DEVELOPING A BIBLICAL COUNSELING SUPPORT

MINISTRY AT SONRISE BAPTIST CHURCH

IN NEWNAN, GEORGIA

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A Project

Presented to

the Faculty of

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

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by

Kenneth Dean Waldrup

December 2019

APPROVAL SHEET

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Kenneth Dean Waldrup

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To my wife, Anna, and our children, Caleb and Abigail

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

I would like to thank my wife for her love and support throughout all my years of ministry and schooling. I honestly could not have done it without her and am so appreciative for her being my helpmate, closest advisor, and dearest friend. This project is a culmination of not only my hard work but hers as well. She not only supports me in my studies but manages our household well and is a wonderful mother to our children.

I would also like to thank my parents for all the hard work they have put into laying the foundation for my educational success and never giving up on me, even when I was a difficult student as a child. They knew, and always reminded me, that God had a plan for me and that I should be obedient to that, no matter the challenge.

I also would like to thank Dr. Robert Jones for his support and willingness to serve as my faculty supervisor during my project formation and implementation. I am appreciative of his guidance and pastoral spirit as I went through this process. In addition, I want to thank SonRise Baptist Church for the opportunity to implement my project and the support the staff and congregation have given me.

My ultimate prayer is that this project edifies my local congregation and empowers believers to minister to one another through the Scripture and the power of the Holy Spirit. This project is much more than an academic exercise, it is the foundation of a ministry that, I pray, makes a difference for the kingdom.

Ken Waldrup

Newnan, Georgia

December 2019

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The local church is situated as an outpost of the kingdom of Jesus Christ in communities where there are physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. The church should reach inward and outward to help meet these needs with the power and sufficiency of the Scriptures. Strategic ministry planning should take into account these needs and provide a means to impact the lives of the church and community. SonRise Baptist Church is a unique congregation with a desire to meet these needs with the gospel. Its vision statement is concise: "That all people have a loving and growing relationship with God through Jesus Christ."[1] This vision is implemented through a variety of ministries and outreaches with the purpose of intentionally reaching out to love and serve the community. The biblical counseling ministry of the pastoral staff also aims to apply the truths of Scripture to the problems the congregation and community face. The church should provide a support ministry that augments the scope of pastoral counseling, as well as integrate this program into the overall operation and mission of the church. This support ministry would strengthen the health and vitality of the church, equipping them with the resources to "encourage one another and build one another up" (1 Thess 5:11).

Context

Community of SonRise

SonRise Baptist Church is located in Newnan, Georgia, approximately thirty minutes southwest of Atlanta. It is a fast-growing community with multiple job

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[1] SonRise Baptist Church, "Our Vision," accessed June 2, 2017, http://www.sonrisebaptist.org/guiding-truths/.

opportunities, housing accommodations, colleges and universities, an abundance of retail and dining options, and quick access to the interstate and Atlanta airport. The city of Newnan also draws individuals from smaller surrounding communities to take advantage of the employment, education, and healthcare opportunities that exist there. Newnan is a vibrant community with a historic downtown, performing arts center, and fairgrounds which serve as venues for the many events hosted in Newnan each year. Newnan has much to offer and many people choose to build their lives around this city.

SonRise is located on the eastern edge of Newnan's city limits, just off the major state highway that serves as the main corridor of travel. It sits in between the commercial and residential areas of East Newnan. It is situated within walking distance or very short driving distance to a multitude of subdivisions and housing developments ranging from lower to medium-income families. This location provides SonRise with many ministry opportunities just outside its doors.

History of SonRise

SonRise Baptist Church has been a part of the community of Newnan since 1995, when it was established as a satellite church of First Baptist Church Newnan, with the purpose of ministering to an expanding population in East Coweta County. Around 1998, the congregation became an autonomous, independent church known today as SonRise Baptist Church. About that same time, an opportunity arose to purchase the athletic facility they were renting, creating a permanent home for the congregation. This facility has also given the church a distinct ministry model that has shaped the culture and ministry planning of the church since the beginning. Today, SonRise is actively involved in ministering through the church fitness center, Upward, and many other programs.[2]

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[2] SonRise Baptist Church, "History," accessed June 3, 2017, http://www.sonrisebaptist.org/history/.

Ministry Structure of SonRise

The nontraditional campus of SonRise leads to a unique configuration of ministries. SonRise's facility is made up of a large worship space, gymnasium, fitness center, and children's wing. However, there is little additional room for classrooms or extra ministry space. Because of this, SonRise is heavily invested into the concept of small group ministry. These groups are scattered throughout the community, meeting in members' homes on various days and times throughout the week. There are approximately twenty-five co-ed small groups consisting, on average, of ten members of different age and life stages as well as multi-generational groups. The Wednesday night programs are also decentralized into small groups that meet at the church, which allows the congregation to choose the study group in which they would like to be involved. The congregational life at SonRise revolves around the proper function and implementation of the small group.

Unlike a traditional church, which has distinct, specialized ministries—such as a women's ministry, college ministry, etc.—SonRise fulfills these needs within the framework of individual small groups. With the exception of corporate worship and pastoral care and counseling, the small group at SonRise is intended to meet every ministry need of its members. This creates a culture where relationships are formed and fostered in individual groups.

The Need for a Biblical Counseling
Support Ministry at SonRise

Although SonRise has a strategic ministry plan that seeks to meet the spiritual needs of its congregation, there is an opportunity to reach and engage more of the congregation with biblical counseling principles. Because of this deficit, biblically based counseling is not readily accessible to the average congregant. Ultimately, this has resulted in a silent struggle for many congregants who may not know that the Bible speaks to their every need and can help in their current situation.

The pastoral staff of SonRise work hard to interact with as many congregants and visitors as possible throughout the week. There are five staff members consisting of

the senior pastor, missions pastor, pastor of small groups and technology, youth pastor, and children's ministry leader. Although the entire staff is able to provide care and support, the senior pastor provides the majority of formal counseling to the congregation. The staff are assisted by elder and deacon boards, but their responsibilities are more focused on making decisions and meeting physical needs. Due to the size of the congregation, with an average Sunday morning attendance of 400-500 individuals, it is unrealistic to expect the staff and leadership to personally and closely connect with every person. This issue is compounded by the decentralized nature of the small group system. The staff and leadership may only see most of the congregation on Sunday morning and have no contact with them the rest of the week. Because of this, congregants struggling with issues and burdens can easily go unnoticed.

The small group at SonRise is intended to be a close, intimate group that is centered on Bible study and fellowship. Within this context, people feel an openness to share their burdens and struggles. Because there was no biblical counseling training, small group members and leaders were ill-equipped to handle the intricacies of applying theological truth to everyday problems. This resulted in small groups doing their best to comfort and support these individuals with what knowledge they had. Leaders may have questioned their ability to engage in offering counsel due to the lack of specialized training in biblical counseling principles. A small group leader's only course of action was to refer the individual directly to the pastor and staff. However, some may have felt hesitant to approach the staff out of fear or embarrassment. This fact reinforced that small groups had to be equipped to apply biblical counseling methods from the start. If these leaders did not respond or react in an appropriate and timely fashion when issues surface, any avenue for restoration and reconciliation may have been lost.

<center>**Rationale**</center>

SonRise Baptist Church had to acknowledge the need for a biblical counseling support ministry within the context of their ministry model. SonRise is in a prime location

<center>4</center>

and implements an excellent framework to create a ministry focused on helping those in need within their congregation and community. By utilizing the church structure and existing leadership of the church, it was beneficial to create a ministry to train and equip small group mentors to apply biblical counseling techniques to assist their peers. By implementing such a ministry, SonRise expanded the trained ministry workforce in order to meet the needs of the congregation. This support ministry ultimately strengthened the counseling ministry of the pastoral staff and alleviated the temptation for the congregation to turn to secular counseling, which would possibly lead them away from the truths held in Scripture. Most importantly, this ministry helped the congregation fulfill one of the mandates of the church: to bear one another's burdens. The church should not neglect the needs of those struggling with difficulties. Instead, it is of utmost importance to come alongside and minister to those during some of the darkest times of their lives. This opportunity gives the church an avenue to pour out love and support to those who need it most.

When planning a biblical counseling support ministry, one must look at a church's overall structure and ministry plan before implementation. This ministry should fit seamlessly within the context of the local congregation so that it does not become burdensome and is easy to graft into the overall ministry focus of the church. SonRise Baptist Church has a decentralized ministry model that emphasizes small groups dispersed throughout the community, which was an ideal setup for implementing a biblical counseling support ministry. By utilizing the small group model, the likelihood of success and long-term implementation was greatly increased. This ministry strengthened the church's ability to care for one another and the community.

When forming the biblical counseling support ministry at SonRise, it was important to identify individuals who would be interested and called to serve as small group mentors within the existing ministry model. Initially, one member of each small group was trained, creating a network of mentors spread throughout the congregation.

Small groups serve as outposts of the overall counseling ministry, providing support to the members of their small group, ensuring that every member of the church has someone trained to identify and offer support on their spiritual and emotional needs. Additionally, this training program was open and available to any church member who felt the call of God to participate as a small group mentor. By training individuals on different levels of involvement within the church, biblically-based counsel will be readily accessible to those in need.

Everyone is struggling and in need of biblical counsel on some level. The small group mentor should be bold yet discerning to be intentional about meeting the needs of these individuals. A well-trained and planned biblical counseling support ministry allows the congregation's physical, emotional, and spiritual needs to be better met. This support prevented feelings of isolation and withdrawal, allowing the congregation to have a sense of community and support during difficult times. Mentors are now able to create an environment where their peers can feel secure to share their true feelings and questions. By building a community around these individuals, the church is able to invest their resources and gifts for the purpose of building each other up, bearing one another's burdens, and strengthening the overall mission of the church. By implementing this biblical counseling support ministry, SonRise Baptist Church is able to reach as many congregants as possible who are in need of God's Word.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to design and implement a biblical counseling ministry support program for SonRise Baptist Church that equips and encourages small group mentors to offer basic biblical counsel to those in need.

Goals

The goals listed progress in a chronological fashion. These goals helped gauge the success of the implementation of this ministry with the express purpose of ministering to those in need within the small group setting.

1. The first goal was to develop eight one-hour sessions related to biblical counseling fundamentals, principles, and techniques.

2. The second goal was to equip fifteen participants to provide basic biblical counsel to those in their small groups.

3. The third goal was to revise the eight-week curriculum for future use.

Research Methodology

The first goal was to develop eight one-hour sessions related to biblical counseling fundamentals, principles, and techniques. It also focused on specific issues such as stress, fear, and anxiety. This goal was measured by the expert panel who consisted of the pastoral staff of SonRise and an ACBC certified counselor who utilized a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, and applicability of the curriculum.[3] This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level. If the 90 percent benchmark was not initially met, the material was revised until it met the standard.

The second goal was to equip fifteen participants to provide basic biblical counsel to those in their small groups. This goal was measured by administering a pre- and post-survey that assessed the participant's level of confidence in biblical counseling principles, practices, and their role at SonRise Baptist Church.[4] The goal was considered successfully met when a *t*-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference in the evaluation scores. Neil Salkind explains, "The t test . . .

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[3] See appendix 1. All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by the Sothern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the project.

[4] See appendix 2.

involves a comparison of means from each group of scores and focuses on the differences between the scores."[5]

The third goal was to revise the eight-week curriculum for future use. This curriculum covered biblical counseling fundamentals, principles, and techniques. The participants evaluated the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, and applicability of the curriculum using an evaluation rubric after completing the course.[6] This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level. If the 90 percent benchmark was not initially met, the material was revised and sent to the expert panel for evaluation using a rubric.[7] The material was revised until it met the 90 percent standard by the expert panel.

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

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

Biblical counseling. The Biblical Counseling Coalition defines *biblical counseling* as counseling that is

> anchored in Scripture, centered on Christ and the Gospel, grounded in sound theology, dependent upon the Holy Spirit and prayer, directed toward sanctification, rooted in the life of the church, founded in love, attentive to heart issues, comprehensive in understanding, thorough in care, practical and relevant, and oriented toward outreach.[8]

Sufficiency of Scripture. Grudem defines the *sufficiency of Scripture* as "Scripture contained all the words of God he intended his people to have at each stage of redemptive history, and that it now contains everything we need God to tell us for

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

[6] See appendix 3.

[7] See appendix 1.

[8] Biblical Counseling Coalition, "Confessional Statement," accessed November 15, 2017, https://www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/confessional-statement/.

salvation, for trusting him perfectly, and for obeying him perfectly."[9] Scripture is the only authoritative means for counseling and is the basis for every response given by a counselor.[10]

Within the context of this project, two delimitations were imposed. The first delimitation was that only one member of each small group could participate in each training cycle. Second, the project as limited to twenty-five weeks in length. This timeframe provided an adequate amount of time for training and assessment to occur.

Conclusion

To meet the spiritual and emotional needs of SonRise Baptist Church, it was imperative that the church implement a biblical counseling support ministry within the framework of its existing ministry model. This task was accomplished through the training of one member of each small group through an eight-week biblically-based training course that equipped them to mentor their peers. In the next chapter, the theological and methodological foundations for this ministry are discussed.

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[9] Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 58.

[10] Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 37-39.

CHAPTER 2

THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS
OF A BIBLICAL COUNSELING SUPPORT MINISTRY

The authority of Scripture is firmly rooted in the character of God who has revealed Himself through His inspired Word with purpose and plan. The Bible outlines the relationship between God and man, God's plan for salvation, as well as the mission of His church. Scripture is sufficient to meet every need that man will experience. Believers must utilize all of Scripture to disciple, counsel, and edify one another.

**Scripture as the Foundation of
Counseling (2 Tim 3:16-17)**

In 2 Timothy 3, Paul writes to warn Timothy of difficult times to come, where people would be easily deceived by false teachings that would lead to their destruction. He advises Timothy to remain faithful to what he has been taught and hold fast to the truths of Scripture. Verses 16-17 state that Scripture is inspired by God, is useful for the edification of the saints, and sufficiently prepares believers for ministry. This passage indicates Scripture is God-breathed, giving God's authority to every word found within the text. Scripture contains truths that both edify and convict the reader, spurring the reader on to further spiritual growth. Believers can be fully equipped to counsel one another based upon the authority and all-encompassing sufficiency of Scripture.

All of Scripture Is Profitable

The Bible is the foundation of all Christian learning and spiritual growth. Scripture contains God's will and direction for the world and speaks to the needs of man. Second Timothy 3:16-17 states that all Scripture is useful to establish a foundation for biblical living. This passage indicates that both the Old and New Testaments are equally

authoritative when applying the truths found within them. The two are linked together and must be viewed as a whole to fully understand them both. Donald Guthrie explains,

> All these uses of Scripture were admitted by Judaism; indeed the advanced ethics of the Jews was due to its basis in the Old Testament. Since the Christians took over the same Scriptures, the same profitableness applies. But for them each one of these uses became more comprehensive as the Old Testament teaching was illumined by the life and teaching of Christ.[1]

By viewing Scripture from beginning to end, believers will be able to have a complete view of the principles found within the text. The Old Testament can only be fully understood by seeing the fulfillment in the New Testament, and the New Testament can only be fully appreciated with an understanding of the Old Testament. All of Scripture has the authority of God and should be applied with the same value regardless of when it was originally written. The words of Scripture are crucial to a believer's understanding of God, themselves, and the world. By studying and applying these truths, a believer will have a firm grasp on crucial doctrines that will ultimately shape their worldview. Paul writes to Timothy in this passage of the coming troubles he would face and explains that Scripture outlines God's plan for salvation, fundamental doctrines, and warnings against heresy and ungodly lifestyles.[2] Paul indicates that the Word contains everything a believer needs to know for salvation, edification, and ministry. It is apparent that Scripture is the foundation of a believer's understanding of their world and their relationship to it.

The Authorship and Nature of Scripture

God has provided the world with his special revelation in order to make himself known and display his character in specific ways. Second Timothy 3:16-17 speaks of the divine source of Scripture and how God has breathed every word and

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[1] Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 14 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009), 142.

[2] Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, New American Commentary, vol. 34 (Nashville: B & H, 1992), 238.

thought of Scripture. God has designed his Word to portray his attributes and his desire for man to be reconciled to him. He has done this in such a way that Scripture is directly inspired by himself to accurately express what he has chosen to reveal. The wording in this passage indicates God's inspiration of the Scriptures as a passive rather than an active action.[3] Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., illustrate this fact:

> The idea the term [*theopneustos*] presents is that God has breathed his character into Scripture so that it is inherently inspired. Paul was not asserting that the Scriptures are inspiring in that they breathe information about God into us, even though the statement is true. The Scriptures owe their origin and distinctiveness to God himself. This is the abiding character of Scripture.[4]

Although this passage does not specifically describe the manner of inspiration, it does directly link the source of Scripture to God himself. Millard Erikson describes, "By inspiration of Scripture we mean that supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit on the Scripture writers which rendered their writings an accurate record of the revelation or which resulted in what they wrote actually being the word of God."[5] The words of Scripture are faithful to accomplish the purposes that it was intended to perform since they are directly connected to God's will and plan.

Because every word of Scripture is the Word of God, it bears the full weight of God's authority and sovereignty. God has given his Word in such a way that it is conclusive, absolute, and complete. Lea and Griffin state,

> An assertion of the authority of Scripture is an outgrowth of an affirmation of inspiration. Evangelicals who hold to the authority of Scripture do so because they feel that the Scripture is truth. They also realize that the authority of Scripture is derived by virtue of its inspiration by God. . . . Paul's affirmation of the inspiration of Scripture in 2 Tim 3:16 provides us a statement of the divine origin of Scripture. His statement encourages us to turn to Scripture with the confidence that it provides an infallible, inerrant guide for our beliefs and practices.[6]

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[3] Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 236.

[4] Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 236.

[5] Millard J. Erikson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 225.

[6] Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 240.

The Bible is the ultimate source of truth and is foundational to the Christian faith. God's authority permeates all of Scripture and should give confidence to the reader that Scripture is trustworthy and true. Every word is intentionally inspired to impart the exact meaning and purpose God intended. Lea and Griffin explain,

> The fact that the Bible is inspired by God leads us to assert that the Bible is infallible, inerrant, and authoritative. The term "infallible" suggests that the Bible does not mislead, is a sure, reliable guide, and is fully trustworthy in all matters about which it speaks. . . . The term "inerrant" suggests that the Bible is free from all falsehood or mistakes, and it provides a safeguard for the confidence that Scripture is reliable in all of its assertions.[7]

Because of the inerrant and infallible nature of Scripture, the reader can be sure that their belief and faith are rooted in God's unchanging Word. Because of the inspired nature of Scripture, believers should acknowledge the authority and inerrancy of the Word and the topics on which they speak. Every believer should integrate the Word into every aspect of their lives and view it as the standard for practice and belief. By using Scripture as such, believers will grow spiritually and offer counsel rooted in God's truth.

Endowing the Believer for Ministry

Scripture is useful for the edification and building up of the saints. Believers must master the doctrines held within Scripture so they can have the knowledge to disciple others and strengthen the body. Second Timothy 3:16-17 specifically references four activities in which Scripture empowers the believer to participate: teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training.

First, Scripture bestows the believer with the ability to teach. Believers have the responsibility of discipling one another and helping one another grow in their relationship with Christ. Scripture is the foundation upon which any teaching should be based. Sound teaching is rooted in the doctrines and principles contained within the Word of God. It contains the essential doctrines of the Christian faith and is the ultimate source

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[7] Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 239.

of all knowledge pertaining to a biblical worldview. The church must utilize the whole counsel of Scripture so that every believer will have a full understanding of biblical principles. The Bible should be utilized and integrated into all ministries in order to impart the truths of Scripture into others' lives. The term used for "teaching" in this passage indicates both the content of what is taught as well as the act of teaching. It is implied that teaching is one of the primary purposes of Scripture.[8] Scripture is the foundation of spiritual growth within the church. Proper teaching allows a congregation to discern and understand God's will for his people and how they should interact with the world around them. The Bible should be the source of all teaching within the church. Believers are able to assist one another in growing strong in their faith by properly integrating God's Word into the life and community of the church and their relationships. Biblically-based teaching speaks truth into the lives of the hearers, pointing them toward a biblical framework of approaching life. Proper teaching enables the church to view the world and humanity through God's eyes, providing a proper understanding of life's situations.

Second, this passage indicates that Scripture is useful for rebuking those who are in error. Scripture can serve as a plumb line in which individuals can compare themselves with the biblical standard. The Bible reveals the condition of one's heart and how sin effects every aspect of their life. It is necessary to bring underlying issues to the surface so that they can be acknowledged and addressed. Philip H. Towner describes,

> More specific is the activity described variously in the translations as "rebuking," "convicting of sin," "censure" or "reproof." The term covers a range of activities all related to the process of making someone aware of sin, which begins with the educative act designed to produce self-awareness of sin and proceeds to the more immediately disciplinary stage of calling one up short for some specific misbehavior, and finally reaches the point at which "rebuke" is so harsh it becomes punitive. The difference is a matter of degree. . . . The purpose of the activity being

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[8] Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 589.

to make one conscious of sin in order that a change in behavior might be implemented.[9]

The Word of God has the unique ability to shine a light on unidentified sin and help lead an individual to recognize the error of their ways. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, the Word brings conviction and judgment upon sin in order to lead to repentance and restoration. Lea and Griffin state, "Whether the reproof is personal or doctrinal, Scripture can show sinners their failures, clarify the point of the mistake, and lead them to a new sense of peace and wholeness."[10] Scripture is fundamental to the rebuking of in rebellion against the standards of God. Through the application of Scripture, individuals can begin the process of moving toward true and lasting change.

Third, Scripture not only rebukes but also corrects. God uses his Word to point an erring individual toward the biblical standard and helps lead them to an understanding of what is right. Lea and Griffin explain, "The term 'correcting,' used only here in the New Testament, suggests that Scripture helps individuals to restore their doctrine or personal practice to a right state before God. Correction is one means God uses in order to restore people to spiritual positions they have forfeited."[11] Correcting helps reestablish individuals to a right relationship with God and moves them toward personal and spiritual growth. Towner states, "If convicting is regarded as a negative measure, the activity that follows, 'correcting,' is positive, aiming at the goal of recovery."[12] God desires that those who are in error be reconciled to him, and has provided Scripture to outline how they should live.

Lastly, God uses Scripture to train believers through spiritual disciplines resulting in growth and edification. Scripture challenges a believer spiritually and emotionally to bring about a transformed life. The term used in this passage describes a

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

[10] Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 237.

[11] Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 237.

[12] Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 591.

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systematic approach to training, similar to the way a parent invests in a child's spiritual development, such as in Ephesians 6:4.[13] Scripture is fundamental in the training of believers in that it outlines God's desire for his people and the fruits that his spirit produces in their lives. It systematically causes changes to an individual's understanding of their world and how they should interact with it. This ethical and moral change is rooted in the knowledge gained through the study of the Word and the work of the Holy Spirit. This concept of training would have been easily understood in the time this book was written. Towner explains,

> *Paideia* was a dominant concept in Greco-Roman culture. It was to result in the attainment of the virtues (self-control, piety, uprightness, seriousness, etc.), which amounted to "civilization." It included not simply education or instruction, but the negative or corrective element of discipline, which played its part in the positive development of character. Given the addition of the phrase "in righteousness," which here means the dimension of Christian existence that can be is experienced as visible uprightness of behavior (2:22), the sense of *paideia* as education is clearly meant (see on 2:25).[14]

Training includes both the gaining of knowledge as well as the discipline God performs in the lives of his people. This process does not emphasize behavior modification, but rather a change in the heart. This heart change produces growth and development that leads to righteous living and a desire to honor and obey God.

To bring about true biblical change, believers must study and apply Scripture to every aspect of their lives. Second Timothy 3:16-17 states that Scripture is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training, which all spur the believer on to further spiritual growth. Believers can use the Bible to help edify, admonish, and encourage one another to strengthen the church and their relationship with Christ.

Believers are called to bear each other's burdens and minister to one another as troubles arise. Although Paul was writing specifically to Timothy in this letter, the fact that God's Word fully equips individuals for all types of ministry still applies to all

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[13] Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 237.

[14] Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 591-92.

believers throughout history. Believers must seek God's direction through his Word in order to properly engage in fruitful ministry. Lea and Griffin explain:

> The adjective (*artios*) describes someone who is "in fit shape or condition." The participial phrase described him as furnished completely to do whatever God called him to perform. The use of the Greek perfect tense for "equipped" suggests that this is an abiding condition. If Timothy would nurture his spiritual life in the Scriptures that he would use in his ministry, he would be fully qualified and prepared to undertake whatever tasks God put before him.[15]

A believer must be diligent to remain rooted in the Word of God to continually grow and engage in ministry. Scripture offers trustworthy answers for everyday issues. The more a believer is consistently studying the Word, the better prepared he will be to offer biblical counsel when the need arises. Believers become fully equipped through the comprehensive, sufficient qualities of Scripture. Towner describes explains

> The various uses of Scripture (v. 16b) first make the *anthrōpos* of God "capable," "proficient" (NRSV) or even "complete," that is, fully outfitted for the task. In this case, "full outfitting" or "completion" (*artios*) is to be understood in relation to the functions Scripture can perform, the tools the *anthrōpos* of God must have at his/her disposal for the task.[16]

Scripture contains everything believers need to become proficient and effective to minister to one another. There is no need for supplemental techniques or processes to augment the message of Scripture. It is sufficient to produce competent ministers of the gospel without any additional philosophies. Guthrie illustrates, "The Christian minister has in his hands a God-given instrument designed to equip him completely for his work. . . . The place of the Bible in the equipping of men for the ministry must always be recognized as the most powerful influence."[17] Scripture should always be placed at the forefront of any ministry, serving as the basis of instructing and discipling. The Bible is able to hone the character and spiritual gifts of believers, sanctifying them into useful ministry tools. Believers can

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[15] Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 237-38.

[16] Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 593.

[17] Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 142-43.

seek out the Word for edification to become fully equipped for any ministry task to which they may be called.

Second Timothy 3:16-17 describes how all of Scripture is useful and profitable for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training. It states that Scripture is God-breathed and therefore is authoritative and inerrant, and that it thoroughly equips the saints for ministry. Scripture is the bedrock on which any believer can be wholly and rightly prepared for ministry.

The Revealing Power of Scripture and the Caring, Compassionate High Priest (Heb 4:12-16)

Hebrews 4 discusses the concept of God's rest and its implications upon the obedience and faithfulness of believers. Believers should use the Word of God as a standard to avoid the same disobedience as the Israelites. Hebrews 4:12-13 describes Scripture's ability to understand the motivations and condition of the human heart, with nothing hidden or disguised. Scripture effectively reveals underlying sin that has produced sinful desires and actions in the lives of individuals. This sin is understood and reconciled by a compassionate high priest, as illustrated in Hebrews 4:14-16. Through his work, Jesus offers grace and mercy to help those who come to him in their time of need.

The Living Word

One of the most valuable resources known to man is the Word of God, which serves as a tool for convicting and edifying readers. The Word outlines God's purposes and will complete His intentions as He sees fit. The Holy Spirit, acting in the hearts of those who read Scripture, can bring about conviction and change in all aspects of the reader's life. Although the Bible was written thousands of years ago, it is still active and powerful to cause transformation. George H. Guthrie describes, "The same word that at creation set the elements of the cosmos to their appointed tasks and still governs the universe towards God's desired intentions (1:2-3), has the ability to effect change in people. It is not static and passive but dynamic, interactive, and transforming as it interacts

with the people of God."[18] The power of the Holy Spirit works through Scripture to reach

into the human heart and actively work to transform it. The Holy Spirit who inspired

Scripture continues to work in the lives of individuals, showing that Scripture is still

applicable today. The power of the Word is not dependent upon human activity but rather

on the nature of the one who inspired it. Every word and phrase are deliberate, to illustrate

God's intentions and plan for his people. David L. Allen describes, "By the use of 'living

and active,' the author denoted that the Word possesses the power to effect its own

utterance. It possesses an energizing power that renders it always effective in

accomplishing its purpose. One is reminded of Isaiah 55:10-11, where the word will not

return void but will accomplish God's purpose."[19] Scripture has the unique ability to

accomplish every task intended by its author. When Scripture is read, the words are the

very words of God, actively working within the hearts of readers. Scripture has a plan

that God will see to its completion. Thomas R. Schreiner explains,

> The word of God, i.e., the word God speaks, is like God himself. God is, so to speak, what God says. Hence the word of God, like God himself, is living . . . and active. It has an inherent power and dynamism that cannot be thwarted. . . . Whether the focus is on judgment or salvation, God's word accomplishes what God intends. . . . A focus on the inherent potency of God's word is confirmed by the last phrase in the verse. God's word "judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." God's word penetrates to the core of the human heart, for God's word represents God himself. Just as God knows our thoughts and attitudes, so God's word judges our thoughts and intentions. God knows reality so that he knows whether we are believing or disbelieving, obeying or disobeying.[20]

The Word of God is living and active and draws its strength, authority, and power from

God himself. Scripture has the ability to know the thoughts and attitudes of its readers.

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[18] George H. Guthrie, *Hebrews*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 156.

[19] David L. Allen, *Hebrews*, New American Commentary, vol. 35 (Nashville: B & H, 2010), 219.

[20] Thomas R. Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews*, Biblical Theology for Christian Proclamation (Nashville: B & H, 2015), 146-48.

Every Word in Scripture goes out with God's purpose to reveal the condition of the human heart and all that is hidden and secret. God cannot be deceived by schemes or facades to conceal the sinfulness of man. Schreiner states,

> This verse features God's infallible knowledge of human beings. The shift from the word of God to God himself confirms the close connection between God and his word so that the latter is an expression of the former. God knows the thoughts and attitudes of the heart, for nothing in the created order is hidden from him. God's judgments are always according to the truth, for he knows exhaustively everything that occurs in the world. . . . God's judgments never suffer from superficiality since he sees and knows all, and everything is "laid bare" before him. All human beings will give account to this God who knows all and judges their hearts infallibly. God is never duped by the stratagems and devices of human beings. Thus, no one should think he can disobey God and fall away and escape judgment.[21]

God's omniscience allows him to accurately view the human heart in its most raw form. God fully knows man's depravity and wickedness yet has provided Scripture to help sanctify and continue the work he has begun in the lives of believers. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, he convicts and exposes areas of one's life that are sinful and destructive. God is able to hold men accountable for their actions and will one day judge each accordingly. Every individual should look to Scripture to understand God's standards and expectations.

The Word is a living, direct expression of God himself, and speaks personally to every individual. God uses his Word to bring about his will and transform the lives of those who put their faith in him. Scripture is effective to convict and guide individuals toward Godly change and transformation through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is able to bring out underlying sin and offers a way to address those sins. Ultimately, Scripture points toward Christ as the mediator throughout the sanctification process and demonstrates the help only he can offer.

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[21] Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews*, 148.

Jesus: The Only Means to God's Help

        The Word of God offers guidance and direction for those seeking his will and assistance. As seen in verse 14, because of the work of Christ, all believers have an advocate who provides direct communication between God and man. Jesus is the only way through which man can draw near to God and seek his counsel. Schreiner states, "Jesus has secured for his people access to God's presence, and the presence of God is not available by any other means."[22] This relationship between God and man is vital in the sanctification of every believer. Jesus not only provides a way to God, but compassionately and sympathetically understands the plight of man. Schreiner describes.

> Even though he [Jesus] has entered God's presence by passing through the heavens, he can identify with human beings. . . . Jesus is not only a majestic high priest who has entered the heavens and sits at God's right hand. He is also a tender high priest. He sympathizes "with our weaknesses." The word sympathy is not limited to compassion and empathy but also denotes Jesus' ability to help those who are afflicted. As a human being he knows the frailties and groaning that beset the human race. He is not a distant and aloof high priest but is himself intimately acquainted with the human condition. . . . He understands every temptation we face since he experienced something similar. Nevertheless he never surrendered to sin's power. He shared in our weaknesses and frailty, but he did not—not even once—give himself over to sin.[23]

Jesus' experience on earth gives him a unique understanding of the lives of his people and the struggles they face. Although Christ is fully divine and has not sinned, he is still able to understand the human condition and the power of temptation. Believers can find great comfort knowing their Savior understands their struggles and sympathizes with their pain. Guthrie states, "In this passage, therefore, the word 'sympathize' does not necessitate a sharing of another's exact experience. . . . The word connotes being 'compassionate to the point of helping.' Our high priest does not stand aloof but cares for us in our human state of weakness."[24] Because of his love, Jesus is moved to compassion over the people he died for. He desires to help those who truly seek after him and offers

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[22] Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews*, 152.

[23] Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews*, 153.

[24] Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 176.

mercy and grace to those who cry out to him in faith. Because of Christ's understanding and compassion, verse 16 states believers can confidently approach the throne knowing they will be received. Schreiner explains,

> Believers draw near to the throne boldly, for they know it is a throne of grace by virtue of Jesus' work, not a throne of wrath. Hence they confidently and gladly ask God to grant them "mercy," presumably for sins they have committed. At the same time they petition God for "grace" for the strength and power to face every situation in life. God's grace is poured out as believers request help when they are overwhelmed.[25]

Because of the completed work of Jesus Christ, believers have the right and privilege to approach God in a personal and intimate manner. The relationship between God and man is marked by God's open invitation for his people to come to him in their time of need, which is explained by Guthrie: "Jesus' compassionate disposition invites us to intimacy with God and makes that intimacy possible. . . . Christians therefore, should draw near to God with unabashed openness since God alone is the true source of mercy and grace."[26] By God's benevolent lovingkindness, believers receive the grace and mercy to continue growing in Christ and face the obstacles that arise in a fallen world.

Jesus, through his work on the cross, has provided a way for man to come to God in faith. He fully understands the human condition with all its struggles and temptations, yet he did not sin. His humanity allows him to sympathize with man and spurs him to compassion for those burdened with sin. Because of God's love and care, he desires for his people to draw near to him. He invites them to boldly come to him to ask for mercy and grace in their time of need. God offers help to those who truly seek after him with genuine repentance and a desire to be forgiven. He gives mercy to those who have rebelled against him and grace to empower his people to live a life that honors him. Believers can and should approach God with confidence, through the mediation of Christ, knowing that he truly cares for them and is ready and able to help.

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[25] Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews*, 154.

[26] Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 176.

All Believers Are Called to Counsel (Rom 15:14)

Romans 15 is part of Paul's closing remarks to the church in Rome in which he reiterates his authority as an apostle to the Gentiles as well as commends the Roman Christians for their spiritual maturity. Verse 14 describes the Romans as competent ministers with the ability and knowledge to instruct each other. This verse indicates that all believers have the ability to counsel and minister to one another. This is a crucial aspect of Christian relationships and interactions within the church. These relationships should be marked by edification, loving correction, admonition, and biblical instruction, among others. Every believer has the ability and capability to instruct and counsel each other with the authority of Scripture.

Every Believer Is Capable to Counsel

Romans 15:14 can be used as a guide to illustrate the ability of all believers to build each other up through sound counsel and intensive discipleship. Paul indicates that this be accomplished through the application of the Word in everyday issues as well as correcting and rebuking those who have gone astray. One can see the intimate nature of the relationship between fellow believers and how they play a pivotal role in the spiritual development of each other. This passage shows that he desires mature believers to invest their lives in mutual instruction and care. James D. G. Dunn describes the phrase:

> "Able to admonish one another" denotes basically the well-intentioned attempt to influence mind and disposition by apposite instruction, exhortation, warning, and correction; so with reference to God's chastening in Jewish wisdom literature. . . . It was clearly important for Paul that his congregations should be mature enough to exercise this crucial ministry among themselves; there is no implication that he was thinking of the protentional [sic.] of the Roman church(es) to instruct others.[27]

This passage clearly indicates that every believer is spiritually mature enough to instruct and admonish each other to grow in Christ. Believers are equipped with the Word and the Holy Spirit to influence and guide them in helping each another navigate the issues of life.

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[27] James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 38 (Dallas: Word, 1988), 858.

With this understanding, every believer should embrace the responsibility of ministering to one another on such a level. As seen in Romans 1:8, the believers in Rome lived in such a way that it was well known that they were capable of counseling one another in this manner. Robert H. Mounce describes,

> Although Paul had never visited or ministered to the Christian congregation in Rome, he was confident that they were a healthy church. Morally, they were "full of goodness," intellectually they were "complete in knowledge," and functionally they were "competent to instruct one another." Williams says they were "competent to counsel." The believers in Rome were expected to help one another toward spiritual maturity. They were to advise and instruct one another. None were so wise that they had nothing more to learn, and none were so inept that they had nothing of value to share. Spiritual insight is by no means the sole prerogative of those with high intelligence.[28]

These believers understood that they had the ability and were expected to counsel one another with confidence. Believers are all fit to teach one another no matter their life experience or aptitude. This passage indicates the responsibility of believers to use their abilities to enrich relationships within the church. Paul writes with the confidence that they have put into action their faith by investing and cultivating each other's growth in Christ. Paul had the assurance that the Roman church, although imperfect in many ways, still contained mature believers who had the ability to counsel one another as they should. Likewise, the church today, with its own frailties and failings, still has the capability and qualities to make a difference in the lives of other believers.

Paul's encouragement to the Romans can still be applied to believers living today. Believer have the skills needed to apply God's truth in their life and the lives of others, they have the resources of the Holy Spirit and Scripture to instruct and guide them, and they have their own life experiences to bring their unique personality to the relationship. It is clear that Paul indicates that every believer should and can instruct, advise, and encourage one another.

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[28] Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, New American Commentary, vol. 27 (Nashville: B & H, 1995), 207.

Characteristics of Mature Believers

  Romans 15:14 also describes the characteristics of the mature believer within the Roman church. Paul illustrates that these believers exhibited goodness, knowledge, and the ability to instruct one another. These qualities are key to a healthy Christian body, ministering to one another in all aspects of life.

  Paul highlights the strengths of the Roman church to encourage them to continue ministering to one another with such dedication. The Roman Christians lived in such a way that their love for one another was expressed through a ministry of mutual edification. Mature Christians should minister with the same passion and purpose to counsel and guide one another toward Christ. Paul intentionally chose these characteristics to illustrate the qualities needed to edify and encourage one another. These characteristics have profound significance that develop through the maturation and sanctification of the believer and help the reader understand the requirements of those seeking to help and lead others.

  Goodness allows the believer to have empathy and concern regarding the discipleship and spiritual well-being of others. Colin G. Kruse states, "'Goodness' may be described as a 'positive moral quality characterized esp. by interest in the welfare of others,' and is something, the apostle says, that is produced in believers' lives by the Spirit."[29] This characteristic creates a genuine relationship that would be conducive to the mutual edification of both parties. This relationship would be marked by a deep sense of care and concern for fellow believers and the desire to reach out and invest in their lives.

  Knowledge, rooted in the Word and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, allows a believer to offer sound counsel that speaks to the needs of the individual. Kruse writes, "'Knowledge' as far as Paul is concerned, is something embodied in the law but found supremely in Christ, in whom, he says, 'are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and

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[29] Colin G. Kruse, *Paul's Letters to the Romans*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2012), 536.

knowledge.'"[30] This knowledge is eternal and immutable as a result of its divine authorship. Because this knowledge is not based upon their personal opinion or experience, believers can be confident that the counsel they offer is trustworthy and true.

Competence describes the believers' ability to accurately and lovingly apply their knowledge of the Word to any situation. Romans 15:14 indicates that the Roman believers not only understood what they were taught but were able to apply it to themselves and others.[31] Competence denotes that a believer can fully engage in discipleship through instruction and admonition. Because of their knowledge and compassion, believers will be able to instruct with compassion, truth, and grace.

The characteristics described in Romans 15:14 give confidence to any believer seeking to influence the lives of others with the truths of Scripture. These qualities help shape and guide the believer to better understand, apply, and approach situations where God's counsel is needed. By cultivating these characteristics, a believer will have the framework in which they can build a ministry of compassionate care and counsel.

Conclusion

Scripture is the foundation of belief and practice within the church. Scripture asserts its authority, power, and ability to interact with its reader through the work of the Holy Spirit. Second Timothy 3:16-17 explains that Scripture is inspired by God and holds the same authority as the spoken Word of God. It also states that Scripture is beneficial for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in order to thoroughly equip the saints for good works. Hebrews 4:12-16 describes how Scripture is able to see past the schemes of man and reveal the innermost intentions of the human heart. This passage identifies Jesus as the compassionate high priest who understands and offers help to those who seek him.

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[30] Kruse, *Paul's Letters to the Romans*, 536.

[31] Grant R. Osborne, *Romans*, IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 387.

Believers can come to Jesus to receive grace and mercy in their time of need. Romans 15:14 also describes how believers are fully capable of counseling one another based upon the authority of Scripture. Believers should edify, correct, admonish, and instruct one another with the full counsel of Scripture to guide them. Scripture is fully sufficient to address any situation an individual may face. It empowers and equips believers to apply the truths of Scripture in their own life and the lives of others. Believers must obey the call to counsel one another exercising the full authority and power of the truth that can only be found in the Word of God.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL, PRACTICAL, AND HISTORICAL ISSUES
RELATED TO A BIBLICAL COUNSELING
SUPPORT MINISTRY

Biblical counseling is rooted in the sufficiency of Scripture and its authority in the lives of believers. This ministry helps individuals find a biblical solution to everyday problems and spur them on toward spiritual growth and discipleship. A biblical counseling support ministry reinforces and assists the biblical counseling ministry within the local church. This support ministry operates under the same principles and methods as the traditional biblical counseling ministry but is designed for implementation by lay leaders who are not certified counselors. Biblical counseling is distinct from other Christian or secular forms of counseling and should be purposefully implemented within the framework of the local church.

The Superiority of Biblical Counseling

Within the realm of counseling, many different streams of thought influence the church and those who seek help for deep-rooted issues. These other influences include Christian integrationist counseling, Christian psychology, and transformational psychology. An individual should examine the fundamentals, methodology, and practices of these different counseling classifications. By understanding these basic principles, a person will be able to see the differences and deficits of these methods of counseling.

Christian Integrationist Counseling

The most well-known and accepted form of counseling within the church today is known as Christian integrationist counseling. This form of counseling is performed by licensed individuals who have passed rigorous exams to meet state requirements to

practice. They are viewed as a Christian alternative to secular forms of counseling and psychology while utilizing the scientific approaches to human behavior and nature.

Christian integrationist counselors differ from their secular counterparts in that they view counseling through a Christian worldview. Integrationists understand that man is created in the image of God and have inherent value and characteristics of the Creator. This image has been marred by sin and effects interactions, feelings, relationships, their physical bodies, and every other aspect of existence. Every individual is weighed down by this burden of sin and can do nothing to alleviate it in any way. Integrationists believe that God has provided a way of salvation through Jesus Christ who is the only means to remedy the brokenness within the heart of man. This heart change is accomplished over time through the process of sanctification. The Bible serves as the framework for their understanding of these key theological principles and is the basis upon which they view and interact with their counselees. Christian integrationist counselors value Scripture as God's special revelation and believe it serves as a guide in how they approach counselees and formulate a plan of care. In all these things, they allow their Christian worldview to shape their understanding of humanity, influencing how they approach counseling.

To create a well-rounded approach to counseling, Christian integrationist counselors attempt to combine the Christian faith and beliefs with aspects of the social sciences. When counseling individuals, they begin with Scripture as the basis of treatment, using a biblical worldview while applying secular understandings of human behavior to help identify the issues at hand. Stanton L. Jones states,

> Far from answering all our questions for us and smothering the intellectual quest, Christian belief supports the quest for truth, and provides foundational truths about the nature of humanity that can undergird and direct inquiry fruitfully but in a way that does not decisively answer every question we have. Even as we seek to be profoundly and deeply Christian in the understandings we bring to the field, we can look hopefully to science to expand those understandings further.[1]

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[1] Stanton L. Jones, "An Integration View," in *Psychology and Christianity: Five Views,* ed. Eric L. Johnson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2010), 112.

Christian integrationists view Scripture and science as complimentary tools that work in conjunction with one another to comprehensively understand the situation. By utilizing Scripture and science, the integrationist feels they are using every resource to help their counselees find a solution to the problems at hand. They use a variety of resources as a basis for their counseling because they view Scripture as limited in the scope of understanding man. Jones illustrates, "The integrationist also surmises that Scripture does not provide us all that we need in order to understand human beings fully, and that there is a legitimate and strategic role for psychology as a science and as a profession in giving us intellectual and practical tools for understanding and improving the human condition."[2] Integrationists believe that Scripture is not adequate to serve as the only source of knowledge and counsel when ministering to struggling counselees. They view Scripture as useful in the areas of spiritual development, emotional issues, and the sin nature of man. However, they feel that Scripture is deficient in that it does not specifically address complex mental health issues, psychosocial problems, the use of medications, and other areas.

Because of this perceived deficit, the Christian integrationist views the Bible and the social sciences as complementary partners in an attempt to offer well-rounded assistance to their counselees. They view this approach as taking into account all knowledge available of God's creation through the special revelation of His Word as well as knowledge found through scientific study. The Christian counselor strives to effectively guide their counselees toward a solution that not only draws from Scripture but also utilizes commonly held beliefs about human behavior and psychology, combining the two streams of thought for the benefit of the counselee.

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[2] Jones, "An Integration View," 101.

Christian Psychology

        Christian psychology is another form of Christian counseling that seeks to balance faith and science for the benefit of those who seek their counsel. Christian psychologists focus on mental health and psychological issues more than counseling individuals through relational and personal struggles. They diagnose psychological issues just as secular psychologists do; however, they apply biblical principles alongside psychological practices. These psychologists practice through a Christian worldview while utilizing secular philosophies of human thinking and behavior.

        Christian psychologists view the world through an essentially gospel-centered, biblical worldview, and they interpret human interaction and spiritual issues through this lens. In many cases, they are believers that practice within a field of study that focuses heavily upon the secular sciences. They use the same scientific approach as secular psychologists while evaluating and applying theological principles to the issues at hand. They value both biblical truth and commonly accepted psychological practices so that they can best understand and help those seeking their counsel. They view this approach as looking at humanity in the round, using all the resources available to them.

        Christian psychology attempts to replace the humanistic worldview of secular psychology and replaces it with a biblical worldview. They approach counseling an individual with the understanding that they are composed of a mind, body, and spirit, and address each of these components collectively. They acknowledge that each of these aspects interact with each other may play a role in the overall presenting problem. In doing this, they flavor their modern therapies with a Christian understanding of the world and apply the truths of Scripture to psychological problems. Eric L. Johnson describes,

> Without a personal relationship with the God for whom they were made, humans live in spiritual darkness, seeking, but failing to satisfy their ultimate longings for God with creaturely substitutes, which in turn affects their activities and understanding of themselves and others, and contributes to unjust and oppressive human relationships. In addition, a Christian critical psychology will assume that the triune God is necessarily the ultimate source of the most comprehensive form of

enlightenment there is, that occurs through experiential union with the person and work of Jesus Christ by faith, fostered by the Holy Spirit.[3]

The Christian psychologist sees the root of psychological issues as being directly influenced by the spiritual condition of the individual. With the understanding that humans react negatively out of a spiritual deficit, the Christian psychologist must first seek to guide an individual toward a right relationship with God in order to begin the restoration process. In addition, the Christian psychologist utilizes modern psychology to further uncover the underlying social and psychological issues that also play a part. They claim that by doing this, they are enhancing their understanding and ability to offer counsel on a variety of issues. Johnson states,

> Christians have not fully appreciated the commonalities there are between their own interpretation of human beings and the various schools of critical thought, probably inhibiting mutual enrichment and possible collaborations between these communities. . . . The Christian psychology community should eagerly embrace its critical heritage and investigate, elaborate on, and work with the unconscious/implicit dynamics of human beings according to its own distinctive worldview assumptions, including its view of God.[4]

Christian psychologists see no conflict in embracing theological and secular principles for the benefit of those in their care. They view this combination as mutually beneficial and edifying to the entire study of psychology and its practice. By unifying these two streams of thought, the Christian psychologist creates a philosophy of psychology that is both scientific and faith-based.

Christian psychology may appear to be a biblically-based option of counseling that applies Scripture and science in a complementary fashion. However, the secular aspects are based on humanistic worldviews and cannot easily, if at all, be wed to the Christian faith. When these two worldviews intersect, one will inevitably overshadow the other. Ultimately, the prevailing worldview will direct the focus of the psychological philosophy and practice of the psychologist. In many cases, the secular worldview often

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[3] Eric L. Johnson, "Christian Psychology as a Type of Critical Psychology," *Christian Psychology* 8, no. 2 (2014): 32-33.

[4] Johnson, "Christian Psychology as a Type of Critical Psychology," 37.

dominates the methodology and undertone of the counsel offered, skewing the direction of the psychologist. One can see, for example, that the focus of the Christian psychologist is on symptom management rather than addressing the root issues and encouraging personal growth and sanctification for lasting change. It can become easy for these individuals to depend upon secular ideologies rather than searching for biblical truth that speaks to the issues at hand. Robert C. Roberts and P. J. Watson illustrate,

> We should also make clear that Christians are free to pursue investigations of countless psychological topics that are not as worldview dependent. . . . For example, neuro-psychology, episodic memory, cognitive development, schizophrenia and social influence—areas where faith assumptions make relatively little measurable impact on the investigations.[5]

Christian psychologists believe that Scripture has deficits surrounding medical and scientific issues, such as those listed above. In these cases, they turn to secular scientific research to "fill the gaps" in their methodology. This ultimately is a statement about their view of Scripture and its sufficiency. They imply that Scripture is inadequate or is silent toward the needs of those struggling with complex mental and behavioral health issues. This can be a dangerous precedent and can ultimately lead to a psychology that is only Christian in name, and not in practice.

Transformational Psychology

Transformational psychology is a Christian-based philosophy that focuses on observation, reason, and the leading of the Holy Spirit. The psychologist attempts to approach each issue from a non-biased perspective, allowing the psychologist to accurately evaluate and interpret all the information at hand. Transformation psychologists feel this process creates the foundation on which they can offer counsel that is effective for each situation.

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[5] Robert C. Roberts and P. J. Watson, "A Christian Psychology View," in Johnson, *Psychology and Christianity*, 173.

Transformational psychologists view psychology as a process rooted in the present and not restricted by tradition or a set methodology. John H. Coe and Todd W. Hall state,

> We strive to be open to study ourselves, God, others and reality, as well as to the traditions that we have become familiar with and the mentors who have led us. The goal, then is for each generation in the Spirit to allow reality and faith to shape this endeavor, to do the work of psychology in faith and then, as a secondary task, reintegrate its findings with those truths and traditions within which it finds itself.[6]

Transformational psychologists observe reality, are led by the Spirit, and formulate conclusions about the situation. These observations allow them to view every circumstance with an open mind, allowing them to gather and interpret situations without partiality or preconceived bias. Although transformational psychologists do not depend upon traditions, they do not allow themselves to be overly influenced by them. Coe and Hall explain, "The transformative psychologist reserves the right to withhold judgment on accepting as true what any tradition may teach, while he or she engages in the firsthand work and methodology of psychology. Because, as helpful as tradition are, they can also be blinders, not allowing the psychologist to truly see."[7] Transformational psychologists must be careful not to allow traditional ways of thought to overly influence the way they practice psychology. These psychologists feel that this would prohibit them from seeing things in reality as they truly are.

Transformational psychology also believes in certain truths that become the basis of their worldview. Coe and Hall illustrate, "We start with the Christian realities, for they do not merely constitute the faith as some belief system or worldview, but they are known by faith to be true and reflect the realities that constitute and ontologically ground our very existence."[8] These truths lay the foundation for the observational work

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[6] John H. Coe and Todd W. Hall, "A Transformational Psychology View," in Johnson, *Psychology and Christianity*, 202.

[7] Coe and Hall, "A Transformational Psychology View," 201.

[8] Coe and Hall, "A Transformational Psychology View," 203.

needed in transformational psychology. Coe and Hall explain that these "Christian realities" include the existence of God, the creation of man in his image, the doctrine of sin, the need for community—both with God and others, the need to become sanctified through the work of the Holy Spirit, and that God has revealed these things personally as well as through Scripture.[9] Transformational psychology seeks to practice psychology through a Christian worldview but without being restrained by traditional psychological practices. This viewpoint seeks to empower the individual to evaluate situations and formulate conclusions based on observations and understanding, promoting transformation in the life of the psychologist as well as others.

Transformational psychology has a weak foundation for practicing psychology within the context of counseling. These psychologists base their observational skills upon "Christian realities" yet do not fully depend upon biblical truth for the basis of their counsel. This philosophy brings into question the validity the Christian nature of their psychology. The very heart of transformational psychology is based upon observations by the individual. By relying on these observations, each psychologist could come to different conclusions while observing the same situation. Even though these psychologists attempt to be objective in practice, there is no way to completely avoid subjectivity and the influence of individual biases. This partiality ultimately can lead to inconsistent counsel, flawed implementation, and brings the trustworthiness of transformational psychology into question. Those seeking help cannot fully rely upon the psychologist for true and effective counsel.

Biblical Counseling

Biblical counseling is unique in that it seeks to be fully based upon Scripture and its sufficiency. Biblical counselors believe Scripture is fully authoritative, speaks to every need, and is the basis for a full understanding of human nature and existence. The

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[9] Coe and Hall, "A Transformational Psychology View," 204.

Biblical Counseling Coalition describes that counseling is "anchored in Scripture, centered on Christ and the Gospel, grounded in sound theology, dependent upon the Holy Spirit and prayer, directed toward sanctification, rooted in the life of the church, founded in love, attentive to heart issues, comprehensive in understanding, thorough in care, practical and relevant, and oriented toward outreach."[10]

Biblical counseling is built upon the truth that God's Word is sufficient, inerrant, and authoritative on all issues of life and experience. The authority of the counsel offered comes from Scripture itself rather than the ideas, philosophies, research, or beliefs held by the counselor. Biblical counselors are not reliant upon secular practices or influenced by pop-psychology but look to Scripture as the final authority on all issues. Jay E. Adams states,

> No other system of counseling has authority . . . because no other system has an authoritative base. I cannot help but agree with most criticism of the use of authority in counseling since they grow out of a recognition of the utter arrogance of any fallible man who attempts to speak authoritatively. No counselee should entrust his life to the hands of another unaided fallible sinner.[11]

Biblical counseling is unlike any other system of counseling that depends upon flawed human understanding; rather, biblical counseling is trustworthy and true because it comes directly from Scripture. This reliance upon Scripture changes the entire approach of the counseling methodology, pointing the counselee back to God's Word depending upon the Holy Spirit.

Biblical counseling is the only form of counseling that solely bases its methodology upon Scripture and its theological principles. Biblical counseling implies that all counsel offered is rooted in a biblical worldview and derived from a biblical understanding of human nature. Biblical counselors understand that sin is the underlying cause of all issues and uncovering the root sin will alleviate secondary and tertiary issues

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[10] Biblical Counseling Coalition, "Confessional Statement," accessed November 15, 2017, https://www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/confessional-statement/.

[11] Jay E. Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 20.

as well. Scripture illustrates that man consists of a physical body and a soul, and each aspect can play a role in many presenting or root issues. Biblical counseling understands that the starting point for true resolution can only be found through a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ. These counselors also know that the effectiveness of their counsel is not dependent upon their ability alone, but the active work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the counselee doing the work to bring sanctifying change. Biblical counseling is defined by scriptural principles and uses the Bible as an outline for counsel and practice.

Another hallmark of biblical counseling is the reliance upon Scripture itself to do the work of counseling. The biblical counselor acts as a guide to walk through Scripture alongside the counselee, directing them toward applicable truths. The Holy Spirit works through the Word of God to sanctify and bring about change. Adams describes,

> Thus the counselor's authority at every turn is limited by the Bible itself. This is another reason why the Scriptures must be in actual use in counseling sessions. At least a certain amount of biblical exposition ought to accompany any authoritative directive . . . exposition is necessary (1) to enable the counselee to "see [for himself] if these things are so" (Acts 17:11); (2) to bring the full authority of God's word to bear upon the counselee (so that he may not treat the directive merely as a suggestion, that he may take or leave), and to accord it the full weight that it deserves.[12]

The counselor guides the counselee through Scripture, allowing the Holy Spirit to work in the heart to convict, correct, rebuke, or affirm the counselee. Scripture itself does the work; the biblical counselor must only be obedient and faithful to convey God's unchanging message to those who are struggling.

At its heart, biblical counseling is dependent upon Scripture for every aspect of its implementation. It bases its authority, methodology, and effectiveness on the Word of God, which inspires change and repentance. No other counseling system implements the full authority of Scripture, brings the full weight of Scripture to bear on sin issues, and depends upon God to do the work of change in the lives of the counselee. John MacArthur explains that in Biblical counseling "Scripture is superior to human wisdom (1 Cor.

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[12] Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling*, 19-20.

3:19); that the Word of God is a more effective discerner of the human heart than any earthly means (Heb. 4:12); that the Spirit of God is the only effective agent of recovery and regeneration (Eph. 5:18-19); and that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are found in Christ Himself (Col. 2:3)."[13] Biblical counselors are fully invested in the application and implementation of God's Word to deal with the root sin issues in the lives of their counselees. Biblical counseling does not blend the secular with the sacred and truly respects the sufficiency and effectiveness of the counsel given in Scripture. All other counseling systems fall short in employing Scripture to the full extent of which it is capable.

Key Elements of a Biblical Counseling Support Ministry

A biblical counseling support ministry is designed to support the pastoral counseling ministry of the staff. They will be embedded throughout the congregation as members of small groups as well as ministry leaders who will help identify and offer basic biblical counsel to those struggling with spiritual and emotional issues or unwilling to seek pastoral assistance. For the proper implementation of a biblical counseling support ministry, a culture of discipleship must saturate every aspect of the church's function and ministry. The mentor should view their role as a facilitator of intensive discipleship in which he or she ministers to individuals through one-on-one relationships, the small group ministry, and intentional evangelistic engagement to those outside of their church family. These actions will allow the mentor to apply the truths of Scripture, finding God-honoring solutions to life's difficult issues.

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[13] John MacArthur, "Rediscovering Biblical Counseling," in *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically*, ed. John MacArthur (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 4.

One-On-One Relationships

One of the most effective modes of discipleship is the mutual edification that takes place within personal relationships and one-on-one interaction. These close relationships allow for a sense of intimacy and openness that can only come through a shared investment of time, energy, and experiences. This connection will ultimately create a relationship built upon trust and authenticity. The biblical counseling mentor will become a confidant for those who share and seek help for issues. It is inevitable that over the course of time, personal issues, cares, and concerns will be shared and the biblical counseling mentor will able to apply Scripture, helping friends find a resolution. Biblical counseling mentors will be equipped to engage their friends and acquaintances with basic biblical counseling methodology so they can point their friends toward God's plan for their life.

Many dealing with spiritual and emotional issues may withdraw from interacting with others and begin to hide their struggles out of fear and shame. This seclusion will lead to feelings of isolation and despair. A biblical mentor can reach out to those showing these signs and begin to minister to them where they are. Through intentional interaction and intense discipleship, the mentor will be able to break through the sense of isolation and show the hope that can only be found in Christ. The mentor will encourage the individual to reconnect with a small group and the church as a whole, allowing others to minister to the individual and bear each other's burdens.

The close, personal relationship that the mentor will have through a one-on-one relationship will create an environment in which the mentor will be able to lovingly rebuke, teach, and disciple their friends. This process is an inevitable byproduct of the close relationship rooted in the Word. Every believer can play a role in the spiritual edification and discipleship of fellow believers, as well as offer sound counsel based on scriptural truths. Jeremy Pierre and Deepak Reju explain,

> Every Christian is capable of helping, even with the really hard stuff in the Christian life. With the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17), Christ's love in their hearts (Gal. 5:6), and a willingness to serve (Mark 10:43-45), nothing can stop them from doing some effective good. God uses his Word to offer wisdom for responding rightly to any

circumstance under the sun. That wisdom is available for all who seek it, and Christians can do this together formally or informally.[14]

Every believer has the tools and ability to lovingly disciple one another. The biblical mentor can be confident knowing that the counsel they offer is from the inerrant Word of God and is trustworthy and true. The mentor will be able to point to Scripture as the ultimate authority, allowing the power of the Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of fellow believers.

Small Groups

At the center of the biblical counseling support ministry at Sonrise Baptist Church is the integration of biblical counseling mentors into every small group within the congregation. Integrating this ministry will strengthen the community within the small group as well as extend the pastoral care ministry of the church. The small group fosters community within the larger congregation and allows members to participate in group discipleship and edification. Brad Bigney and Ken Long state,

> If spiritual formation is the purpose of the church, then *personal* transformation in community with other believers is the purpose of small group ministry. Bible study is great. Fellowship is wonderful. Evangelism is essential. But changing and growing to be more like Christ is the purpose of a small group ministry. People do not drift naturally toward transformation; they retreat toward information.[15]

Biblical counseling mentorship can build off of existing relationships, serve as a resource for the small group, and strengthen the spiritual health of the group. The mentor can work with the small group leader to help meet the spiritual needs of the group and help identify those struggling and need assistance. The community within the small group will then be able to surround and support those members in need with the care and concern that will help them along the discipleship process.

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[14] Jeremy Pierre and Deepak Reju, *The Pastor and Counseling* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 114.

[15] Brad Bigney and Ken Long, "Tools to Grow Your Church: Uniting Biblical Counseling and Small Groups," in *Biblical Counseling and the Church*, ed. Bob Kellemen and Kevin Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 93.

The small group atmosphere should be a place of open and honest communication where members can share struggles and needs without fear of judgment or criticism. Each member has the responsibility to cultivate such an environment so that proper biblical discipleship and soul care can take place. The small group should be a place where members feel they are cared for, loved, and are able to openly express concerns. Kevin Carson states,

> In a small group setting, others can see areas where we need wisdom and prayer (James 1:5). So the small group becomes a greenhouse or incubator for spiritual growth, with everyone spurring one another on to love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24-25), giving hope and help that enables everyone to keep moving forward, by God's grace. This, of course, is all hinged upon allowing others to speak into our lives.[16]

The biblical mentor will then be able to offer basic biblical counsel to a multitude of issues that may be shared in this setting. This relationship will allow the small group to become a place where issues can be shared and solutions can be discussed. Bigney and Long describe,

> So a transformational group is focused on asking questions with spiritual formation in mind…The small group leader, through a series of questions, is providing fertile ground for each person to examine their own attitude of submission to God's Word in their life, which is indicated by their current level of joy in the midst of the trial. . . . Helping each member of the group move toward greater submission to God during a trial is the transformational result for which the small group pleader is aiming.[17]

The mentor will be able to facilitate discussion surrounding the root issues and, with the support of the rest of the group, lovingly guide the individual through Scripture, allowing God's truth to speak into the situation. This open and honest soul care will eliminate the silent struggle that many individuals face and will ultimately become an extension of the formal biblical counseling ministry of the church.

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[16] 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, 2013), 275.

[17] Bigney and Long, "Tools to Grow Your Church," 94.

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The small group ministry is built upon the idea that every believer has something to offer and can learn from one another. Within the group, members can share from their own experience to help build up other members who may be going through similar situations. The biblical counseling mentor can facilitate such discussions as well as encourage the participation of all members of the group, allowing the mentor to serve as a resource in the counseling process. Since the small group is a place of openness and community, many issues will be shared that will benefit from the experiences of others. The mentor can build off the support that other members offer and lead the discussion toward Scripture, guiding the group toward a biblical solution.

The biblical counseling support ministry is primarily based in the small group since it will become a place in which issues can be identified and handled as they arise. Many times people hide their struggles and allow issues to take root, leading to negative results and worse outcomes. The biblical mentor will be trained to identify and triage these situations before they reach the pastoral level. Bigney and Long illustrate,

> Since people are directly cared for by their small group leader, the leader is the one who should know the counselee better than any other leader in the church. Even if one of his people is being counseled, the small group leader is still responsible for the counselee's growth in Christ-likeness. A counselor may be necessary, but is best seen as a temporary assistant to the leader.[18]

By acting as a resource within the small group, the mentor will help alleviate minor counseling issues that would otherwise be handled by the pastoral staff. Also, many within the church would not feel comfortable sharing certain issues with their pastor and would otherwise go without any biblical counsel. This support ministry would act as a stopgap for these individuals, ensuring they receive the soul care they need. The biblical counseling support ministry will become a vital resource for both the small group and the church as a whole.

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[18] Bigney and Long, "Tools to Grow Your Church," 101.

Evangelism

The biblical counseling support ministry will also reach beyond the small group as the trained mentors will be able to engage their friends, families, and coworkers in the surrounding community. This aspect of the support ministry will integrate an evangelistic aspect in which the mentor will be able to apply Scripture to issues and situations that will arise in everyday conversation and cultural engagement. Although not an assigned function, the mentor will be able to point individuals who do not know Christ toward the ultimate solution for their struggles, which is the peace that can only be found in a relationship with Christ. Rob Green and Steve Viars state,

> Churches may talk about evangelism, but counseling offers a tremendous opportunity for folks to do evangelism rather than talk about doing evangelism. When an unbeliever seeks biblical counseling, it's an opportunity to present Christ as the answer to their needs. Instead of us going to them and giving them a message they don't want, our non-Christian counselees come wanting an explanation for the challenges they are facing in their lives. They are coming on our turf and wanting our answers because no one else has been able to provide satisfactory answers to their deepest questions.[19]

The mentor will engage mentees by using Scripture that speaks to specific situations, use basic biblical counseling techniques to identify the root of an issue, and point the mentee toward Christ. William W. Goode describes,

> Biblical counseling can also benefit the local church in evangelism. While many evangelistic tools are effective and worthy of attention, it is important to notice that the scriptural model always began by addressing the challenges, sins, or trials that a person was facing. Thus the biblical counselor who follows Scripture will not simply dispense the Word but will endeavor to listen and ask questions, and then will present the gospel of Jesus Christ.[20]

By engaging the community outside of the church, the mentor will become a resource for knowledge and help for those who would otherwise seek secular or self-help options. This engagement will spread the reach of the church's ministry, offering hope and healing through salvation and the Word of God.

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[19] Rob Green and Steve Viars, "The Biblical Counseling Ministry of the Local Church," in MacDonald, Kellemen, and Viars, *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, 231.

[20] William W. Goode, "Biblical Counseling and the Local Church," in MacArthur, *Counseling*, 225.

Additional Resources

The biblical counseling support ministry will act as a bridge by which other existing ministries of the church will be connected. While mentoring individuals, the mentor may discover certain issues or needs that can be met by existing ministries of the church. When this occurs, the mentor will be able to "refer" the individual to these ministries for further discipleship and specialized care. The pastoral staff will be the main resource for more in-depth issues that need more extensive biblical counseling beyond the scope of the support ministry. Bigney and Long state,

> Typically small group leaders will be able to handle some of the soul care issues that arise in their group, but not all of them. Since they are providing "personal discipleship" for the eight to fifteen people in their group, those who need long-term "personal intensive discipleship," or what is commonly referred to as "biblical counseling," may need to be cared for by others.[21]

The mentor will work alongside the pastoral staff, reinforcing and offering support during the counseling process. This approach will increase the effectiveness of the pastoral biblical counseling ministry and benefit the counselee by offering comprehensive care. In addition, the mentor can involve the deacon ministry of the church as it is designed to serve and meet physical needs. During the mentoring process, the mentee may express needs that may be compounding spiritual and emotional issues. Through the deacon ministry, these needs can be met, freeing the individual to focus on their discipleship process and resolution of issues. The church may also have other ministries that may benefit the discipleship process of a mentee, meeting specific needs of the individual. One such ministry at Sonrise Baptist Church is Celebrate Recovery, which helps individuals seeking support for addiction recovery, anger issues, and a variety of other life-controlling issues. These additional resources offer another arm of support, providing community and specialized soul care.

The biblical counseling support ministry has four key elements that help increase the effectiveness and implementation of the ministry as a whole, including one-on-one

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[21] Bigney and Long, "Tools to Grow Your Church," 95.

relationships, small group ministry, evangelism, and additional resources. By integrating these key elements, the biblical counseling mentor will be able to effectively identify, counsel, and refer anyone struggling with a variety of issues. This type of ministry will ultimately create an environment in which the congregation will be able to share their burdens with one another, knowing that fellow members will lovingly and intentionally speak God's truth into their situation. This ministry will also engage the community and further the spread of the gospel through the personal ministry of the mentor.

Conclusion

A biblical counseling support ministry is rooted in the principles and methodology of the biblical counseling movement and serves as a support for the congregation as a whole. Its authority is rooted in the inerrancy of Scripture and the ability of all believers to minister to one another through discipleship and basic biblical mentorship. It takes the basics of biblical counseling and serves as a front-line intervention, identifying and addressing issues as they arise. This ministry will serve as a foundation for in-depth, accessible soul care, ensuring every member is able to receive biblically-based counsel. The church as a whole will benefit, and the body of believers will become more invested in the spiritual well-being of their community.

CHAPTER 4

DETAILS OF PROJECT

To implement a biblical counseling support ministry at SonRise Baptist Church, one must first create a detailed plan for preparation, implementation, and evaluation that would seamlessly integrate the ministry into the life of the church. This program must be fully approved and accepted by the church leadership to ensure the credibility and suitability of the curriculum and integration into the existing ministry model. The curriculum design must be straightforward and easily applicable to a wide range of situations. It is then imperative to evaluate the curriculum and effectiveness of the course to make improvements that would strengthen the outcomes in future training sessions. By completing each of these steps, the groundwork was laid for success in this ministry.

Preparation for Implementation

During the initial stages of project implementation, it was crucial to gain the support and guidance of the ministerial staff and church leadership. The pastor and elder board oversee the spiritual well-being of the church and must be involved in any new ministry involving congregants. An initial meeting with the senior pastor was set to discuss the need and premise of a biblical counseling support ministry within the church. The senior pastor was enthusiastic about the idea and brought the project proposal before the elder board at their next meeting. Each elder was given a copy of the project proposal and given a chance to review the project's biblical and methodological foundations. At the following meeting, approximately a month later, they discussed any comments or questions they had about the program. They then decided as an elder body to support proceeding with implementing a biblical counseling support ministry.

A follow-up meeting with the senior pastor was then set to inform me (the project leader) of the outcome of the elder body's decision as well as discuss comments and concerns brought up at their meeting. In addition, curriculum topics were finalized and a timeframe for launch was set. Wednesday nights were conducive for class time given that on-campus small groups and specialized ministry groups are held during the evening and many congregants are already accustomed to coming at that time. The dates of March 6 to May 1 were selected based on ministry and church calendars, skipping April 3 due to Spring Break and the church not having regular scheduled meetings that night. Needs were discussed, including meeting space, AV equipment, and room setup, which was then relayed to the pastor of small groups. He then communicated his willingness to facilitate these and other needs as they arose. With initial approval given and a start date set, the project was ready to move on to the next stage of implementation.

A key element of the implementation process was the recruitment of an expert panel to evaluate and improve the curriculum. This panel implemented the curriculum evaluation rubric, which evaluated the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, and applicability of the curriculum.[1] The expert panel consisted of the pastoral staff of SonRise Baptist Church as well as an ACBC certified counselor. The ministerial staff included the senior pastor, student pastor, pastor of small groups, children's minister, and missions pastor. The staff agreed to evaluate each lesson during their weekly staff meetings and give feedback as needed. An ACBC certified counselor was contacted and agreed to serve on the expert panel as well. An agreement was made that the curriculum PowerPoint and evaluation rubric would be sent to him via email and he would return his rubric within a timely manner. With the members of the expert panel assembled, the project moved forward toward research and design of curriculum.

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[1] See appendix 1,

Within the writing of the curriculum, PowerPoint was chosen to be the delivery method best suited for this ministry setting. This method offered a number of advantages. It was efficient to create a PowerPoint presentation that could be easily edited and disseminated to others via email. It also was compatible with the equipment provided by the church, which consisted of a TV and HDMI cable hookup. It was cost-effective for the church because each participant was able to print off their own copy of the slides with space for personal notes. The ability to print at home allowed participants to create their own curriculum notebook to refer to once the class had concluded.

The next step was to write the curriculum. Each lesson was written and then submitted to the expert panel with a curriculum evaluation rubric.[2] The expert panel had time to evaluate the lesson and send feedback. If the benchmark was not met or constructive changes were identified, then the curriculum was edited as needed. The first lesson focused on the biblical basis for a biblical counseling support ministry. The second lesson described the methodology and practice of biblical mentorship and counsel. The third lesson focused on biblical marriage and other related issues and included a case study for the class to interact with. The fourth lesson covered issues pertaining to children and parenting, including a case study to discuss. The fifth lesson centered on conflict; ways to handle it biblically, and a case study to work through. The sixth lesson discussed the topics of anger, stress, anxiety, and depression, and included a case study. The seventh lesson discussed how to handle crisis situations biblically, as well as a case study to discuss. The eighth lesson consisted of three case studies and a reiteration of the first and second lessons.

The process of the recruitment of participants began during the phase of designing and writing the curriculum. About a month before the class began, information was disseminated to the church. A slide with class and signup information was added to

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[2] See appendix 1.

the scrolling announcements shown before and after the Sunday worship service. An announcement with the same information was also inserted into the paper bulletins that were distributed for Sunday service. Two weeks before the class began, a presentation was made during the service announcements to inform the congregation about the need for a biblical counseling support ministry, the course objectives, and how to register. Following this service, an information booth was set up in the lobby for easy registration and to answer any questions.

At the end of registration, twenty-seven people were interested in taking the course, some of which could only attend sporadically throughout the course period but were still eager to learn and asked to be emailed the literature even if they could not attend.

Implementation

Weekly Preparations

Before the class could be taught each week, several tasks needed to be accomplished so everything could be ready for the presentation of material. The day before each class, the PowerPoint presentation was sent out to the course participants with instructions on how to print their own copies as well as a reminder of the time and location of the class. One hour before the class began, tables and chairs were set up in a corner of the church auditorium, separated by dividers. A portable television was set up and connected to the presenter's laptop. If course instruments were used within a specific session, they were printed in advance and provided to participants when required. Additional applicable resources were also brought each week and laid out on a front table for participants to examine.

Class Structure

Each lesson began with prayer requests and introductory material surrounding the topic covered during the class. Participants shared real-life issues with the class to offer one another counsel and support. I then began the course materials, instructing

participants on the biblical basis for each topic and practical methodology they could use to help those in need. This format gave participants a biblical reference point from which to offer sound biblically-based counsel. Each lesson also gave practical steps to help apply those Scriptures in a pragmatic, straightforward way.

The class concluded with a case study pertaining to the topic covered that week. During the case study portion of the class, participants were broken into groups according to their tables to discuss and deliberate the case studies amongst themselves before sharing their conclusions with the group. Each table worked together to create an action plan that they would theoretically implement in that situation. Participants were encouraged to think of clarifying questions to ask, identify root issues, list applicable Scriptures for the situation, describe ways to involve the mentee in the case study, and highlight spiritual growth opportunities for the mentee.

Course Content

Week 1. Week 1 served as an introduction to the course as well as laid the theological foundation of the entire biblical counseling support ministry program. At the beginning of class, the participant pre-test was given to evaluate their confidence in biblical counseling principles, practices, and their role at SonRise Baptist Church.[3] The first lesson was designed to give the participants a fundamental understanding of the sufficiency of Scripture and the believer's ability to counsel one another, as defined by Scripture. The differences between biblical counseling and other forms of counseling were discussed. By exegeting core Scriptures, participants began to see what Scripture truly says about itself and its ability to speak to every need.

The first passage discussed was 2 Timothy 3:16-17, which illustrated the authority and sufficiency of Scripture. This passage demonstrates that believers are fully equipped to counsel one another and apply Scripture to everyday needs. The class was

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[3] See appendix 2.

instructed to base any counsel upon the truths of Scripture rather than their own human understanding about a situation. Believers should refer to Scripture to instruct and disciple one another and should continually engage the Scriptures to effectively strengthen the body. This model will allow the biblical mentor to grow spiritually and minister effectively within his or her small group setting.

Hebrews 4:12-16 was also exegeted, showing the power of Scripture and its unique ability to reveal the condition of the heart with nothing hidden or disguised. Scripture exposes hidden sin that is the root cause of issues in the lives of individuals. This fact reinforces the power of Scripture, through the work of the Holy Spirit, to convict and bring about change in all aspects of an individual's life. This passage shows that, when mentoring, Scripture ultimately does the work, rather than the talents or abilities of the mentor.

Romans 15:14 was used to instruct the participants to take seriously their ability to offer sound counsel, through the Word, to those in need. Biblical mentors should strive to integrate Scripture into all aspects of their interactions. Christian relationships should be marked by edification, loving correction, admonition, and biblical instruction. Participants were encouraged to exercise their spiritual gifts and disciple one another through the ministry of the Word. This verse also indicates that believers have the ability and capability to instruct and counsel each other with the authority of Scripture. The characteristics outlined in Romans 15:14 are the hallmarks of true biblical discipleship, in which believers seek to encourage one another and spur one another on to good works.

From talking with participants after the first lesson, they seemed overwhelmed by the weightiness of the material and the academic exegetical nature of the presentation. This lesson relied heavily upon exegetical commentaries and the thorough breakdown of the three main passages. Because of this, participants seemed inundated with too much detail. However, they also stated that the information given was eye-opening and incited them to learn more and look forward to the future sessions.

Week 2. In week 2, the lesson covered practical methodology of biblical mentorship and how to apply these principles to everyday interactions. Participants were given a theological understanding of the human heart and its implications on the actions of individuals. The class was given a flowchart that helped them move through the stages of assessment and evaluation, identifying root issues, and working with individuals toward God-honoring change. This lesson gave practical tools to apply basic biblical counseling techniques in real-life situations.

The first passage discussed was Jeremiah 17:5-10. This passage contrasted the difference between a life rooted in the Lord and one rooted in self. Participants were shown that a life dependent upon the Lord produces God-honoring thoughts and actions whereas a person whose heart is turned from God leads to desolation. If one's heart is turned toward God, then he will display good fruit, indicating the condition of his heart and God's sanctifying work in his life. What is valued in a man's heart will ultimately reveal itself in his words and actions. The human heart is deceitful, sinful, wicked, and leads individuals toward destruction. God sees and knows the condition of man's heart, with nothing hidden, and cannot be fooled by public or personal deception. He is the only one who can redeem and change man's heart through salvation and sanctification. Through studying this passage, participants were shown that all of man's issues are products of sinful hearts.

Luke 6:43-46 was also discussed to reinforce the participants' understanding of how the heart effects an individual's actions and beliefs. This passage demonstrates that the condition of the heart produces actions, or fruit, of the same kind. Whatever is believed in the heart affects the way an individual will react and respond to a situation. Only a heart transformed by Christ can produce actions that honor him and reflect His sanctifying power in an individual's life.

It was reiterated to the class that the goal of biblical mentorship is to help individuals pinpoint the root issue in their problem and help them replace it with a God-

honoring foundation for a fruitful life. The participants were shown a diagram that broke down the process of biblical mentorship into systematic steps. The first steps included observing the situation and presenting issues, identifying the sinful root, and encouraging repentance from sinful beliefs and actions. The final steps included replacing old beliefs with biblical truth, allowing the Holy Spirit to work in the life of the individual, and observing the life change and the production of good fruit.[4]

Week 2 concluded with describing practical steps of implementation. The class was instructed to listen and ask clarifying questions to gather more information about the situation. They were encouraged to help the mentee discover the root issue and point them toward Scripture to help replace unbiblical beliefs with God-honoring beliefs. It was explained that it is crucial for the mentee to be an active participant in the change process and to ensure that they are actively involved. The mentor must always point the mentee toward the hope found in Christ as well as direct them toward disciplines that will reinforce the Word of God in their lives. These practical steps are a simple method to help guide biblical mentors in helping those who are struggling.[5]

This lesson was received well by the participants overall. Many stated that this process was practical and easy to apply to a number of situations and settings, including their own heart issues. The participants were eager to learn more in the coming weeks about specific issues and how they could apply this process to a variety of circumstances.

Week 3. The third week of class covered the topic of marriage and issues within the marriage relationship. Participants were given a biblical overview of marriage and the roles of husband and wife, which served as a foundation on which counsel could

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[4] These steps have been adapted and altered from Robert D. Jones, lecture, *80551-Introduction to Biblical Counseling*, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, July 17-21, 2017.

[5] Randy Patten and Mark Dutton, *The Central Elements of the Biblical Counseling Process*, Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2013), 325-38.

be offered to those struggling with marriage issues, such as communication issues, sexual sin, and problems with intimacy.

Genesis 2:18-24 was exegeted to give the definition of marriage and explain the roles of a husband and wife within the context of a marriage relationship. This passage defines marriage as a relationship between a man and a woman in which both are made in God's image but play two separate roles. Within marriage, the man and woman leave their family of birth and cleave to one another, creating a new family. This passage demonstrates the complementarian design for marriage where the husband leads, and the wife is the helpmate.

Ephesians 5:22-33 was discussed and used to explain the unique roles of the husband and wife within marriage. The husband should emulate Christ's sacrificial love, cleanse his wife with the washing of the Word, and love his wife as part of his own body. Moreover, the wife should submit to her husband and respect his authority as head of the household. The wife's role of submission was described as willingly putting herself under the authority of her husband, not because she is inferior but out of obedience to the Lord.[6] Colossians 3:18-19 was also used to further expound upon the role of the wife to submit to her husband, as well as that the husband should love his wife tenderly.

A case study was given to the class that described a hypothetical couple with communication issues and confused marriage roles. The intent was for the class to take several minutes to discuss amongst themselves and come up with the root issues and an action plan that they would apply in that situation. However, they seemed to struggle with understanding how to apply the previous weeks' material to a real-life scenario. They stated that they did not understand what they should discuss with their group because there was not a prompt to remind them of what to address or how to move forward in assessing and applying biblical principles to the situation. The class was able to identify the confused

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[6] Tony Merida, *Exalting Jesus in Ephesians*, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville: B & H, 2014), 137-43.

marriage roles in the case study and offer practical counsel based upon Scripture to help the individuals. Ultimately, because the discussion prompts were not presented clearly, they struggled with applying what they had learned to the situation.

After the case study, a practical description of biblical marriage roles was given. It was described that the husband is to love and cherish his wife, take the responsibility for the marriage, lead his family, and provide for his wife and children. The wife is to provide support and companionship to her husband, manage their household, and provide children for the marriage.[7] These roles complement each other and serve as a witness of God's love and harmonious design for marriage.

Communication issues were discussed, and verses were given to help participants understand the biblical guidelines for discourse. Within communication it is important for what is said to be right and true, to speak the truth in love, avoid harsh words, and to be quick to listen and slow to speak. It was also discussed that the tongue can be very destructive but also has the power to help and heal.[8]

This information would have been better utilized if discussed prior to the first case study. Because of the amount of content and the time spent on the case study, this was the last topic presented to the class since the class time limit had ended. Participants were encouraged to read over the remainder of the material, interact with the second case study on their own, and questions could be asked at the next class time.

The second case study in the PowerPoint was an example that focused on sexual sin within marriage. It described a couple who had become distant from one another—the husband began using internet pornography, and the wife was preoccupied with their children. This scenario led into the last slides describing definitions of sexual sin and

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[7] Andreas J. Köstenberger and David W. Jones, *God, Marriage, and Family* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 23-25.

[8] John G. Kruis, *Quick Scripture Reference for Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 51-53.

biblical intimacy within marriage. A list, drawn from Köstenberger and Jones, explained the sexual sins listed in the Bible and the scriptural references pertaining to them.[9] The last slide gave the biblical basis for sexual intimacy within marriage and the guidelines in which to enjoy this gift.

Week 4. Lesson 4 focused on children and parenting and specific issues that may arise when mentoring parents. A scriptural basis was given for the role of parents and how they should train their children in the Lord. These verses also described the expectation of children to obey, respect, and honor their parents. Children are described as a blessing from the Lord and should be nurtured and discipled with intentionality and purpose.

The first passage discussed was Deuteronomy 6:4-9, which describes the shepherding nature of parenting. Parents should take every opportunity to train and disciple their children. These opportunities should come naturally and repeatedly to impress the Word of God indelibly in the hearts of their children. This passage should spur parents on to take advantage of the time they have with their children to establish a firm foundation for later faith.

Psalms 127:3-5 was also discussed and speaks about how well-trained children are a tool of the Lord. Parents must train and disciple their children to represent the Lord in all they do. Children should be raised in accordance with God's desires and plans for the family to be effective witnesses of the work of God. Children are a blessing from the Lord and parents should embrace the responsibility of raising their children with gratefulness and joy.

The next verse discussed was Proverbs 22:6, which outlines the importance of discipling and training one's children in godly living. It is a parent's duty to lay a firm foundation in which their children base their lives upon scriptural principles. Childhood

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[9] Köstenberger and Jones, *God, Marriage, and Family*, 82-83.

is a time in which habits and values are instilled that will last for their lifetime. It is of utmost importance that parents take every opportunity to wisely and strategically impress the Word of God upon the hearts of their children.

Proverbs 3:1-12 was next examined and outlines the instructions of a godly father to his son. This passage describes a life dedicated to the wisdom of the Lord and how that is reflected. Ephesians 6:1-4 similarly describes the importance of children obeying their parents as if they were obeying the Lord himself. Children should honor and respect their parents and have a teachable spirit.

The last several slides discussed specific issues related to parenting and children. The first topic was discipline and how it should be a measured, appropriate corrective response to negative behavior. The goal of discipline is repentance and heart change, not simply behavior modification. The topic of rebellion was also discussed and how children are naturally bent toward rebellion and will seek opportunities to assert their own will over parental authority. Parents should view rebellion as a spiritual battle for the heart of their children and should respond accordingly. The topic of adult children was covered, including how parents should interact and respect their adult children, whether they are leaving home to live on their own or returning home for a season. Due to the lack of time, the case study could not be covered during this week's lesson and was moved to lesson 8.

Week 5. Lesson 5 dealt with biblical approaches to conflict and how it can be resolved in a God-honoring manner. This lesson contained key verses that served as a foundation to understand and view conflict as it is described by Scripture. Participants were given practical steps to deal with conflict as well as a case study where they were able to apply these concepts in a realistic situation.

Ephesians 4:29-32 outlined how Christians should interact with one another in their words and actions. Believers should not speak in such a way that is foul or destructive, but rather seek to encourage and build one another up. This is a direct expression of the inward change that comes through salvation and the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of

the believer. Foul language is not a proper representation of Christ and is detrimental to the witness of a believer.[10]

James 4:1-3 explains that conflict springs from sinful desires, destructive consequences of self-serving motives, and is the ultimate source of fights and conflict. This type of behavior can undermine relationships and become a hindrance to spiritual growth and the sanctification process. In contrast, Romans 15:5-7 and 1 Corinthians 1:10 describe the harmony in which believers should strive to produce in their communities and relationships. The act of unity is an expression of worship and obedience to the call God has placed on his church. Conflict arises from reverting to one's sinful feelings and desires whereas unity flows out of the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. In the body of believers, there will never be a complete absence of conflict, but when it does arise it should be handled in a God-honoring and peaceable manner.

Several other passages were also discussed, including Galatians 5:19-23, which describes the works of the flesh contrasted with the fruits of the Spirit. The sinful desires of the flesh produce conflict, whereas the fruits of the Spirit produce unity and good works. The work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers will lead to the kinds of actions described in 1 Thessalonians 5:13b-15 and Colossians 3:13-15. These passages describe the peaceful, meek, and humble qualities produced in the lives of believers and are the hallmark of a regenerate heart.

The class was then guided through Ken Sande's "Four G's of Conflict Resolution."[11] This approach begins with glorifying God, shifting the focus from self-centered desires and feelings to praising and honoring God regardless of the circumstances. The second step is "getting the log out of your own eye," where an individual must examine himself and acknowledge his own responsibility in the situation.

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[10] John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 1697.

[11] Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 12-13, 38.

The third step is to "gently restore," where believers offer hope and grace in order to allow restoration. The final step is to "go and be reconciled," leaving what has occurred in the past and intentionally focusing on forgiveness and resolution.

The class was then presented with a case study describing a conflict between siblings over the care of their elderly mother. Participants interacted well with the case study, expressing comprehension and growing confidence in their ability to formulate and implement an action plan. Participants showed marked improvement from the previous weeks in their ability to discuss and respond to the case study.

Week 6. Week 6 covered the topics of anger, stress, worry, and depression. This lesson gave a scriptural understanding of each topic, in addition to practical, biblically-based steps to help process and work through these life-controlling issues. The class was given an opportunity to apply what they learned by working through a case study that allowed them to create an action plan and steps moving forward for the subjects. This lesson equipped participants to deal with some of the most common issues they will face, as these topics are experienced by all.

The first subject covered was the topic of anger. James 1:19-20 and Ecclesiastes 7:9 speak of the foolishness of being quick-tempered and the wisdom of remaining calm and collected in the midst of stress. Ephesians 4:26, 31-32 explains that believers should be quick to resolve issues and not allow anger to linger and fester in the heart, allowing the enemy an opportunity to lead them astray. Proverbs 15:18 and 16:32 show the strength of character of those able to control themselves and their emotions in times of trouble and can help diffuse difficult situations. Participants were also given practical action steps from David Powlison's *Anger*. These steps include assessing the situation, evaluating personal motives, understanding the possible consequences of anger, seeking God's

guidance, and creating a God-honoring response.[12] This action plan served as a framework for the class to help themselves and others in anger-provoking situations.

The second topic discussed in this week's course material focused on stress and its effects. Matthew 11:28-30 reminded the participants of the freedom that comes from salvation in Christ and the peace that can be found through a relationship with him. Psalm 61:1-4 indicates that God hears the cries of his people and is a refuge in their times of need and distress. In these times, believers should remember that God is far greater than any stressful situation or anxiety they may encounter. Practical steps were then given, illustrating a simple action plan that can be implemented at any time, for a variety of situations. The first steps are to pause, to slow racing thoughts, and to put things into perspective, remembering that God is near in times of trouble. The final steps are to pray, which involved God in the situation, and to move forward, not allowing the fear to become paralyzing.

The third topic discussed was worry. Matthew 6:25-27 and 33-34 describe the futile nature of worry and the sense of control man attempts to gain by worrying. Philippians 4:4-7 gives an action plan for believers on how to approach worry by involving God in every aspect of the situation. The action steps previously explained for stress were also used in the literature to address to worry.

The final topic covered was depression. Psalms 69:1-3, 6:6-9, and Proverbs 18:14 indicate that depression affects the physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of everyone—even believers. Psalms 43:5, 16:7-8 and 73:23-26 show that God is ever-present in suffering and serves as an anchor in times of need. The action steps discussed were based upon *Depression* by Edward T. Welch, and included believing even when feelings

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[12] David Powlison, *Anger* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2000), 16-26.

incline toward disbelief, fighting to reject negative thoughts, allowing God to reveal what he is saying about the heart issues, and actively speaking God's truth into the situation.[13]

Due to the discussion during the class, there was not enough time to cover the case study that particular week, so it was moved to week 8 for discussion and evaluation.

Week 7. Lesson 7 discussed how to mentor someone going through a personal crisis and covered topics such as death, serious illness, financial issues, and questions of faith. Participants were given a general action plan designed to address specific issues in times of crisis. Biblical support was also given for each of the individual topics to offer a biblical understanding of each crisis situation and increase their knowledge to best help those in their care.

The crisis action plan was based off *Crisis & Trauma Counseling* by H. Norman Wright and served as a guide for participants to implement biblical mentoring within a crisis situation. This plan included steps such as listen and assess, reassure and support, offer biblical counsel, and offer ongoing support and resources.[14] This type of plan is easily applied to a wide range of situations and is both biblically-based and practical.

The first topic discussed was how to help someone grieving after the death of a loved one. Psalms 6:7-9, Lamentations 3:22-24, and Psalm 34:18 illustrated that God hears the cries of those who grieve and is faithful to offer comfort in such dark times. God should be trusted during times of grief and although he does not always offer answers, He does promise his presence through the process. There is also hope for the believer offered in 1 Corinthians 15:53-57 and 2 Corinthians 5:6-9, which indicate that the believer will be with the Lord at the moment of death and there will be full restoration in the life to come. Christ gives believers victory over the sting of death and the power it holds over mankind. Scripture offers hope and peace for those who have lost a loved one who was in Christ.

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[13] Edward T. Welch, *Depression* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2000), 1-28.

[14] H. Norman Wright, *Crisis & Trauma Counseling* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2011), 164-65.

The second topic covered serious illness and the hope that a believer can find in Christ. Second Corinthians 5:1-5 and Romans 8:22-23 show that, even in sickness, a believer has the promise of renewal in the life to come. The human body will always struggle with illness and pain until it is resurrected and restored. Those struggling with illness can look to the future, knowing that their physical suffering will one day cease.

The third topic discussed financial issues and biblical concepts that a mentor can share with a mentee trapped in a monetary crisis. First Chronicles 29:11-12 indicates that all things belong to God, come from God, and should be stewarded as such. Proverbs 15:16 and 1 Timothy 6:9-10 warn against the love of money and the turmoil it can create. Matthew 16:19-21 outlines a heavenly perspective of money and possessions, indicating that believers should invest in things of eternal value, not temporal amusements. These concepts can help individuals move forward past crisis with a biblical understanding of their finances.

Questions of faith was the last topic discussed in this lesson and dealt with faith and belief in the midst of trial. Psalms 19:1-4, Romans 1:19-20, and Psalm 14:1a indicate that God has made himself clearly known through creation, and no man can honestly deny God's existence. Hebrews 11:6, 1 Corinthians 13:12, and Romans 10:17 gave a biblical definition of faith and described the importance of faith to bridge what is known about God and what cannot be fully comprehended. First Peter 1:3-9 indicates that trials can strengthen faith and refine it to its purest form, giving the believer a closer walk with Christ and a deeper reliance upon him. These verses serve as a beginning point for offering hope to those struggling with faith and belief in God. They lay the groundwork for further discussion and mentoring, allowing for the natural progression of discipleship to occur.

The final portion of the class was the interaction with a case study about a woman grieving the death of her husband. The class was broken into groups and they discussed an action plan and presented their findings to the class. Participants did very

well and offered biblical support as well as practical ways to meet her needs during this time.

Week 8. Week 8 was the final week of the course and focused on application and final assessments. At the beginning of the class, each participant filled out a post-test participant survey[15] and a curriculum evaluation rubric[16] to gauge knowledge learned, evaluate what participants felt about the material, and determine if any changes to the curriculum needed to be made. The lesson contained an overview of the Scriptures covered in week 1 about the theological foundations for a biblical counseling support ministry as well as a brief recap of the methodology covered in week 2.

The majority of the class focused on three different case studies, allowing participants to apply what they had learned throughout the course. The case studies came from previous lessons (weeks 3, 4, and 6) where there was not enough time to discuss them adequately. Participants demonstrated understanding and competency of the material and were able to create an appropriate, biblically-based action plan for each of the scenarios.

Post-Implementation

The participants represented a wide range of ages, spiritual development, and small groups. The ages of the participants ranged from the mid-30s to the 70s and included new believers as well as established church members. The class originally began with 27 individuals who showed interest in and registered for the course, some of which had prior engagements and could not physically attend the class, but still wanted the material to review on their own. On the first night of class, approximately 23 participants were present, but the number varied slightly as the course went on. Over the next eight

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[15] See appendix 2.

[16] See appendix 1.

weeks, at least 15 participants were at each session, but the exact number varied. These 15 represent many of the small groups within the church, expanding the reach of this ministry to a broad section of the congregation.

After the implementation of the course, the course materials and evaluation forms were calculated to determine if the goals of the project were met and were successful or not. The course material was adapted according to the comments and suggestions and resubmitted to the expert panel for final approval, if necessary. After finalizing the curriculum with the expert panel, a future meeting was scheduled with the church staff to discuss the possibility of offering the course recurrently in the future.

Conclusion

This biblical counseling support ministry of SonRise Baptist Church was designed to train and equip biblical mentors with basic biblical counseling principles to minister to those struggling with issues within the context of their small groups. This goal was accomplished through an eight-week mentorship course focusing on key issues that are most likely to surface within a small group setting. Participants interacted with real-life case studies that allowed them to apply the material in a realistic and practical way. The next chapter analyzes the data collected and determines whether the project goals were met.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

After the completion of the biblical mentorship support ministry implementation, it was imperative to analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the project and identify areas that needed improvement. Several methods were used to gather and analyze the data to determine if the project goals and purpose were met. An expert panel evaluated each lesson of the curriculum, a pre- and post-test was given to the class to gauge confidence gained, and a curriculum evaluation was filled out by the participants at the end to see if they had any positive or negative feedback on the course in general. All these items were taken into consideration to evaluate the effectiveness of the project implementation and the ministry training as a whole.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

Several factors indicated the need for a biblical counseling support ministry for SonRise Baptist Church. Because of the size of the congregation and the decentralized ministry structure, it was common for individuals struggling with certain issues to go unnoticed and unsupported. These individuals may seek help outside of the church from professionals whose counsel is not rooted in a biblical worldview. In addition, the staff is incapable of meeting all the counseling needs of every congregant. Because of these issues, a network of trained mentors was established to offer basic biblical counsel to those who might otherwise not seek counsel. Through this project I designed and implemented a biblical counseling ministry support program for SonRise Baptist Church that equips and encourages small group mentors to offer basic biblical counsel to those in need.

Evaluation of the Project's Goals

The first goal was to develop eight one-hour sessions related to biblical counseling fundamentals, principles, and techniques. This goal also focused on specific issues such as stress, fear, and anxiety. This goal was measured by the expert panel, which consisted of the pastoral staff of SonRise and an ACBC certified counselor, who utilized a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, and applicability of the curriculum.[1] This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level. If the 90 percent benchmark was not initially met, the material was revised until it met the standard.

Each week, the curriculum was sent out to the members of the expert panel to be evaluated before the lessons were taught. Each member of the expert panel filled out a rubric and the results were averaged for each lesson. Although not all of the lessons were evaluated before implementation, which is explained later in the weaknesses of the project, all eight lessons met and exceeded the benchmark of 90 percent as set forth in the goals.[2] Because all of the lessons met this benchmark, the goal was achieved.

The second goal was to equip fifteen participants to provide basic biblical counsel to those in their small groups. This goal was measured by administering a pre- and post-survey that assessed the participants' level of confidence in biblical counseling principles, practices, and their role at SonRise Baptist Church.[3] The goal was considered successfully met when a *t*-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference in the evaluation scores. The pre- and post-test scores were

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[1] See appendix 1.

[2] The average scores for each lesson were lesson 1—100 percent, lesson 2—100 percent, lesson 3—100 percent, lesson 4—100 percent, lesson 5—100 percent, lesson 6—95.83 percent, lesson 7—100 percent, lesson 8—97.92 percent.

[3] See appendix 2.

analyzed and resulted in a statistically significant difference resulting in the increase of their confidence ($t_{(9)} = 7.856$, $p < 0.00000169$).[4]

The third goal was to revise the eight-week curriculum for future use. This curriculum covered biblical counseling fundamentals, principles, and techniques. The participants evaluated the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, and applicability of the curriculum using an evaluation rubric after completing the course.[5] This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level. If the 90 percent benchmark was not initially met, then the material was revised and sent to the expert panel for evaluation using a rubric.[6] The material would continue to be revised until it met the 90 percent standard by the expert panel.

During the assessment of this goal, I discovered that the wrong evaluation rubric was utilized by the participants to evaluate the course curriculum. The participants were given the curriculum evaluation rubric, which was intended only for the expert panel to use. The participant course evaluation rubric is identical to the curriculum evaluation rubric but with five additional questions pertaining to the class time. When this mistake was discovered, I contacted my project supervisor who discussed this with the SBTS PDS office, and advised me to move forward with the data I had collected and use it to evaluate this goal as well as document my mistake within the goal evaluation. With this being said, the following data was collected and analyzed from the participants' responses on the curriculum evaluation rubric. The rubric utilized by the participants

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[4] The pre- and post-test scores of each participant are listed: participant 1—48/53, participant 2—46/50, participant 3—43/53, participant 4—48/60, participant 5—46/51, participant 6—50/58, participant 7—43/60, participant 8—44/50, participant 9—42/48, participant 10—48/59, participant 11—41/51, participant 12—22/42, participant 13—37/54, participant 14—52/60, participant 15—43/59.

[5] See appendix 3.

[6] See appendix 1.

indicated that the benchmark was met, successfully meeting the goal, and there was no need to revise and resubmit the material to the expert panel.[7]

Strengths of the Project

Throughout the implementation process, many strengths arose that showed the effective and useful nature of the biblical counseling support ministry program. By the end of the course, it became apparent that the eight-week course length was a significant strength. Many of the participants commented on how they felt comfortable committing to an eight-week study, knowing that they would gain basic skills within an attainable timeframe. Because of the relatively short nature of the program, the attrition rate for the participants was kept to a reasonable amount. This could be attributed to the participants knowing that their commitment was only for two months. In addition, many of the Wednesday night studies offered at SonRise fit within an eight-week timeframe. This timeframe allowed the participants to simply sign up for this course just as they would any other study held on Wednesday night. Children's programs are also a regular part of Wednesday night services, providing childcare for those with young children. If the course had continued for a longer period of time, the participants might have lost their attention or motivation, and their attendance would have suffered. Overall, the timeframe was conducive for learning and well-suited for the ministry model of the church.

Another major strength of the project was the scriptural basis that equipped the participants to biblically mentor individuals struggling with life-controlling issues. After evaluating the course curriculum, the expert panel gave feedback stating that each lesson was thoroughly founded upon and drew its authority from Scripture. In addition, many participants had comments on the curriculum evaluation rubric that the lessons were saturated with Scripture and offered biblically-based solutions for the topics discussed

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[7] All fifteen participants gave a score of 100 percent on their curriculum evaluation rubrics.

within the course. One participant even commented, "In an age where even some 'Christian counselors' have gotten away from the counsel of God, this curriculum is *very* biblically-based and will truly help those who are struggling."[8] The biblical nature of the curriculum lent itself to being practical and relevant to everyday life. Participants had a sense of confidence knowing that they could directly and easily apply what they learned to situations in which they would innately encounter. The relevant nature of the curriculum added to the applicability of the program—the knowledge gained in the course directly impacted the way they minister to those in which they come in contact.

Positive undocumented results were also gathered through conversations and interactions with the participants throughout the course. On different occasions, participants shared that their view of certain topics changed because of the scriptural support for each lesson, and that they needed to personally apply these truths to become more in line with Scripture. Other participants stated that each week helped them grow spiritually and drove them to further study and application in their personal time. One participant was a new believer and specifically stated that the lesson on marriage caused him and his wife (who also participated in the course) to discuss their marriage roles and evaluate their relationship through the lens of Scripture. Another participant stated that she was able to deescalate a family dispute by using the course material on conflict, applying biblical principles to the situation and resolving the issue before it worsened any further. Another older participant directly stated, "When I fight with my wife, I've never thought to consider what the Bible has to say on the matter." He later stated how eye-opening the authority and applicability of Scripture had been for him. These comments speak to the reliance of the curriculum upon Scripture for its authority and transforming power over each individual.

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[8] Quote from participant 6 on Curriculum Evaluation Rubric, May 1, 2019.

Weaknesses of the Project

Throughout the project, weaknesses were made apparent that were detrimental to the project as a whole. These weaknesses were outside of my control, in spite of attempts to mitigate them. One major weakness was the untimely response and communication with the expert panel. I attempted to provide ample time for the evaluation of the course material, however, the expert panel did not always give feedback before the teaching of each lesson. This problem could have been alleviated by submitting the curriculum with more time for the expert panel to evaluate and respond. The staff of the church, which comprised five out of the six members of the expert panel, gave verbal feedback on the first lesson but did not turn in their evaluation rubrics for data collection. The sixth member of the panel turned in an evaluation rubric for the first four lessons well before those lessons were taught.[9] His evaluations marked each of those lessons within the sufficient range and in his opinion no changes were needed to the curriculum. I continued to submit the remainder of the lessons and remind the members of the panel of the urgency of the evaluations, yet there was virtually no feedback even though they were aware that the class was being implemented. Once the course was completed, the ACBC and IABC certified biblical counselor submitted his remaining evaluation rubrics for lessons five through eight, apologizing for the delay due to unforeseen circumstances. The five staff members submitted their evaluation rubrics two weeks after the completion of the course. Upon evaluating their comments and the data collected from the expert panel's rubrics, each lesson was scored within the sufficient range and would have required no substantial change according to their comments and grading.[10] Although the expert panel submitted their rubrics, they were not submitted within a timely manner,

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[9] An ACBC and IABC certified biblical counselor

[10] The average score for each lesson was taken, requiring a 90% or higher to be considered sufficient. The average scores for each lesson were lesson 1—100 percent, lesson 2—100 percent, lesson 3—100 percent, lesson 4—100 percent, lesson 5—100 percent, lesson 6—95.83 percent, lesson 7—100 percent, lesson 8—97.92% percent.

which caused difficulty for me during implementation. In the absence of feedback, I continued with implementation assuming the lack of communication indicated their approval, and that any serious issues with the course material would have prompted immediate contact from the expert panel, advising me to change the material. This weakness, however, did not hinder the implementation of the course as a whole, the confidence gained by the participants, or impede the learning process of the participants. In spite of these difficulties, the first goal of the project was successfully met, which was to create a curriculum rooted in Scripture, focusing on biblical counseling fundamentals, principles, and techniques.

Another weakness of the project was the management of time. Throughout the course, each class began slightly late due to participants not arriving until five to fifteen minutes after the scheduled start time. This delay effected the presentation of each week's lesson and most often resulted in the inability to cover the case study or allow adequate participant interaction. The participants commented on their evaluations that they wished they had more time for the case studies and in-class interjection. The discussion of case studies was hindered because the class time was shortened from one hour to approximately forty-five minutes. In hindsight, I should have lengthened the course by an additional 30 minutes or so to take into account late arrivals and start time, ensuring all course material could be covered. In any future classes, I will account for this weakness and plan accordingly.

What Could Have Been Done Differently

Even though the implementation process went fairly smooth, some areas came to light that I would have done differently. The recruitment process for the course was based upon an open call for participants who were members of SonRise Baptist Church and were interested in biblical mentorship and helping others. Because of this recruitment process, no vetting process was in place to screen participants before joining the class, which would have verified their level of spiritual development and leadership ability. A

vetting process would have been useful since these individuals received a level of training that required foundational biblical literacy and a basis upon which to further equip them for mentorship. In hindsight, it would be wise to implement such a process during the recruitment stage of the next round of training. Even without this vetting process, the course participants consisted mostly of those in church leadership or who were engaged, serving members.

Another area that I would change when teaching this course again would be the addition of optional homework to each lesson. By adding homework, participants could engage with authors who are experts in their fields, furthering their knowledge of certain topics that were not extensively covered in the course. Each participant could expand their knowledge on topics of interest and help them better prepare to minister in specific situations. This optional homework could also spur conversations within the class sessions and allow for participants to edify one another with what they individually learned. By engaging in extra-curricular homework, participants could strengthen their mentoring skills and deepen their comprehension of the concepts needed to effectively minister to those in need.

In lesson 2, I would replace the Jeremiah 17 passage with another Scripture. Jeremiah 17:5-10 refers to an unregenerate heart and does not take into account the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. The Holy Spirit sanctifies the believer's heart and replaces his old nature with the fruit of the Spirit. Using the Jeremiah passage in this way may mislead participants into thinking otherwise. A more appropriate passage would be Galatians 5:16-26, which describes the battle between the old and new natures within the heart of a believer. This passage is better suited for this class, as all the participants are professing believers.

Another major change I would implement if I were to teach the class again would be to split the topics of stress, worry, anxiety, and depression from week 6 into multiple weeks. Dividing these topics would lengthen the course from eight weeks to ten,

ensuring that each subject would be given adequate time and attention rather than quickly touching on each of these topics. When teaching week 6, it felt as though I was rushing through the content so the participants could have time to interact with the case study at the end, which did not give justice to each topic. By breaking up the content into additional weeks, I would be able to go into greater detail on each one, allowing participants to engage these issues on a deeper level.

Even though the course material met the 90 percent benchmark by the expert panel and the participant post-evaluations, some minor changes could increase the functionality of the presentations and its usefulness in future training sessions. It was determined through the implementation of the course that moving the case studies to the end of each lesson allowed participants to take all the material that was covered and apply it to the case study at the end of the lesson. In early lessons, having several case studies throughout the material kept the class from covering all the course material. Moving the case studies to the end ensured that the material could be covered, while still allowing adequate time at the end for discussion of the case study. In addition, each lesson could be edited for clarity and ease of presentation. Some of the quotes in earlier lessons could be removed and used as supplemental discussion points outside of the course curriculum. The lessons could also benefit from editing the PowerPoint presentation, condensing some of the material on the slides to be more concise and clearer in presentation. These changes would make the presentations more functional, allowing the participants to more easily grasp the concepts presented in each lesson.

In addition to the changes listed, lesson 1 was in need of reworking and modifying for future use. The expert panel scored the lesson within the satisfactory range but made comments about the academic nature of the presentation. This lesson heavily relied upon quotes from exegetical commentaries and was presented with an academic writing style, more so than the other lessons. This lesson would benefit from reworking

the presentation to better fit the objectives and level of the course. More than any other, lesson 1 is in need of the most editing if I am to teach the course again.

Theological Reflections

Throughout the implementation process, many theological principles came to light and reinforced the need for this project. One such concept was the observance of the power of Scripture in the lives of believers and its ability to speak to every need. During the course time, I observed participants interacting with and applying Scripture to case studies as well as their own lives. The participants' personal spiritual growth reinforced the theological foundation of the project—that Scripture is sufficient to mentor and counsel those struggling with life-controlling issues. The participants gave feedback about how they learned that the Bible is the foundational tool for discipleship and can be used to counsel, convict, and comfort anyone. This foundation gave the participants a sense of confidence, knowing that their authority and knowledge does not come from themselves but from the revealed and inspired Word of God.

Throughout the class time, the participants began to live out the principles in Romans 15:14, which indicates that all believers are fundamentally equipped to counsel and minister to one another. The participants quickly grasped the methodology and practice of biblical mentorship and were able to integrate Scripture into case study action plans as well as minister within their own families and vocations. Participants were excited to find that they were equipped with the Holy Spirit and the Word of God and were able to meet the needs of those struggling. This knowledge encouraged the participants to further their study of Scripture and continue learning biblical counseling techniques that they could apply personally and corporately.

As the course progressed, it was encouraging to see the theological foundations of the program take root and begin to grow in the participants' lives. They used the authority of Scripture and applied it to everyday issues, relied upon the active power of the Holy Spirit to work in the lives of each other and those they mentor, and have a

growing confidence in their ability to mentor one another. It was edifying to see that those who are equipped by the Spirit and the Word have the ability to speak truth into the lives of fellow believers. It was also amazing to see the promises of Scripture being lived out before my eyes. This project served as an incredible reminder of what God can do in the lives of those he has called and equipped.

Personal Reflections

Over the course of the project, I have grown personally in multiple ways. My knowledge of biblical counseling has grown and has made me a better minister, husband, father, and Christian. I understand myself more in light of the truths of Scripture and biblical counseling methodology. Biblical counseling has helped me identify the root issues of my ever-present anxiety, revealing the truths of Scripture in my own life. It has strengthened my marriage as my wife and I are able to biblically address issues that arise within our life together, and has broadened my skill set as a chaplain working with the chronic and terminally ill. I have also seen, through this project, the effectiveness of biblical counseling and biblical mentorship, and how everyday believers can make an impact in each other's lives. I want to continue learning and applying biblical counseling concepts to make an impact in the lives of all I come in contact with.

Seeing the enthusiasm of the participants in this first class and their hunger for the Word was inspiring. It also reinforced the need for trained biblical mentors within the context of the small group ministries of the church. The staff was encouraged by the outcome of the project and are supportive of the continuation of the program in the future. Even though this program has equipped fifteen participants, a goal should be set to continually train members for this ministry. Continuing this process will multiply the effects of the ministry and help ensure that those struggling will have access to biblically trained mentors who are equipped to help.

Conclusion

The purpose of this project was to design and implement a biblical counseling ministry support program for SonRise Baptist Church that equips and encourages small group mentors to offer basic biblical counsel to those in need. This purpose was accomplished by creating a biblically-based curriculum to train fifteen individuals to minister to the members of small groups and the congregation as a whole. Throughout this process, the theological foundations of the project came to life and took root in the lives and hearts of the participants. Although there were weaknesses within the implementation, the project as a whole was successful in meeting its purpose and goals. This ministry helps to equip the congregation of SonRise Baptist Church to take seriously their responsibility to care for and counsel one another. The church is meeting the scriptural mandate to "encourage one another and build one another up" (1 Thess 5:11).

APPENDIX 1

CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

This rubric was used by the expert panel after the curriculum was written and revised to ensure its fidelity with Scripture.

Curriculum Evaluation Rubric

Agreement to Participate
The research in which you are about to participate is designed to assist in the creation of a curriculum for the training of biblical counseling mentors. This research is being conducted by Kenneth Waldrup for purposes of project research. In this research, you will evaluate the program curriculum for biblical fidelity. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time*. By your completion of this evaluation rubric, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

1=insufficient 2=requires attention 3=sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The curriculum is biblically based and theologically sound.					
Each lesson of the curriculum provides biblical support for its topic.					
The curriculum contains practical information that can be used every day.					
Each principle is frankly explained and can be easily understood.					
Each lesson of the curriculum adequately describes its topic.					
The presentation methods of the curriculum are effective at communicating the objectives of each lesson.					
The curriculum allows adequate time for student interaction and involvement.					
The curriculum speaks to the needs of the congregation of SonRise Baptist Church.					

APPENDIX 2

PRE- AND POST-PARTICIPANT SURVEY

This survey was given to the participants at the beginning and end of the course to assess their confidence in biblical counseling principles, practices, and their role at SonRise Baptist Church.

Pre-and Post-Participant Survey

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to evaluate your confidence in the application of biblical counseling principles. This research is being conducted by Kenneth Waldrup for purposes of project research. In this research, you will mark the option that best describes how you feel about each statement. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time*. By your completion of this evaluation rubric, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
I can apply my knowledge of Scripture to everyday life issues.						
I know the difference between biblical counseling and other forms of counseling.						
The Bible is useful for counseling.						
I'm confident in my overall knowledge of Scripture.						
I can discern underlying sin issues in people's problems.						
I can biblically mentor someone struggling with marital issues.						
I can biblically mentor someone who has parenting concerns.						
I can biblically mentor someone struggling with anxiety and stress.						
I can biblically mentor someone in times of crisis (death, illness, financial problems).						

APPENDIX 3

PARTICIPANT COURSE EVALUATION RUBRIC

This rubric was utilized by the participants at the end of the course to assess the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, and applicability of the curriculum.

Participant Course Evaluation Rubric

Agreement to Participate
The research in which you are about to participate is designed to assess the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, and applicability of the curriculum. This research is being conducted by Kenneth Waldrup for purposes of project research. In this research, you will mark the option that best describes how you feel about each statement. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time*. By your completion of this evaluation rubric, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

1=insufficient 2=requires attention 3=sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The curriculum is biblically-based and theologically sound.					
Each lesson of the curriculum provides biblical support for its topic.					
The curriculum contains practical information that can be used every day.					
Each principle is frankly explained and can be easily understood.					
Each lesson of the curriculum adequately describes its topic.					
The curriculum allows adequate time for student interaction and involvement.					
The curriculum speaks to the needs of the congregation of SonRise Baptist Church.					
The eight-week training course was sufficient for training individuals in biblical counseling fundamentals.					
The material aided in the understanding of biblical counseling principles.					
The mock mentoring scenarios were beneficial for the application of biblical counseling principles.					
This course equipped participants to biblically mentor those in their small group.					
The instructor adequately covered the material.					

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ABSTRACT

DEVELOPING A BIBLICAL COUNSELING SUPPORT
MINISTRY AT SONRISE BAPTIST CHURCH
IN NEWNAN, GEORGIA

Kenneth Dean Waldrup, DMin
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2019
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Robert D. Jones

The purpose of this project was to design and implement a biblical counseling ministry support program for SonRise Baptist Church that equips and encourages small group mentors to offer basic biblical counsel to those in need. Chapter 1 outlined the rationale and context of the project. Chapter 2 discussed the theological foundations of the project by exegeting 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 4:12-16, and Romans 15:14 to biblically support the biblical counseling ministry support program. Chapter 3 discussed the major views of Christian integrationist counseling, Christian psychology, and transformational psychology and contrasted them with the Scriptural principles of biblical counseling. Chapter 4 gave a detailed outline of the implementation process, from planning to post-implementation. Chapter 5 evaluated the data collected and discussed the strengths, weaknesses, and things learned through the course of the project. The ultimate goal of the project was to train individuals to practice biblically-based mentorship, equipping the mentors to effectively minister to one another.

VITA

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