friends struggling in their marriage, I would first encourage them to talk to a pastor or professional counselor.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

14. If approached by a friend struggling with anger, I would first encourage him or her to talk to a pastor or professional counselor.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

15. If approached by a friend who recently received a psychiatric or psychological diagnosis (ADHD, obsessive-compulsive disorder, bipolar disorder, borderline personality disorder, schizophrenia etc.), I would feel equipped to provide loving, biblical care and counsel.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

16. Sin is the ultimate cause of all personal problems.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

17. Our historic personal relationships bear a determinative influence on our lives today.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

18. Anxiety and depression are problems that originate with a chemical imbalance in the brain.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

19. Certain forms of secular counseling are necessary for adequately address some problems.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

20. The Bible does not address every problem people experience.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

21. The Bible provides principles that help believers respond to every type of problem in a godly way.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

22. I would like to learn how to provide biblical care and counsel for others.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

23. I would like to learn how to disciple other believers.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

24. I would like to learn how to apply Scripture to my own struggles.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

25. The Village Church effectively equips its leaders in discipling others and providing biblical care and counsel.   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

APPENDIX 2

PROPOSED PHILOSOPHY OF CARE
AND COUNSELING FOR
THE VILLAGE CHURCH

Introduction

The Village Church is a body of believers committed to providing loving,

biblical care for its members and attendees. Throughout much of the church's history,

such care has been pursued through biblical counseling ministry. However, despite the

church's commitment to providing wise, biblical care, a consistent philosophy and

methodology of care has yet to be developed and implemented on a broad level. This gap

between commitment and practice has resulted in uneven care practices, and has exposed

the need for a comprehensive definition and philosophical framework for biblical care

and counsel at TVC.

As a means of helping to bridge the gap between TVC's commitment and

practice of Christ-centered care, this brief paper will present a proposed definition of

biblical counseling and philosophy of care at TVC. The definition of biblical counseling

will address both the process of biblical counseling, as well as its goals. Discussion of

TVC's philosophy of care will include consideration of several pertinent practical

questions related to the pursuit of care and counsel. First, who are the individuals and

groups that are to provide care at TVC? Second, how should TVC understand its role in

the training, development, and deployment of its leaders for the purpose of providing

biblical counsel at TVC? Third, what should the parameters be for biblical counseling at

TVC, and what potential limits exist for its employment, specifically as it relates to care

situations of greater sensitivity, intensity, and complexity? Lastly, in the presence of such

complex care needs, what should the relationship be between TVC and its pursuit of care

and the appropriate utilization of external care resources (i.e. professional counseling, psychiatry, psychology, social services agencies, etc.) when warranted?

Definition of Biblical Counseling

A brief definition of biblical counseling is this: *biblical counseling is the personal, heart-focused application of God's Word to issues of sin and suffering in light of the hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

Unpacking the Definition

This definition has many components that warrant further exploration. First, biblical counseling is personal. It occurs between people in the context of relationship. Biblical counseling can thus also be referred to as the personal ministry of the Word.[1] Whereas preaching from the pulpit takes place one-to-many, biblical counseling occurs one-to-one or one-to-few.[2]

Second, biblical counseling is heart-focused. This means that biblical counseling seeks to address one's inner life, or what the Bible repeatedly and collectively refers to as *the heart*. The biblical concept of the heart encompasses one's thoughts and beliefs (cognition), desires and emotions (affection), and actions, commitments and choices (volition). Biblical counseling is personal ministry that considers one's responses to his or her world on a cognitive, affective, and volitional level.

---

[1]Because the label *biblical counseling* has been used in various (and at times, confusing) ways to refer to different counseling approaches, it may be advisable to consider an alternative term that captures the essence of the above definition while accurately describing the process that follows. Such possible terms include *soul care*, *biblical soul care*, *personal ministry*, *biblical discipleship*, *care and counsel*, *Christ-centered counseling*, and *gospel counseling*. While this paper employs the label *biblical counseling*, other descriptors could be used that avoid some of this confusion while maintaining a vision for Christ-centered, biblically-based, personal, heart-focused ministry. For more on how and why a church might utilize different terms used to describe biblical, Christ-centered care and counsel, see Robert K. Cheong, "Why We 'Care' Instead of 'Counsel' Each Other," *The Journal of Biblical Counseling* 30, no. 3 (2016): 2-6.

[2]John Henderson, *Equipped to Counsel: A Training Course in Biblical Counseling*, 2nd ed. (Fort Worth, TX: Association of Biblical Counselors, 2014), 16.

Third, biblical counseling utilizes Scripture "with a full commitment to its authority and sufficiency, convinced that from beginning to end, it reveals Christ and his powerful redeeming grace addressing the needs and struggles of the human condition."[3] Biblical counseling is pursued under the belief that Scripture is sufficient to address the full breadth of human experience—who we are, why we do what we do, and how God intends for us to relate to him in his world.[4] Because Scripture is sufficient, it therefore contains all that is necessary to equip Christians to live faithfully before God in every circumstance, and to equip them to minister God's truth to others amid all forms of sin and suffering.[5]

Fourth, biblical counseling seeks to apply the truths of God's sufficient Word to issues of personal sin and suffering. Because sin (both original and personal) is the ultimate cause of human brokenness and suffering, such issues must be explored in light of the truths of Scripture if the comfort of the gospel and the transforming grace of Jesus are to be known in one's life. Because suffering will come to every person, biblical counseling must also endeavor to consider the eternal hope of the gospel and its implications for Christians amid their sorrows.

Fifth, and finally, biblical counseling exalts the person of Jesus Christ, and is pursued with the specific purpose of empowering men and women to love and treasure

---

[3]"CCEF Model of Care," accessed June 29, 2016, https://www.ccef.org/about/mission-beliefs-history/model-of-care.

[4]Jeremy Pierre, "Scripture Is Sufficient, but to Do What?," in *Scripture and Counseling: God's Word for Life in a Broken World*, ed. Bob Kellemen and Jeff Forrey (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 94.

[5]That Scripture is sufficient for counseling others means that Scripture provides (1) an accurate and comprehensive view of people and life's problems through a biblical conception of human experience, and (2) contains all that is necessary in terms of content to address the problems people face in light of God's plan of redemption through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. See David Powlison, "The Sufficiency of Scripture to Diagnose and Cure Souls," *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 23, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 2. This understanding of Scripture's sufficiency does not imply that extrabiblical resources (such as the observations of modern psychology) are of no value when considering the care of one's soul. Rather, to say that Scripture is sufficient means that the Bible contains all that is necessary to fully address human life in light of the revelation of Jesus Christ. Where other resources are considered, they must always be seen as subordinate and subject to the corrective lens of Scripture, and should therefore be utilized with biblical goals for counseling (i.e., progressive sanctification) in view.

him. There is no one more worthy of one's devotion than Christ, "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:3). Though biblical counseling is concerned with helping men and women consider their problems in a biblical manner, such consideration serves the larger purpose of directing one's attention to the glory, majesty, grace, mercy, and love of the only Person able to produce lasting, God-centered change.

Thus, biblical counseling is the personal, heart-focused application of God's Word to issues of sin and suffering in light of the hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ. However, more than simply arriving at a definition biblical counseling, we must also consider what biblical counseling aims to produce in one's life. The goal of biblical counseling is two-fold: to know a person's situation fully, in order to help them image Christ rightly.[6]

The Goal of Biblical Counseling

First, biblical counseling ministry seeks to know a person's situation fully. Proverbs 18:13 states that "if a man gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame." Applied to personal ministry, this passage states that it is foolish to provide counsel without a comprehensive understanding of one's circumstances, or consideration of one's responses to those circumstances. Rather, sufficient time must be given to knowing one's situation, so that a right response may be given. Therefore, biblical counseling pursues a thorough understanding of one's experiences, as well as his or her heart responses, in order to more clearly examine the balance that exists between what happens outside the heart and what proceeds from the heart. In other words, through biblical counseling one who counsels wants to know not just what a person does, but why he or she does it.

---

[6]These goals adapted from Jeremy Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life: Connecting Christ to Human Experience* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2016).

Second, biblical counseling intends to help one image Christ rightly in increasing measure as he or she responds to the various trials and sufferings of human experience. In Ephesians 5:1-2, Paul writes, "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." As mentioned elsewhere in Scripture, the goal of the Christian life is increasing Christlikeness evidenced through the process of progressive sanctification (1 Thess 4:1-3). Therefore, the goal of biblical counseling is to know a person fully, in order to provide specific, personal, heart-focused ministry in the pursuit of godly change.[7] As a counselor becomes familiar with the details of one's situation, the counselor endeavors to help the counselee to consider how he or she can respond the various struggles, trials, and sufferings of life in a way characterized by faith in Jesus Christ. To state it another way, biblical counseling is concerned with providing Christlike care that results in Christ-centered change.

The above definition describes what biblical counseling consists of and what it aims to produce in one's life. Biblical counseling is the personal, heart-focused application of God's Word to issues of sin and suffering in light of the hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and is meant to result in Christ-centered change. However, in order to adequately address the methodological needs related to care at TVC, we must consider how the above description of personal ministry fits within the context of an overall philosophical framework of care for TVC. In the following section, a philosophy of care

---

[7]In this way, it is right to refer to biblical counseling as a distinct expression of discipleship, which occurs in the context of one's sin struggles and suffering. Robert Kellemen's definition of biblical counseling is therefore helpful when exploring the connection between biblical counseling and discipleship: "Christ-centered, church-based, comprehensive, compassionate, and culturally informed biblical counseling depends upon the Holy Spirit to relate God's Word to suffering and sin by speaking and living God's truth in love to equip people to love God and one another (Matt 22:35-40). It cultivates conformity to Christ and communion with Christ and the body of Christ, leading to a community of one-another disciple-makers (Matt 28:18-20)." Robert W. Kellemen, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church: The 4E Ministry Training Strategy* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2011), 36.

will be presented that addresses the practical implementation of biblical care and counsel at TVC.

Philosophy of Care at TVC

As noted earlier, TVC has long sought to provide care for its members, but has lacked a consistent approach in terms of philosophy and methodology. In the following section, a philosophy of care will be discussed that addresses the biblical and theological foundation for care and counsel, the appropriate personnel for care at TVC, TVC's role in training these individuals for effective personal ministry, the various structures where care at TVC should be pursued, the relative potential limitations of biblical counseling at TVC, and the relationship that should exist between TVC and external counseling resources (i.e., professional counseling, psychology, psychiatry, etc.). While this philosophy is not exhaustive, it intends to establish the foundational parameters for the pursuit of effective Christ-centered care and equipping of caregivers at TVC.

The Biblical Foundation for Care and Counsel

As stated in the previous section, biblical counseling is rooted in the belief that Scripture, because it accurately addresses all of human life before God, is the sufficient foundation for counseling ministry.[8] Scripture is the supreme source of truth about God, the world he created, and his image-bearers who inhabit it. Scripture captures the breadth of human experience, including the honor bestowed on humanity at creation, the devastating impact of sin and its effects at the fall, and the complex outworkings of the heart in response to one's world.

---

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

The Bible also reveals how, into the chaos and complexity of a world broken by sin, God has sent his Son Jesus Christ as the redeemer and restorer God's image-bearers so desperately need. This same Word that reveals the glory of Jesus Christ also depicts the power of the gospel for those who believe in him. Faith in Jesus Christ results in salvation from sin, but it also produces sanctification and increasing Christlikeness. Such transformation is a work of the Spirit, which occurs progressively through the application of Scripture to one's life as men and women respond to life's difficulties with living faith.

Scripture therefore, reveals who God is, who we are, how God has addressed our deepest need through Jesus Christ, and how God is conforming our lives to the image of his Son by the working of his Spirit through the application of his Word. Yet God's Word also specifically guides the process of how people are to minister God's truths to one another, both in terms of content and methodology.[9]

Scripture is inspired, finding its source in God himself (2 Tim 3:16). Because Scripture is inspired, it is therefore true (John 17:17). That Scripture is God's true Word demonstrates that it is "profitable," or useful. Scripture's usefulness centers on two primary functions: (1) the formation of right beliefs about God and the world he created and (2) conformity of one's character to the image of Christ. In other words, God intends for his inspired Word to shape one's inner life (the heart) in such a way that one's actions and character are transformed. Because it is God's Word alone that can affect such change (Pss 19:7-11; 119:50), it is thus the foundation of biblical care and counsel.

Scripture also speaks of two broad areas of human need—suffering and sin—as the primary circumstances in which personal ministry is to occur. Biblical counseling addresses human suffering by bringing God's comfort to the experiences of the sufferer

---

[9]David Powlison, "Affirmations and Denials: A Proposed Definition of Biblical Counseling," *The Journal of Biblical Counseling* 19, no. 1 (Fall 2000): 19.

(2 Cor 1:3-4). Such comfort consists not only in the recognition of God's gracious

character and fatherly care, but also of the loving reminder of his redeeming love through

Jesus Christ. As believers minister such truths to one another, they look to God together,

who alone can lift up the downcast and console the afflicted (Ps 34:18).

While humans are sufferers, they are also sinners.[10] Biblical counseling

addresses one's struggles with sin through the pursuit of loving confrontation. Such

confrontation is to reflect a thorough knowledge of one's situation (Ps 18:13). It also

must be consistent with the pursuit of biblical wisdom (Eph 4:15). It should occur within

the context of community, and be received mutually among believers (Rom 15:14; Gal

6:2; Col 3:16). It must not be simplistic or rote, but rather such counsel should explore

one's motivations, desires, beliefs, and emotions (Prov 4:23). Thus, biblical counseling is

grounded in Scripture, and consists of the application of God's Word to the complex

human issues of sin and suffering, in light of God's grace in Jesus Christ.

The People Involved in Care at TVC

In Ephesians 4:11-16, the apostle Paul casts a vision for the fully-orbed

ministry of the church:

> And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is

---

[10]To say that humans are sinners does not ignore the reality that a constitutive change occurs at conversion, whereby people who were once only known as sinners are now known as saints (2 Cor 5:17ff.). Rather, to acknowledge the sinfulness of humanity following one's salvation refers to the presence of remaining or indwelling sin, against which as believers must fight in the pursuit of sanctification. In other words, though believers are now known as saints, they still sin, and can therefore be described as sinners with respect to one's inner and outer life. When counseling other Christians, it is important then to remember that the believer simultaneously possesses three functional "identities" (sufferer, sinner, saint), and that this understanding does not diminish the transformative positional change that occurs when one is rescued out of the domain of darkness and is transferred into the kingdom of God (Col 1:13). For more on viewing counselees through these three categories, see Michael Emlet, *CrossTalk: Where Life and Scripture Meet* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2009), 75-77, 95-101.

the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

This passage reveals several principles that inform the pursuit of biblical counseling ministry at TVC. First, Jesus has given leaders to the church, and these leaders are called to equip other believers for ministry (4:11-12). In particular, such equipping is the responsibility of a church's elders. At TVC, many skilled men and women besides the church's elders assist in equipping church members for ministry. Yet it remains the biblical responsibility of the elders to lead out in equipping, while also ensuring that those who assist in this pursuit do so with faithfulness.

Second, the personal ministry of the Word is the calling of all believers. Where the authoritative public ministry of the Word is limited to the gathering, the personal ministry of God's Word is the responsibility of the entire church.[11] Elders are called to provide oversight and care for the church, including the ministry of care and counsel (Acts 20:28). Though a believer's ministry may be broad, incorporating various works of service as befits one's gifting (Eph 4:16), it is also to include personal ministry in some form or fashion. And though this ministry may occur in varying degrees depending on giftedness and competency, all are to pursue such ministry to the degree to which they are able. While some care situations will require more direct elder involvement due to their complexity or severity, all members of a church are called to pursue Christ-like care to the extent that it would be helpful for the church's growth in godliness.

Third, the personal ministry of the Word is meant to result in the church's increasing spiritual growth and Christlikeness. The ministry that is to occur by all believers in the church emphasizes the proclamation of the gospel and the application of

---

[11]Henderson, *Equipped to Counsel*, 29.

128

gospel truths. The personal ministry of the Word that informs this change is always to be pursued in a manner characterized by love (Eph 4:15), and motivated from a posture of humility (Eph 4:2).

Fourth, true change comes only from Christ, and is characterized by a deepening awareness of the gospel through God's Word that effects change in one's life. Other approaches to care (even when pursued by Christians), if they do not utilize Scripture in this way, fall short of God's prescribed method of change for his church. If biblical care and counsel is to lead to growth in Christlikeness, then it is to be patterned after the Bible's methodology for personal ministry.

Thus, God has given leaders to the church for equipping in ministry. Not only are these leaders called to care for the church, so too are individual members called to care for one-another. Though the degree and extent to which such care is offered will vary, and while some will more naturally excel at providing care than others, personal ministry is the responsibility of the entire church. TVC should thus employ those skilled in providing biblical care and counsel (whether elders, staff, wise leaders, etc.), while also encouraging growth among the church at-large in the pursuit of personal ministry, all as a reflection of the church's overall mission to make disciples.

**TVC's Role in the Development
and Deployment of its Leaders**

As mentioned above, God has given leaders to the church called to equip believers in the work of ministry, including the ministry of biblical counseling. And while passages like Ephesians 4:11-16 envision a type of every-member ministry, the New Testament describes a church where discipleship produces disciple-makers (Matt 28:18-20). As Robert Kellemen's definition of biblical counseling states, "[Biblical counseling] cultivates conformity to Christ and communion with Christ and the body of

129

Christ, leading to a community of one-another disciple-makers."[12] It is thus not only equipping for ministry that church leaders are to pursue, but rather ministry among the body of Christ that overflows into discipleship that in turn produces disciple-makers. Therefore, it is important that TVC's elders and staff work toward the development of the church's volunteer leaders as disciple-makers, for these men and women share in a significant degree of partnership in TVC's overall pursuit of ministry. Because biblical counseling is an expression of discipleship, TVC's leadership development should also include training in care and counseling.

    TVC's efforts at equipping leaders for care and counsel should therefore be characterized by the following elements:[13]

    Comprehensive and compassionate methodology. Those engaged in biblical counseling need to be men and women of increasingly Christlike character. They must also be people who minister compassionately to the whole person—one's suffering as well as his or her wrestles with sin.

    Thorough grounding in Scripture and Christian theology. Because Scripture is the foundation for counseling ministry, those who pursue biblical care and counsel must be capable students of Scripture. This is because Scripture provides an accurate assessment of human nature and human need before God, while also revealing God's redemptive power through Jesus Christ. In addition, a knowledge of Christian theology assists the biblical counselor in developing consistent categories of human experience, providing a necessary conceptual framework for ministry to others.

---

[12]Kellemen, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church*, 36.

[13]A detailed explanation of each of these characteristics is the focus of ch. 3 of this ministry project.

Biblical conception of the heart. The Bible describes people as a complex duality of physical and immaterial parts. In other words, humans are physical and spiritual beings—body and soul (or heart). In many ways, biblical counseling's primary focus is the complex relationship between our hearts and the world around us. Personal ministry seeks to explore how we respond to our world, in order to encourage faith in God amid the various influences (ourselves, our relationships, and our circumstances) we face.

Application of Scripture to specific problems. Alongside exploration of the biblical heart, biblical counseling endeavors to apply the truths of Scripture in specific and redemptive ways. The use of Scripture in counseling is not a simplistic exercise; rather, it is an attempt to carefully study the Bible's meaning through the redemptive lens of Christ and his gospel, and to bring these truths to bear on one's life in a way that is both biblically faithful and situationally sensitive. This requires both a thorough knowledge of the purposes of Scripture in personal ministry, as well as an in-depth understanding of the various problems we face.

Progressive Sanctification as the Goal of Personal Ministry. While compassionate biblical ministry that addresses one's heart often brings genuine situational help to one's problems, the primary goal of biblical counseling is progressive sanctification, or increasing Christlikeness, regardless of circumstantial change (1 Thess 4:3). Those engaged in biblical counseling thus strive to know a person fully, in order to help them image Christ rightly in all situations (Eph 5:1). By his grace, God energizes such human effort to bring about change through the working of the Holy Spirit (Phil 2:12-13).

The Appropriate Contexts for Care
at TVC

Biblical personal ministry can occur anytime when two or more people are in

community with one another and seek to apply the truths of Scripture to life's problems.

Yet the contexts in which such ministry occurs as well as its expression may vary

depending on the people providing the care and the situations that prompt it. At TVC,

these various expressions of biblical care may be distinguished between organic care that

occurs in the context of gospel-centered community, and care that is provided in more

structured contexts (such as in an issue-specific recovery group, or that which involves a

pastor, minister, or professional counselor). These two forms of care are referred to

respectively as *informal care* and *formal care*.[14]

Informal Care. Informal care describes mutual, one-another ministry that

occurs in the context of community. Informal care reflects one end of a continuum of

care, which spans the everyday struggles of the Christian life on the one hand to more

complex issues of sin and suffering on the other. The primary contexts for informal care

are Home Groups and among members and attendees of TVC. The people involved in

providing informal care include church members, group leaders and coaches, and

deacons, ministers and other staff members. Informal care is regular and ongoing, and

reflect the practical pursuit of "the one-anothers" in the church at-large.

Formal Care. Formal care is personal ministry that occurs in the context of

community, but which is carried out in situations of greater complexity or intensity, and

by individuals who possess higher levels of skill and training. Formal care exists on the

same continuum as informal care, but is offered as one's care needs increase beyond what

can be adequately addressed in an informal context alone. Formal care may be offered in

---

[14]For a more detailed description of the potential implementation of *informal care* and *formal care* at TVC, see appendix 3.

certain forms of gospel-centered community (e.g. in a Recovery Group), may be provided by certain leaders at TVC (e.g. certain coaches, deacons, or ministry staff), and may also include a referral to a licensed counselor. In the most intensive or complex situations, formal care would be pursued by TVC elders in conjunction with TVC Care staff and licensed counselors. Though informal care and formal care are similar in many respects, their respective utilization occurs in different ways depending on the type of problem being experienced and the relative skill and competency of the person(s) offering care.

**The Potential Limitations for Care
at TVC**

In general, biblical counseling should be seen as a sufficient means of providing Christ-centered care for those in need. There is no context in which biblical care and counsel is truly inappropriate because there are no situations where people do not need Christ and his grace. This is because Scripture, as God's sufficient Word, intends to shape the beliefs and actions of God's people. That God is able to affect change through the Word in every type of suffering acknowledges both the complexity of human experience and the power of God to redeem. As Jeremy Pierre notes, though we suffer and struggle in complex ways, and are often a mystery to ourselves, "we are not a mystery to God."[15] Thus, despite the varieties of our problems, God always has something redemptive to say to his people.

However, it is important to note that though the preceding statement is true generally, it does not imply that just anyone who claims to be a biblical counselor or any situation in which biblical counseling is offered reflects either the appropriate personnel or circumstances where such care should be pursued. To be sure, informal care ("the one-anothers") is something that all Christians are called to pursue. However, formal care, which occurs mostly in complex and difficult scenarios, should be reserved for those with

---

[15]Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, 2.

the necessary character, wisdom, and training, and who are able to provide helpful Christ-focused direction that results in Godward fruit. And while TVC desires to be a church where wise, situationally appropriate formal care can be offered with consistency, this is a goal that has yet to be accomplished.

That this goal is currently aspirational should not cause TVC to question the efficacy or sufficiency of biblical counseling as a mode of care. Rather, it should prompt the church to redouble its efforts in equipping qualified men and women for careful and thorough biblical counseling ministry. Where TVC is currently limited in providing this type of care, such limitations reflect the church's lack of equipping and/or capacity rather than the insufficiency of Christ and his Word to address life's problems. Because Scripture calls a church's elders to care for the church, wise care and counsel cannot be outsourced to others for reasons of competence or capacity alone (where it is in TVC's power to pursue growth in this areas). Thus, more energy must be given to the development and deployment of elders, ministers, deacons, and other leaders who possess Christ-like character, biblical wisdom, and growing counseling competency.

That more energy must be devoted to developing wise counselors does not however imply that there are not situations in which external modes are care are appropriate or even necessary. In fact, some forms of suffering represent the reality that sin and its effects have touched every aspect of the physical world, including our bodies. In other situations, the complexity and intensity of one's situation make it wise to consult others with greater training and experiential expertise. Indeed, given TVC's present limitations, it is necessary to acknowledge circumstances when the church's current care resources would be inappropriate. There are at least two current areas of common care needs where TVC should wisely consult with external resources:

Mental illness and brain disorders.[16] Earlier it was affirmed that people are a complex duality of both physical and immaterial parts. As part of our physical bodies, our brains bear immeasurable importance for human functioning. There is an inseparable relationship between our hearts and bodies (including our brains), one which should inform any holistic approach to care. Our hearts can impact our bodies, and a measurable disruption of one's physiology (including brain functioning) may impact and influence one's heart in significant ways.[17] When it is suspected that someone may be experiencing a problem rooted in the brain or because of some other physiological cause, it is important that this person pursue a medical evaluation with a physician or psychiatrist, a medical doctor who specializes in treating brain disorders. Certain problems, such as symptoms associated with severe depression, bipolar disorder, acute or prolonged anxiety or panic, or other troubles, should prompt the one providing care to encourage medical consultation. In these circumstances, the use of psychoactive medication should be seen as one possible means of alleviating the physical symptoms associated with such troubles, which in turn can often provide a more effective context for heart-level exploration and care.

However, while it is clear that the brain can impact human functioning and may play a role in certain complex problems, the degree to which personal problems are

---

[16]Both the scope of this paper and the author's subject-matter knowledge in these areas are insufficient to fully capture the nuance and sensitivity needed in ministering to people affected by these problems. With such a limitation in mind, this section, and the one that follows it, attempt to graciously summarize areas of needed growth at TVC (including that within my own ministry), so that further steps toward positive change and equipping can be taken. Regarding my conclusions about the nature of mental or psychological forms of suffering, it is not my hope to speak rigidly or from a place of dogmatism. Rather, I am striving to acknowledge the complexity of many human problems while highlighting the uncertainty that exists regarding issues of causation and etiology, all while affirming the power of God to heal, redeem, transform, and mend the lives of those afflicted by sin and its effects (whether the result of life in a fallen world, or from their or another's sinful actions).

[17]Edward T. Welch, *The Counselor's Guide to the Brain and its Disorders* (Glenside, PA: CCEF, 2015), 13-36.

physiologically or neurologically rooted is uncertain.[18] For example, certain theories that assume a causative link between the brain and problems in living have yet to be proven objectively.[19] In addition, many psychological diagnoses, though providing a helpful description of several complex problems, are often based upon criteria that depend upon subjective observation rather than measurable data. The criteria used for such diagnoses often fail to consider the inherently spiritual nature to life's problems. Though complex, such situations are an occasion where God intends for his transforming grace to be known in the lives of those struggling in these ways.

Because there exists an at-times clear link between brain functioning and human difficulties, TVC should be unafraid to refer such individuals for medical consultation when this may be a possibility. However, because the link between brain functioning and many human problems is often assumed (but unproven), TVC should also be firm in its commitment to provide Christ-centered care for such people, regardless of the cause of one's problems. Such care should explore the dynamic working of one's heart and encourage a response of faith in Christ amid suffering or significant struggles. Even when it is ascertained that one is suffering from a physiological problem, biblical care is still an important and necessary part of ministry to the whole person.

Domestic violence, abuse, and trauma. Unfortunately, abuse is all too common an area of ministry need for the church. By God's grace, TVC desires to grow in its ability to provide compassionate care for victims of domestic violence and abuse and

---

[18]For a secular perspective on the uncertain role the brain plays in human problems, see Allen Frances, *Saving Normal*: *Insider's Revolt against Out-of-Control Psychiatric Diagnosis, DSM-5, Big Pharma, and the Medicalization of Ordinary Life* (New York: William Morrow, 2013). Frances was the head of the task force responsible for the 4th edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-IV). For a Christian perspective, see Edward T. Welch, *The Counselor's Guide to the Brain and its Disorders* (Glenside, PA: CCEF, 2015). Welch is a counselor and faculty member at CCEF (Christian Counseling and Education Foundation), and holds a PhD in counseling psychology with an emphasis on neuropsychology.

[19]Charles Hodges, *Good Mood Bad Mood: Help and Hope for Depression and Bipolar Disorder* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 2012), 597, Kindle.

for sufferers of trauma. However, because TVC is in the early stages of developing an

approach for care for abuse victims, it remains advantageous for TVC to rely on the help

of skilled professionals in pursuing care in these intense areas of need.[20] Professional

counselors with experience in ministry to trauma sufferers, secular resources that help

provide accurate observations of the effects of trauma and abuse, and specific training in

the relational dynamics of abuse and domestic violence are all ways that TVC should

seek to gain greater knowledge that leads to more effective care from God's Word. As

with other care areas, TVC's relative lack of counseling competence with respect to

abuse or trauma should not imply an insufficiency in God's ability to help sufferers from

his Word, but rather the church's need for continued growth in caring for sufferers of

abuse and trauma with care, compassion, and tangible help.

**The Relationship between TVC and
External Counseling Resources**

TVC has long enjoyed a positive relationship with professional counselors.

Many men and women have profited from the wise, careful insights these counselors

have provided, often from a biblical vantage point that pursues encouragement in the

pursuit of Christ and his Word. Despite these benefits, many of TVC's referrals are the

result of a lack of counseling competency or capacity among TVC's leaders rather than

any firm philosophical commitment to external formal counseling as a preferred setting

for care. If TVC could provide effective care at all levels of ministry, it would reduce the

---

[20]TVC's developments in the pursuit of compassionate care for abuse victims mirrors that of several recent Christ-centered resources exploring these issues from a biblical perspective. Where before biblically oriented resources on caring for sufferers of abuse were few, there are thankfully now many books available that seek to apply the truths of Scripture to issues of abuse and trauma. Recent examples include Justin S. Holcomb and Lindsey A. Holcomb, *Rid of My Disgrace: Hope and Healing for Victims of Sexual Assault* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011); Justin S. Holcomb and Lindsey A. Holcomb *Is It My Fault? Hope and Healing for Those Suffering Domestic Violence* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2014); Diane Langberg, *Suffering and the Heart of God: How Trauma Destroys and Christ Restores* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2015); Chris Moles, *The Heart of Domestic Abuse: Gospel Solutions for Men Who Use Control and Violence in the Home* (Bemidji, MN: Focus Publishing, 2015); Leslie Vernick, *The Emotionally Destructive Marriage: How to Find Your Voice and Reclaim Your Hope* (Colorado Springs: CO: Waterbrook Press, 2013).

need for external referrals, thus creating greater opportunity for texts like Acts 20:28 and Ephesians 4:11-16 to become a reality in the life of the church. As has been stated previously, a lack of capacity or competency should occasion greater efforts on the part of TVC to pursue equipping in Christ-focused biblical care. Indeed, professional counselors committed to equipping the church can play an important role by resourcing and assisting in equipping the church, thus helping the church fulfill its mission in providing biblical care and counsel for its members, both informally and formally.

Yet this is not to say that there should not be ongoing partnership with external counseling resources when helpful or necessary. On the contrary, in situations where TVC is unable to provide effective care because of a lack of equipping or situations of particular complexity, TVC should pursue referrals to professional counselors in light of the extensive training and vocational accountability such men and women receive. In addition, in situations where medical issues are a question, or there is a potential physiological link to one's problems, consultation with a medical doctor is both wise and necessary. Wherever possible, TVC's relationship to external care resources should reflect consistency in Christian worldview, beliefs about the purposes and use of Scripture in care and counsel, and a commitment to Christ-centered change as the goal of counseling.

Conclusion

Biblical counseling is the personal, heart-focused application of God's Word to issues of sin and suffering in light of the hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Those pursuing biblical counseling ministry make it their goal to know one's situation fully in order to help him or her image Christ rightly. Where appropriate, all believers should pursue care and counsel under the careful oversight of church leaders. Effective equipping in biblical counseling in the church seeks to establish a comprehensive methodology grounded in Scripture, focused on the heart and the specific troubles people

face, with a goal of increased faith in Christ and increasing Christlikeness in one's life. Such care may be offered informally in the context of gospel-centered community, and formally where circumstances or one's situations require it. Some situations, because of their complexity, intensity, or sensitivity, merit partnership with external resources. Utilization of such resources should enhance the church's ability to fulfill its biblical mission to make disciples and to provide faithful biblical care and counsel to all its members.

APPENDIX 3

INFORMAL AND FORMAL CARE DESCRIPTIONS

Introduction

Scripture describes the essential calling that exists for Christians to care for

one another. Believers are to help one another apply the truths of Scripture as they

mutually pursue Christ in the fight against sin, and they are to minister God's mercy to

each other amid suffering. Such care is an activity that should occur organically, between

individuals within the church (Rom 15:14; 2 Cor 1:3-4; Gal 6:1-2; Col 3:16; Jas 5:19-20).

It also occurs organizationally, through the leadership God has called and by means of

the equipping such men and women provide for the church at-large (Eph 4:11-16).

Though the settings in which biblical care is offered may vary, such ministry within the

body of Christ should be seen an expression of discipleship. As with discipleship, the

overall goal of biblical care is increasing maturity and Christlikeness.

At TVC, organic, one-another ministry can also be known as *informal care*.

Personal ministry offered in a more structured context (such as in an issue-specific

Recovery Group, or that which involves a minister, pastor, or licensed counselor) may be

referred to as *formal care*. The following sections describe the various forms, contexts

and necessary equipping for both *informal* and *formal* care at TVC.[1]

Informal Care

Informal care describes mutual, one-another ministry that occurs in the context

of community. Informal care reflects one end of a continuum of care, from the everyday

---

[1]The sections that follow describe the potential implementation of *informal care* and *formal care* at TVC based upon the proposed philosophy of care and counseling presented in appendix 2.

struggles of the Christian life to more complex issues of sin and suffering (addressed through formal care).

The primary contexts for informal care are Home Groups and among members and attendees of TVC. The situations and circumstances in which informal care occurs may vary, but would include the following:

1. Mutual ministry between group members that occurs in the normal rhythms of group life.

2. Ministry carried out by group leaders as they fulfill their various role responsibilities (e.g. model, care, mobilize) through "member care."[2]

3. Intentional discipling relationships among church members, or between home group leaders and members.

4. Informal directive care (i.e. focused ministry/discipleship) between group leaders and members, either in response to a sin issue or one's suffering.

5. Care offered by coaches to leaders and members, and by ministers to coaches, leaders and members.

Informal care may be effectively offered as a result of training in the basics of providing biblical care offered by Groups Ministry Staff to group leaders. Some leaders (such as group coaches and some group leaders) may be encouraged to pursue more formal training that would be offered by TVC Care staff.

Formal Care

Formal care is personal ministry that occurs in the context of community, but which is carried out in situations of greater complexity or intensity, and by individuals who possess higher levels of skill and training. Formal care exists on the same continuum as informal care, but is offered as one's care needs increase beyond what can be adequately addressed in an informal context alone.

Formal care may be offered in certain forms of gospel-centered community (e.g. in a Recovery Group), may be provided by certain leaders at TVC (e.g. certain

---

[2]"Member care" refers to the everyday responsibilities of group leaders.

coaches, deacons, or ministry staff), and may also include a referral to a licensed counselor.

In the most intensive or complex situations, formal care would be pursued by TVC elders in conjunction with TVC Care staff and licensed counselors. Formal care includes (but is not limited to) the following:

Recovery Groups

1. Directive care in a group setting in response to issues of sin or suffering.

2. Corrective care in a group setting in response to more significant sin issues.[3]

3. Providing appropriate care in more acute situations such as abuse, self-harm, chemical addiction, certain forms of depression and anxiety, and other significant troubles (The extent to which such care would be offered in these circumstances would vary depending on the skill level of the leader and the needs of the individual, and would often occur in cooperation with TVC staff, and professional counselors as needed).

Equipping for Recovery Group leaders and coaches would include training in biblical care and other formal training as necessary (e.g. Abuse/Domestic Violence, etc.).

TVC Deacons and Ministers

1. Directive or Corrective care in response to significant issues of sin or suffering (ideally offered alongside members of one's community or alongside other leaders who have previously been involved with care).

2. Providing appropriate care in more acute care needs such as abuse, self-harm, addiction, certain forms of depression and anxiety, and other significant troubles. The extent to which such care would be offered in these circumstances would vary depending on the skill level of the deacon/minister and the needs of the individual, and would occur in cooperation with TVC Pastors, Elders, and Care staff, and professional counselors as needed.

Equipping for TVC Deacons/Ministers would include training in biblical care and other formal training as determined by TVC Elders and Care Staff).

---

[3]*Directive care* refers to intentional ministry in the face of personal sin (accompanied by repentance and the desire for change/reconciliation), suffering or the effects of being sinned against (cf. Gal 6:1-2; 2 Cor 1:3-4). *Corrective care* describes ministry in response to significant sin issues where one's repentance is less clearly observed or known (Matt 18:15-20). These categories adapted from Garrett Higbee, "Biblical Counseling and Uncommon Community," in *Biblical Counseling and the Church: God's Care through God's People* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 129.

TVC Pastors, Elders, and Care Staff

1. Directive or Corrective care in response to significant issues of sin or suffering.

2. Acute and Critical care in response to acute care needs, with assistance from professional counselors as needed.

3. Consulting and equipping for other leadership levels in providing appropriate care.

Equipping for TVC pastors and elders would include ongoing training in biblical care by TVC Care staff. Initially, the care offered at this level would be led out by TVC Care staff. As TVC's pastors and elders grow in their care competency, they will take on a more active role in formal care situations.

Practical Implementation

Practical implementation of care at TVC in informal and formal situations could occur as follows, based on the above category distinctions, TVC's present care needs and its desired level of equipping. There will be some degree of overlap between informal and formal expressions of care (as well as those involved in providing such care), but at a minimum implementation would be reflected by the following care processes (see Figure 1 below):

Informal Care

Informal care, or the "one-anothers", will be administered by the Home Groups team, and includes the following ministry relationships:

1. Group leaders caring for group members.

2. Group coaches caring for group leaders and member.

3. Group ministers or pastors caring for coaches, leaders, and members.

4. Care deacons serving as a resource to the home groups team.

Formal Care

Formal care will be administered by the TVC Care team, and consist of the following elements:

1. An initial intake process led by TVC Care team. Based upon this initial process, care needs would be directed into one of the following paths of care:

2. Directive or Corrective Care in a Recovery Group, led by the Recovery Group team, with elder or ministerial involvement as necessary, and professional counseling (as needed).

3. Acute care provided by TVC Care team in conjunction with professional counseling (as needed), with ministerial and elder involvement.

4. Critical care led by a TVC elder alongside professional counseling (as needed), and supported by TVC Care team and ministerial staff.

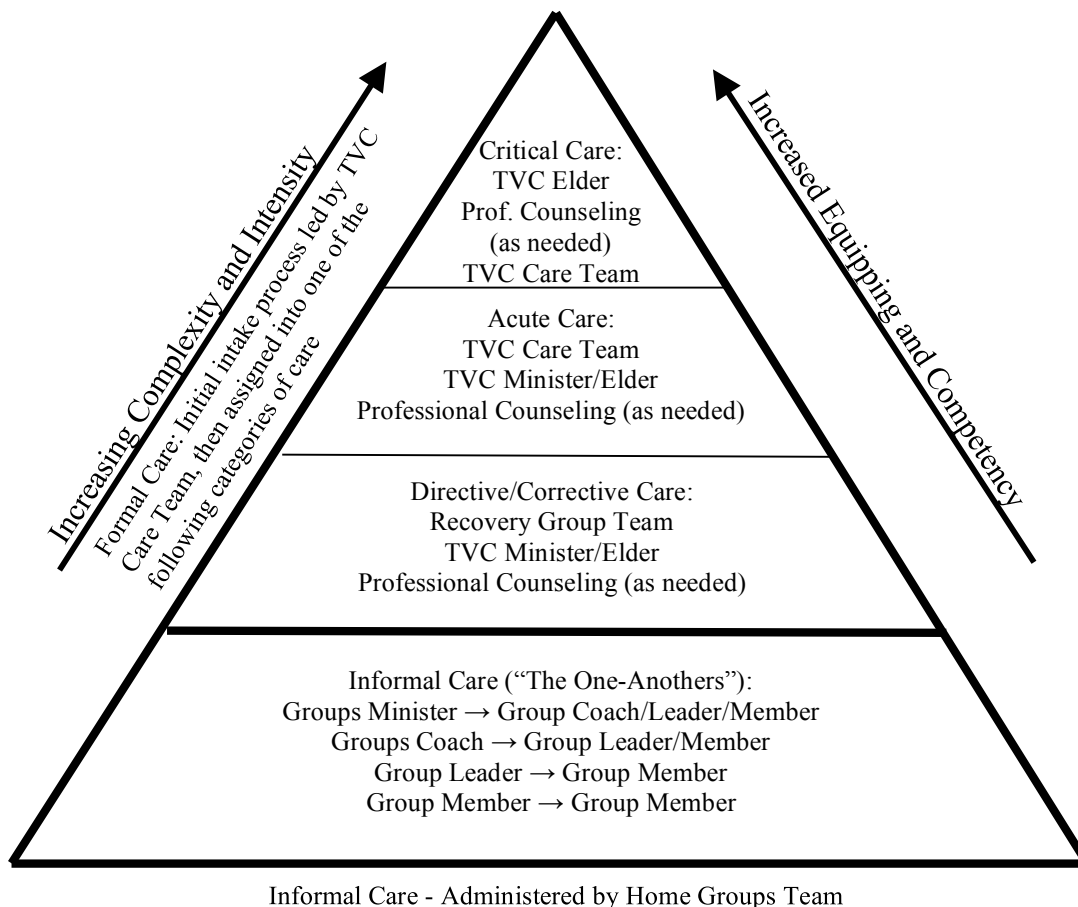Informal Care - Administered by Home Groups Team

Figure 1: Informal and formal care processes at TVC. As care needs escalate in complexity and/or intensity, care is administered by those with increased equipping and competency. Informal care is primarily led by the Home Groups team. Formal Care begins with an intake process led by the Care Team, and is then pursued by TVC Ministers, Elders, or Care Team in conjunction with professional counselors as needed.

APPENDIX 4

EVALUATION RUBRIC FOR PROPOSED
PHILOSOPHY OF CARE
AND COUNSELING

The following evaluation rubric was sent to an expert panel consisting of two

TVC elders, two members of the Association of Biblical Counselors (ABC), and three

pastors not affiliated with TVC. The panel evaluated the proposed philosophy,

measuring its biblical faithfulness and scope.

Name of Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

Evaluation Rubric for Proposed Philosophy of Care and Counseling					
1 = insufficient; 2 = requires attention; 3 = sufficient; 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Biblical Faithfulness					
The proposed philosophy is biblically and theologically sound.					
The proposed philosophy adequately establishes the biblical basis for church-based care and counsel.					
Scope					
The proposed philosophy effectively describes an applicable process for providing church-based care and counsel.					
The proposed philosophy sufficiently addresses the appropriate utilization and potential limitations of biblical care and counsel at TVC.					

Please include any additional comments below:

APPENDIX 5

EVALUATION RUBRIC FOR BIBLICAL
COUNSELING CURRICULUM

The following evaluation rubric was sent to an expert panel consisting of two

TVC elders, two members of the Association of Biblical Counselors (ABC), and three

pastors not affiliated with TVC. The panel evaluated the course curriculum, measuring its

biblical faithfulness, scope, teaching methodology, and applicability.

Name of Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

Evaluation Rubric for Biblical Counseling Curriculum					
1 = insufficient; 2 = requires attention; 3 = sufficient; 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Biblical Faithfulness					
The course curriculum is biblically and theologically sound.					
The course curriculum effectively establishes the scriptural basis for biblical counseling ministry.					
Scope					
The course curriculum adequately covers each topic it addresses.					
The course curriculum is content appropriate for volunteer leaders.					
The course curriculum provides a basic understanding of biblical counseling concepts.					
Methodology					
The course curriculum effectively teaches a basic biblical counseling methodology.					
The course curriculum effectively utilizes various teaching methods (lecture, discussion, homework, reading, role-play).					
Applicability					
The course curriculum is applicable for personal ministry.					
The course curriculum will effectively equip leaders in biblical counseling.					

Please include any additional comments below:

APPENDIX 6

APPLICATION FOR COURSE PARTICIPANTS

The following application addresses the commitments necessary for participating in this project's twenty-three week equipping course and includes questions that were answered by all prospective participants.

APPLICATION FOR COURSE PARTICIPANTS

Introduction to *Foundations of Care and Counsel*[1]

Welcome to *Foundations of Care and Counsel.* We are excited for how the Lord will use this class for his glory and the good of our church. Below you will find information regarding the topical focus and time commitment of this twenty-three week, two-semester course. Once you have reviewed this information, please fill out and submit the attached application.

Class Focus

Foundations of Care and Counsel is a two-semester course that covers the basics of providing biblical care and counseling at The Village Church. In the first semester, we will examine the biblical foundation for *the personal ministry of the Word*, or what it means to apply Scripture to one-another's lives in the context of personal discipleship. We will also consider what the Bible says about our problems, our hearts, and our hope through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In the second semester, we will discuss the process of *biblical counseling. Biblical counseling* is discipleship that is rooted in the Scriptures, aimed at the heart, exalting Jesus Christ, exhorting us to love God and others. Learning how to provide biblical care and counsel is one way we all join together in the church's mission to bring glory to God by making disciples.

Time Commitment

Foundations of Care and Counsel will meet on Sunday mornings from 9am to 11am. The Fall semester will meet from September through December. The Spring semester will meet February through early May. The class will include a mix of classroom instruction, discussion and role-play scenarios designed to help us practice the concepts being learned. Because this course requires a certain level of commitment, participants will be permitted to miss no more than two sessions per semester.

You can expect to spend the following time working on course assignments outside of class:

- One-Two hours per week reading assigned chapters from the *Equipped to Counsel: Leader Notebook*, and additional required reading (articles, book chapters).
- Two hours per month writing brief response papers as assigned.

---

[1]Portions of this application have been adapted from Robert W. Kellemen, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church: The 4E Ministry Training Strategy* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2011), 366-71.

Required Reading
You will be asked to purchase two books for this course, which you will be able to keep for your personal library. We will read chapters out of the following books:

- Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change* (P&R Publishing, 2002)
- Michael R. Emlet, *CrossTalk: Where Life and Scripture Meet* (New Growth Press, 2009)

In addition, we will read selected chapters from the *Equipped to Counsel: Leader Notebook*, and various articles from resources such as the *Journal of Biblical Counseling*.

Application

Directions
Please fill out the following application questions, using complete sentences. For most questions, you may keep your responses brief (2-3 sentences).

1. How did you come to know Christ?

2. What person(s) have contributed most to your growth in Christ over the years?

3. Why are you interested in the *Foundations of Care and Counsel* class?

4. What do you hope to gain as a result of this class?

5. To what degree to you feel confident in walking with another person amidst personal struggles?

6. What role does the Bible play in helping us address someone's struggles?

7. What are some of your personal strengths in providing biblical care and counsel to others?

8. What are some of your personal weaknesses in providing biblical care and counsel to others?

9. Do you feel like you can commit the necessary time and energy to completing this course?

10. Do you have any additional questions about the course you would like answered?

APPENDIX 7

EVALUATION RUBRIC FOR COURSE
PARTICIPANTS

The following rubric was used to evaluate course participants' growth in

biblical counseling competency. A course instructor and at least one fellow participant

measured participants' growth in counseling knowledge as exhibited through class

discussion and counseling competency through role-play scenarios.

Name of Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

Evaluation Rubric for Course Participants					
1 = insufficient; 2 = requires attention; 3 = sufficient; 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Counseling Knowledge					
The student demonstrated a growing knowledge of biblical care and discipleship concepts.					
The student is able to clearly explain biblical care and discipleship concepts as evidenced through class discussions.					
Counseling Competency					
The student fully participated in all role-play scenarios.					
The student demonstrated increased care and discipleship competency during role-play scenarios.					

In addition to the above evaluation, please answer the questions below:

1. What are the student's strengths regarding care and discipleship as observed in this class?

2. In what areas can the student grow as they care for and disciple others?

APPENDIX 8

BIBLICAL COUNSELING COURSE EVALUATION

Course participants filled out the following evaluation measuring their

satisfaction with the course content, the instructor's presentation skills, and the course's

applicability for future ministry.

Name of Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

Biblical Counseling Course Evaluation					
1 = insufficient; 2 = requires attention; 3 = sufficient; 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Course Content					
The course content was biblically and theologically faithful.					
The course content was easy to understand.					
The course content was relevant to my ministry.					
Course Presentation					
The instructor(s) met all stated course objectives.					
The instructor(s) taught the content in a way that was helpful for future ministry.					
The instructor(s) adequately explained all class topics.					
The instructor(s) answered my questions sufficiently.					
Course Applicability					
This course has helped further my spiritual growth.					
This course has helped equip me for future ministry.					

In addition to the above evaluation, please answer the questions below:

1. What about this course was most helpful in equipping you for ministry?

2. What about this course was least helpful in equipping you for ministry?

3. How did this course change the way you viewed the ministry of care and discipleship?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

Adams, Jay E. *The Christian Counselor's Manual*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973.

_____. *Competent to Counsel*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970.

_____. *A Theology of Christian Counseling*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979.

Arnold, Clinton E. *Ephesians*. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 10. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010.

Barnett, Paul. *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.

Bauer, Walter. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*. Edited by Frederick William Danker. 3rd ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001.

Best, Ernest. *Ephesians*. The International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998.

Bigney, Brad. *Gospel Treason: Betraying the Gospel with Hidden Idols*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2012.

Blomberg, Craig. *Matthew*. The New American Commentary, vol. 22. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992.

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

Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Edited by John T. McNeill. Translated by Ford Lewis Battles. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1960.

Carson, D. A. *Matthew*. In vol. 8 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelein, 3-602. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985.

Cranfield, C. E. B. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*. The International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979.

Duvall, J. Scott, and J. Daniel Hays. *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012.

Emlet, Michael R. *CrossTalk: Where Life and Scripture Meet*. Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2009.

Fee, Gordon D. *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*. New International Biblical Commentary. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988.

Fitzpatrick, Elyse. *Idols of the Heart: Learning to Long for God Alone*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2001.

Fitzpatrick, Elyse, and Dennis E. Johnson. *Counsel from the Cross: Connecting Broken People to the Love of Christ*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009.

Frame, John M. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013.

France, R. T. *The Gospel of Matthew*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.

Frances, Allen. *Saving Normal: An Insider's Revolt against Out-of-Control Psychiatric Diagnosis, DSM-5, Big Pharma, and the Medicalization of Ordinary Life*. New York: William Morrow, 2013.

Garland, David E. *2 Corinthians*. The New American Commentary, vol. 29. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1999.

Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.

Hafemann, Scott J. *2 Corinthians*. The NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.

Hagner, Donald. A. *Matthew 14-28*. Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 33b. Dallas: Word Books, 1995.

Harris, Murray J. *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. The New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.

Henderson, John. *Equipped to Counsel: A Training Program in Biblical Counseling*. Fort Worth, TX: Association of Biblical Counselors, 2008.

Hodges, Charles. *Good Mood Bad Mood: Help and Hope for Depression and Bipolar Disorder*. Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 2012. Kindle.

Hoehner, Harold W. *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002.

Holcomb, Justin S., and Lindsey A. Holcomb. *Is It My Fault? Hope and Healing for Those Suffering Domestic Violence*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2014.

_____. *Rid of My Disgrace: Hope and Healing for Victims of Sexual Assault*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011.

Johnson, Eric L. *Foundations for Soul Care: A Christian Psychology Proposal*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007.

Jones, Stanton L., and Richard E. Butman. *Modern Psychotherapies: A Comprehensive Christian Appraisal*. 2nd ed. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011.

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

_____. *Gospel-Centered Counseling: How Christ Changes Lives*. Equipping Biblical Counselors Series. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014.

_____. *Gospel Conversations: How to Care Like Christ*. Equipping Biblical Counselors Series. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015.

Knight, George W. *The Pastoral Epistles*. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992.

Köstenberger, Andreas J. *2 Timothy*. In vol. 12 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Edited by Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, 487-675. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.

Kruse, Colin G. *Paul's Letter to the Romans*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012.

_____. *2 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1987.

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

Lane, Timothy S., and Paul David Tripp. *How People Change*. Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2006.

Langberg, Diane. *Suffering and the Heart of God: How Trauma Destroys and Christ Restores*. Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2015.

Lincoln, Andrew T. *Ephesians*. Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 42. Dallas: Word Books, 1990.

Martin, Ralph P. *2 Corinthians*. Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 40. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014.

McCartney, Dan, and Charles Clayton. *Let the Reader Understand: A Guide to Interpreting and Applying the Bible*. 2nd ed. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1994.

Moles, Chris. *The Heart of Domestic Abuse: Gospel Solutions for Men Who Use Control and Violence in the Home*. Bemidji, MN: Focus Publishing, 2015.

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

Morris, Leon. *The Gospel According to Matthew*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992.

Mounce, William B. *Pastoral Epistles*. Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2000.

Murray, John. *The Epistles to the Romans*. New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959.

O'Brien, Peter T. *The Letter to the Ephesians*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.

Pierre, Jeremy. *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life: Connecting Christ to Human Experience*. Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2016.

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

_____. *Seeing with New Eyes: Counseling and the Human Condition through the Lens of Scripture*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2003.

Salkind, Neal J. *Statistics for People Who (Think They) Hate Statistics*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008.

Schreiner, Thomas R. *Romans*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998.

Seifrid, Mark A. *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014.

Stott, John R. W. *The Message of Romans: God's Good News to the World*. The Bible Speaks Today. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994.

Thrall, Margaret E. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*. Vol. 1. The International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994.

Towner, Philip H. *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006.

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

Vernick, Leslie. *The Emotionally Destructive Marriage: How to Find Your Voice and Reclaim Your Hope*. Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2013.

Welch, Edward T. *The Counselor's Guide to the Brain and its Disorders*. 2nd ed. Glenside, PA: Christian Counseling and Education Foundation, 2015.

Articles

Adams, Jay E. "Biblical Interpretation and Counseling." *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 16, no. 3 (Spring 1998): 5-9.

_____. "Counseling and the Sovereignty of God." *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 11, no. 2 (Winter 1993): 4-9.

Allchin, Ron, and Tim Allchin. "Equipping Biblical Counselors for Your Church." In *Biblical Counseling and the Church: God's Care through God's People*, edited by Bob Kellemen and Kevin Carson, 190-209. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015.

Babler, John, and David Powlison. "Counseling Ministry within Wider Ministry." *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 18, no. 1 (Fall 1999): 17-24.

Carson, Kevin. "The Personal, Private and Public Ministry of the Word." In *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, edited by James MacDonald, Bob Kellemen, and Steve Viars, 257-70. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2013.

_____. "The Richness and Relevance of God's Word." In *Scripture and Counseling: God's Word for Life in a Broken World*, edited by Bob Kellemen and Jeff Forrey, 29-46. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014.

"CCEF Model of Care." Accessed June 29, 2016. https://www.ccef.org/about/mission-beliefs-history/model-of-care.

Cheong, Robert K. "Why We 'Care' Instead of 'Counsel' Each Other." *The Journal of Biblical Counseling* 30, no. 3 (2016): 2-6.

Clinton, Tim, and George Ohlschlager. "Competent Christian Counseling: Definitions and Dynamics." In *Competent Christian Counseling*, vol. 1, *Foundations & Practice of Compassionate Soul Care*, 36-68. Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press, 2002.

Emlet, Michael R. "Understanding the Influences on the Human Heart." *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 20, no. 2 (2002): 47-52.

Higbee, Garrett. "Biblical Counseling and Uncommon Community." In *Biblical Counseling and the Church: God's Care through God's People*, edited by Bob Kellemen and Kevin Carson, 121-35. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015.

Jones, Robert, and Brad Hambrick. "The Problem of Sin." In *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*. Edited by James MacDonald, Bob Kellemen, and Steve Viars, 139-52. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2013.

Jones, Stanton L. "An Integration View." In *Psychology & Christianity: Five Views*, edited by Eric L. Johnson, 101-28. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010.

Lambert, Heath. "Introduction: The Sufficiency of Scripture, the Biblical Counseling Movement, and the Purpose of This Book." In *Counseling the Hard Cases: True Stories Illustrating the Sufficiency of God's Resources in Scripture*, edited by Stuart Scott and Heath Lambert, 1-24. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2012.

Lewis, Lee, and Michael Snetzer. "Biblical Counseling and Small Groups: Counseling in the Context of Community." In *Biblical Counseling and the Church: God's Care through God's People*, edited by Bob Kellemen and Kevin Carson, 136-51. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015.

Pierre, Jeremy. "Scripture Is Sufficient, but to Do What?" In *Scripture and Counseling: God's Word for Life in a Broken World*, edited by Bob Kellemen and Jeff Forrey, 94-108. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014.

Powlison, David. "Affirmations and Denials: A Proposed Definition of Biblical Counseling." *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 19, no. 1 (Fall 2000): 18-25.

_____. "Cure of Souls (and the Modern Psychotherapies)." *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 25, no. 2 (2007): 5-36.

_____. "How *Does* Sanctification Work (Part 1)?" *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 27, no. 1 (2013): 49-66.

_____. "How *Does* Sanctification Work (Part 2)?" *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 27, no. 2 (2013): 35-50.

_____. "Idols of the Heart and Vanity Fair." *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 13, no. 2 (1995): 35-50.

_____. "The Sufficiency of Scripture to Diagnose and Cure Souls." *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 23, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 2-14.

Scott, Stuart W. "The Gospel in Balance." In *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, edited by James MacDonald, Bob Kellemen, and Steve Viars, 167-80. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2013.

Smith, Robert. "Spiritual Discipline and the Biblical Counselor." In *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically*, edited by John MacArthur, 88-97. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005.

Thomas, Johannes. "Παρακαλέω." In *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*. Edited by Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993.

Tripp, Paul David. "The Great Commission: A Paradigm for Ministry in the Local Church." *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 16, no. 3 (Spring 1998): 2-4.

ABSTRACT

EQUIPPING LEADERS FOR CARE AND COUNSELING AT
THE VILLAGE CHURCH IN DALLAS, TEXAS

Dustin Brady Goodwin, DMin.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Jeremy P. Pierre

This project seeks to equip the leaders of The Village Church in Dallas, Texas to care and counsel biblically. Chapter 1 describes the ministry context of The Village Church and establishes the project's goals. Chapter 2 defends the biblical and theological basis for the project by examining five passages that describe how God has called Christians to care for and counsel one another from his Word as part of the church's pursuit of discipleship (2 Tim 3:16-17; Rom 15:14; 2 Cor 1:3-4; Eph 4:11-16; Matt 28:18-20). Chapter 3 presents the essential qualities and processes that Christians must pursue if they are to care and counsel one-another biblically. Chapter 4 describes the implementation of the project, detailing the course curriculum used to equip leaders in biblical counseling and the writing of the proposed philosophy of care and counseling. Chapter 5 measures the project's effectiveness based upon the completion of several stated goals. The project's overall purpose is to help Christians grow in their love for and skill in ministering to one another amidst all of life's difficulties from God's sufficient Word.

VITA

Dustin Brady Goodwin

EDUCATION
        BMus, University of North Texas, 2006
        ThM, Dallas Theological Seminary, 2011

MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT
        Pastoral Intern, Midlothian Bible Church, Midlothian, Texas, 2006-2010
        Groups Minister, The Village Church, Dallas, Texas, 2012-2016
        Groups Pastor, The Village Church, Dallas, Texas, 2016-