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EDUCATING THE COUNSELORS OF THE RANDOLPH AREA
BIBLICAL COUNSELING CENTER, RANDOLPH, NEW
YORK, TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE COUNSELORS
TO THOSE WITH READING ISSUES

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Kenneth John Schultz

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Kenneth John Schultz

Read and Approved by:

Stuart W. Scott (Faculty Supervisor)

Danny R. Bowen (Second Reader)

Date _____

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	vii
PREFACE.....	viii
Chapter	Page
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Purpose.....	1
Goals	1
Context of the Ministry Project.....	2
Rationale	5
Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations.....	7
Research Methodology.....	8
2. THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR COUNSELING THOSE WHOSE READING PROBLEMS HINDER THE PROCESS.....	12
The Strong Must Help the Weak (Rom 15:1-6)	13
Paul Identifies Two Kinds of Believers.....	14
The Nature of This Relationship	15
The Content of This Relationship.....	17
The Goal of This Relationship	20
Romans 15:1-6 Applied to Biblically Counseling Those with Reading Problems.....	21
Ministry of the Word Is Hard Work and Must Include Everyone (Col 1:24-29).....	22
Ministry of the Word is Hard Work	23
Ministry of the Word Must Include Everyone.....	24

Chapter	Page
Colossians 1:24-29 Applied to Biblically Counseling Those with Reading Problems	26
Only God's Word Will Expose the Real Problem (Heb 4:12)	27
Hebrews 4:12 Expresses What the Bible Is.....	29
Hebrews 4:12 Expresses What the Bible Does.....	31
Hebrews 4:12 Applied to Biblically Counseling Those Who Have Reading Problems.....	33
Biblical and Theological Summary	35
3. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES RELATED TO COUNSELING THOSE WHOSE READING PROBLEMS HINDER THE PROCESS.....	37
Three Spiritually Based Reading Problems	38
The Problem of Apathy	38
The Problem of Laziness	44
The Problem of Unwillingness	49
Physical Reading Disabilities.....	55
Understanding the Dyslexic and Illiterate Person	58
Counseling the Dyslexic and Illiterate Person.....	60
Conclusion to Counseling the Dyslexic and Illiterate Person	68
4. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION	70
Project Development (Weeks 1-3)	70
Project Implementation (Weeks 4-15).....	73
Lesson 1 Review	73
Lesson 2 Review	74
Lesson 3 Review	76
Lesson 4 Review	78
Lesson 5 Review	80

Chapter	Page
Lesson 6 Review	82
Lesson 7 Review	83
Lesson 8 Review	84
Lesson 9 Review	86
Lesson 10 Review	87
Lesson 11 Review	89
Lesson 12 Review	91
Conclusion to the Project Development and Implementation.....	94
5. PROJECT EVALUATION	96
Introduction	96
Evaluation of the Project's Purpose.....	96
Evaluation of the Project's Goals	97
Strengths of the Project	100
Weaknesses of the Project.....	102
What I Would Do Differently	104
Theological Reflections	105
Personal Reflections.....	106
Conclusion	108
Appendix.....	109
1. BIBLICAL COUNSELING SURVEY	109
2. CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC.....	115
3. DIAGNOSING LAZINESS EXERCISE	117
4. INDEX CARD LEARNING METHOD.....	121
5. APATHY EXERCISE.....	122
6. LIST OF TECHNOLOGY-BASED LEARNING TOOLS	124

Appendix	Page
7. DYXLEXIA PARAGRAPH	126
8. TOPICAL SONG LIST	127
9. T-TEST STATISTICAL DATA	131
10. SURVEY SCORES	132
11. PRE-TEST INDIVIDUAL RESULTS	133
12. POST-TEST INDIVIDUAL RESULTS	135
13. INDIVIDUAL COMPARATIVE RESULTS	137
BIBLIOGRAPHY	138

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
A1. <i>T</i> -test statistical data.....	132
A2. Survey scores.....	133
A3. Pre-test individual results.....	134
A4. Post-test individual results.....	136
A5. Individual Question Comparative Results.....	138

PREFACE

I am temporally and eternally grateful to God for having saved me. I acknowledge His grace with heartfelt humility, knowing that He sent His Son to die for me and that the Son was willing to oblige the Father. I enjoy this life with my Savior and look forward to meeting Him face to face one day. I am thankful for His having called me into the pastoral ministry. His grace enables me to do all things, and this project is simply another visible manifestation of His wonderful kindness.

I thank my wife for her dedication to the Lord and to this project through many hours of reading and editing. I thank her for many kind words of encouragement and constructive criticism, which made this project better than it would have been otherwise. I thank my three boys for engaging in this process, especially for their patience with me while deadlines loomed along the way.

I thank the Lord for blessing me with the people of the First Baptist Church of Randolph, New York who sacrificed in different ways in order to help me complete this project. Thanks to those who lightened my regular ministry load to provide me the opportunity to complete this important project. I thank Carolyn Congdon, who edited and revised each chapter. I thank Dr. Stuart Scott for his influence in my life as I engage in the personal ministry of the word in the lives of other people.

I am thankful for the Biblical Counseling Movement, which has shaped my view of how important the Bible is for everyday living. My counseling ministry has

enhanced my walk with the Lord and my overall pastoral call. I thank the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors and the Faith Biblical Training Conferences for their commitment to training people for personal counseling ministry. My hope is that my colleagues in the Biblical Counseling Movement will find this project to be a useful resource for the spiritual care of the people whom God has entrusted to them and that this project stimulates further research and development of materials to help everyone become complete in Christ.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to educate the counselors of the Randolph Area Biblical Counseling Center (RABCC) in Randolph, New York, to be more effective counselors by overcoming difficulties in counseling those who have various reading issues.

Goals

The first goal of this project was to assess the RABCC counselors' knowledge, prior to the first class, about different reading issues and their implications for biblical counseling. This goal was measured by providing the RABCC staff of ten biblical counselors with a pre-project survey.¹ This goal was considered successfully met when all of the RABCC counselors completed the survey and when the survey was analyzed, yielding a clearer picture of the current knowledge of reading difficulties and its implications for biblical counseling.

The second goal of this project was to develop a twelve-week curriculum that was used to increase the RABCC counselors' knowledge regarding reading issues and their implications for biblical counseling. This goal was measured by two certified biblical counselors who utilized a rubric to evaluate the biblical soundness and

¹See appendix 1 for the pre- and post-series survey.

practicality of the material.² This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of ninety percent of the evaluation indicators were at or above the sufficient levels on the rubric.

The third goal of this project was to increase knowledge by educating the nine RABCC counselors through the twelve-week curriculum developed through goal number two. The education was to increase the RABCC counselors' knowledge of how to overcome the difficulties in counseling those who have reading issues. This goal was measured by a post-test survey upon the completion of the twelve-week training course.³ This goal was considered successfully met when the *t*-tests for dependent samples revealed a positive statistically significant difference between the pre and post-series scores.

Context of the Ministry Project

The counseling ministry project took place within the context of the RABCC of Randolph, New York. The center is a for-profit agency that is managed by the non-profit membership of the First Baptist Church of Randolph, New York. The RABCC seeks to be a major influence within the small town of Randolph within Cattaraugus County in New York state. However, the RABCC's impact is currently limited due to the problems cited below—problems which this project will address.

Two primary contextual factors warranted this project, which revolved around two distinct group of individuals. The first group consisted of the counselors who varied in degree of counseling ability based on education and experience. The

²See appendix 2 for evaluation rubrics.

³The post-test survey was identical to the pre-test survey from appendix 1.

RABCC's most educated and experienced counselors are called lead counselors, who can counsel people singlehandedly. Currently, one of the RABCC's lead counselors is certified through the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC), which requires rigorous study, exams, counseling observation, and actual counseling in order to qualify for membership. The lead counselors represent the most educated group of counselors who minister at the RABCC, yet they lack education for counseling those who have an assortment of reading issues that hinder the counseling process. Currently, there are eight other counselors who serve as counselors in training (CIT).

The project was designed to increase the RABCC counselors' knowledge of how to overcome difficulties in counseling those who have reading issues. Educating the RABCC counselors requires continuous effort because of the various complexities of the human condition. The RABCC counselor should be able to deal with several different issues as they arise and the existing training seeks to accomplish this as much as possible. However, even with all of the education that our counselors receive, they had yet to receive any help with an ongoing need within the local community—the need to be able to counsel people when reading issues hinder the counseling process.

The second group of people who determined the RABCC context consisted of the counselees. The RABCC exists in Cattaraugus County in western New York state and provides counseling for people from the neighboring counties of Chautauqua and Allegany. The three counties are among the most impoverished in the entire state.⁴ Out of fifty-seven New York state counties, these three counties rank eighth, third, and

⁴All Over Albany, "New York State Household Income Rates," accessed June 14, 2014, <http://alloveralbany.com/archive/2013/12/16/household-income-and-poverty-rates-in-new-york-state>.

seventh respectively in highest percentage of households living in poverty. The counties also rank sixth, third, and fourth in lowest total household income. Economic problems heighten the possibility that the RABCC will continue to be a viable resource for the area because our counseling is free.

Along with the economic deficiencies in Cattaraugus County, it is also among the least educated in the state beyond high school, ranking eleventh lowest in the state.⁵ Education affects biblical counseling because of the heavy use of the Bible, which requires disciplined reading. The biblical counselor is required to assign written homework centered on the Bible; therefore, the counselee will need to exemplify some literary skills in order to understand and apply the Bible. Consequently, a counselee's limited education can manifest itself as low reading skills, poor reading habits, laziness, or apathy. Given the financial and educational climate of the county, the RABCC expects to have more counsees in the future whose reading issues hinder the biblical counseling process.

There existed a strong need for this project. Since the RABCC's inception seventeen months prior to this project, the well-trained counselors were made aware of this need while they helped four individuals with different problems such as alcoholism, depression, worry, and anger. In each situation the counselor soon realized that the different reading issues of the counselee created a significant barrier between the counselee and the source of his help—the Bible. The biblical counselor must be able to help everyone, no matter what their reading level and this project will equip the counselor to fulfill this directive.

⁵Index Mundi, "New York Educational Attainment," accessed June 14, 2014, <http://www.indexmundi.com/facts/united-states/quick-facts/new-york/percent-of-people-25-years-and-over-with-bachelors-degree-or-higher#chart>.

Rationale for the Project

The two contextual factors above reinforced the need for equipping the RABCC counselors to overcome difficulties in counseling those who have reading issues. This rationale section shows how this project directly benefited three groups of people: the RABCC Counselor, the counselee whose reading problems hinder the counseling process, and the Biblical Counseling Movement at large.

The problem that stimulated this project is essentially this: As a fundamental principle, biblical counseling is based on a book (the Bible) and requires the counselee to interact with that book with focused attention and detail. How does a biblical counselor counsel a person when the counselee's reading problems obstruct the counseling process, rendering him unable to receive the help for which he came—whether it's depression, anxiety, or marital issues?

The RABCC's desire is that its counselors use the inspired Bible to be “thoroughly equipped, ready for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16-17). The biblical counselor must be able to use the Bible to deal with every counseling issue. Before this project, the RABCC counselors were not equipped for every good work because they could not biblically counsel people whose reading problems impeded the counseling process. Therefore, this project benefitted the counselors significantly because existing biblical counseling education does not deal with this critical requirement.

The counsees who will be counseled by those who go through the education will also benefit from this project. The ministry context cited the kinds of people that the RABCC has attempted to help since its inception. There were two adult men, both of whom had a very low reading level (perhaps fourth grade at best). There was another

man who said, “Don’t give me any books to read. Thin pamphlets are the most I will read.” Another lead counselor had a similar adult situation, as well as a session with a ten-year-old who could not read well. Furthermore, a female lead counselor had three counselees where reading deficiencies were evident. After this education is complete, the counselors will have the knowledge to be able to help counselees with reading issues.

Future counselees who present reading problems such as illiteracy, blindness, or dull sight, to the counselor will benefit significantly from this material. The reader up to this point might equate the term “reading issues” as solely having to do with illiteracy or disability but that is not the case. The previous testimonies of the RABCC counselees demonstrate that they must consider some other dynamics when dealing with reading issues.

Furthermore, this project will benefit the future counselee who never developed the habit of reading—who simply does not like to read. It is likely his time in the Bible has been limited because of this lack of habit and that needs to change if the Bible is going to help him with the problem for which he sought counseling. The lazy or stubborn counselee who refuses to read by addressing the underlying heart issues pertaining to him will also be helped. The project enabled the Biblical Counselor to counsel the reading disabled and non-disabled person in a way that will eventually help him with the problem for which he came to counseling.

The Biblical Counseling Movement will also benefit because the RABCC counselors are not the only ones facing this issue. At the Biblical Counseling Training Conference in Lafayette, Indiana, one person asked this to the workshop teacher during a question and answer period: “What do you do with counselees who can’t read?” Another

person at the conference heard about this project and desired to have the finished product because he regularly counsels inmates who have reading problems. Therefore, the material in this project should eventually benefit the larger constituency of the Biblical Counseling Movement.

Definitions, Limitations, and Delimitations

The following definitions of key terms is used in this project:

Biblical counseling. Biblical counseling is spiritual treatment gleaned from the principles contained in the Scriptures. As a noun, Biblical Counseling is a title that represents the formal brand of spiritual treatment. Most writers tend to describe biblical counseling rather than technically define it. However, John Piper provides a robust definition that encapsulates many of the descriptions provided by other biblical counseling writers: “Biblical counseling is God-centered, Bible saturated, emotionally-in-touch use of language to help people become God-besotted, Christ-exalting, joyfully self-forgetting lovers of people.”⁶

Reading disability. Part of this project concentrated on specific physical disabilities which hinder someone’s ability to read, thereby hindering the biblical counseling process. A reading disability is a neurological condition that interferes with an individual’s ability to process and interpret information.⁷ Therefore, a reading disability is a physical problem, rendering someone physically unable to carry out basic reading assignments.

⁶John Piper, “The Glory of God: The Goal of Biblical Counseling,” in *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, ed. James MacDonald (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2013), 24.

⁷National Center for Learning Disabilities, “What Is Dyslexia?,” accessed June 17, 2014, <http://www.ncl.org/types-learning-disabilities/dyslexia/what-is-dyslexia>. The most common reading disability is Dyslexia.

Reading issue/problem. A reading issue is a struggle to read, which is rooted in sin instead of an actual reading disability. Part of this project concentrated on general reading issues such as laziness, unwillingness, or apathy.

Two limitations applied to this project. The first limitation of this project was that the training took place in twelve, one hour sessions over three months, based on the research that was gathered. Second, the effectiveness of the training was limited to the RABCC staff's faithful attendance to the training sessions. To mitigate this limitation, the entire staff was required to attend all training sessions.

Two delimitations apply to this project. First, this project dealt solely with reading issues in counseling, even though the broader scope of discipleship within the entire local church would warrant the training. Therefore, the first delimitation of this project was that it focused solely on educating the ten RABCC staff members.

The second delimitation deals with the curriculum evaluation. The curriculum was evaluated by two individuals who understood the principles and practice of biblical counseling. Therefore, the project used two certified biblical counselors who assessed the biblical soundness and practicality of the developed material.

Research Methodology

The research methodology included a pre-series survey, an evaluation rubric, and a post-series survey. All of the research instruments used in this project were developed in compliance with and approved by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project. The research applied specifically to each of the project's three goals, which determined the effectiveness of the project. The first goal of this project was to assess the eight RABCC

counselors' existing knowledge of different reading issues and their implications for biblical counseling. The pre-test survey for this goal was administered at a staff meeting prior to the first actual training session. The counselor must have agreed to participate in the entirety of the training sessions and have completed the post-series survey in order to have participated in this project.

The pre-series survey revealed three truths about the extent of the counselors' knowledge about the issues pertaining to this project.⁸ First, the pre-series survey revealed the counselors' existing knowledge of biblical principles related to reading issues. Second, the pre-series survey revealed the counselors' existing knowledge of various reading issues and their implications for biblical counseling. Third, the pre-series survey revealed the counselors' current practices of helping those whose reading issues hinder the counseling process. The survey included questions about Bible passages dealing with the habits that lead to reading issues. When the eight RABCC counselors completed the survey and when the survey was analyzed, yielding a clearer picture of the current knowledge of reading issues and its implications for biblical counseling, then this goal was considered successfully met.

The second goal of this project was to develop a 12, session curriculum that was used to increase the RABCC counselors' knowledge regarding reading issues and their implications for biblical counseling. The curriculum was thorough enough to educate the counselors in how to overcome the difficulties in counseling those with reading issues. The curriculum focused on three areas. First, the curriculum examined the biblical principles related to reading issues. Second, the curriculum identified

⁸See appendix 1 for the survey questionnaire. The same questionnaire was used for the pre- and post-series survey.

specific reading issues and their implications for biblical counseling. Third, the curriculum provided specific methods to help the counselor to overcome the reading issues that hinder the counseling process. The curriculum was submitted to two certified biblical counselors prior to the teaching in order to verify the material's biblical soundness and practicality. The goal was measured by utilizing a rubric through which these two certified biblical counselors evaluated the biblical soundness and practicality of the material.⁹ This goal was considered successfully met when ninety percent of the evaluation indicators were at or above the sufficient levels on the rubric. If the evaluation indicators were below ninety percent, then the curriculum would have been revised and resubmitted to the two certified biblical counselors. This process would have been continued until ninety percent of the indicators are at or above the sufficient levels.

The third goal of this project was to increase knowledge by educating the ten RABCC counselors through the twelve, one-hour lesson curriculum. Participation increased their ability to overcome the difficulties presented when counselees demonstrate reading problems. This goal implemented the material that was developed in goal number two. For this goal, a variety of teaching methods was researched and used to engage the counselors and promote maximum learning. The actual training sessions took place every week for one hour during the RFBC Sunday School hour. The training covered a three month period and required full participation by the RABCC staff.

The third goal was measured when the RABCC staff filled out the post-series survey upon completion of the twelve sessions. The t-test for dependent samples is the

⁹See appendix 2 for the curriculum evaluation rubric.

best measurement tool because, according to Neil Skalind, a t-test for dependent samples “involves a comparison of means from each group of scores and focuses on the differences between the scores.”¹⁰ Therefore, this goal was considered successfully met when the t-tests for dependent samples revealed a positive statistically significant difference between the pre and post-series scores.

¹⁰Neil J. Skalind, *Statistics for People Who (Think They) Hate Statistics*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008), 191.

CHAPTER 2

THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR COUNSELING THOSE WHOSE READING PROBLEMS HINDER THE PROCESS

Biblical counseling is a kind of spiritual treatment for the immaterial aspect of the human constitution that relies on the Bible for this care. Several nuances to biblical counseling training enables one to competently help another person who is struggling with different, sometimes complex, problems. Yet, some occasions make biblical counseling even more challenging, such as when a counselee who is seeking biblical counseling for a specific problem, brings with him a reading problem. Because biblical counseling is based on a book, if the counselee demonstrates a reading problem, should the biblical counselor “throw in the towel” and conclude that he is unable to work through this significant obstacle? The Bible answers this question with a firm negative, as the following exegesis will divulge.

The material in this chapter will provide the biblical counselor with a solid, biblical and theological foundation for helping people even though reading problems complicate the process. Some biblical principles clearly teach that the counselor cannot abdicate his responsibility to biblically counsel another person, even when reading issues provide some obstacles. Three biblical passages will emphasize (1) strong believers are to help weak believers with their problems, (2) the person with a reading problem is still required to grow spiritually, despite reading issues, and (3) the Bible is sufficient to expose the issue for which the person with a reading problem has come for help.

The biblical counselor understands the discipline of biblical counseling is a vital aspect of discipleship. As one is disciplined, he actually engages in the biblical process of progressive sanctification. John F. MacArthur explains the companionship between biblical counseling and progressive sanctification:

While there are many ways of changing people, biblical counseling aims for nothing less than transformation into the image of Jesus Christ amid the rough and tumble of daily life. Change is not instantaneous, but progresses throughout life. This progressive view of sanctification has many implications. For example, the process of change is only metaphorically, not actually, healing. The metaphor is meant to capture the process of sanctification: ongoing repentance, renewal of the mind unto biblical truth, and obedience in the power of the Spirit.¹

Biblical counseling provides the counselor with an opportunity to help someone with a problem to navigate through the intense fires of progressive sanctification in a very personal way. The following exegesis will show the Bible teaches believers are to use the Scriptures to help other believers to grow spiritually, which will in time, lead them to recognize and solve their problems. The exegesis will apply to the counselor who seeks to help the counselee grow, even when reading issues hinder the process.

The Strong Must Help the Weak (Rom 15:1-6)

In this important passage, two kinds of believers correlate well to the discipline of biblical counseling—the *strong* and the *weak* (Rom 15:1). Paul emphasizes the kind of cooperation that ought to exist between those who are weak and strong. Paul encourages the Roman believers to be very specific in the help of one person to another, “we then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak” (v.1). In providing this relationship, he describes well what is often true of the relationship between

¹John MacArthur, *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically* (Nashville: Nelson, 2005), 28.

counselor and counselee (vv. 1-3)—a strong person helping a weaker person. The following exegesis will examine the relationship between these two groups, including the identification of each group, the nature, content, and goal of their relationship as Paul defines them.

Paul Identifies Two Kinds of Believers (Rom 15:1)

The two groups represented here have been identified in the previous chapter of Romans where Paul charges the more spiritually mature to be supportive to those who are weaker in the faith (Rom 14:1, 22-23). The spiritually strong should not cause disputes with the weak by judging them in three specific veins of life. First, they are not to condemn them for what they eat. Second, they are not to condemn them based on who serves. Third, the strong are not to condemn the weak based on which day of the week they esteem (Rom 14:1-6). Instead of the stronger brother condemning the weaker brother for these things, he ought to do everything out of love for him (v. 15). Undoubtedly, the Apostle is extremely concerned about how the two groups interact with one-another. In fact he is so concerned that he then continues writing about the relationship between these two groups in chapter fifteen.

The first category of people described in this passage is *strong* believers, of whom Paul includes himself by using the first-person plural designation *we*. The Greek word Paul uses here to identify the strong believer is *dynatos*, meaning “being capable or competent, pertaining to issues of faith.”² The strong are “the ones who hold the key to

²Frederick William Danker, ed., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (BDAG) (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 264. Certainly this pertains to spiritual, rather than physical weaknesses; otherwise Paul would have used the other form of the word, δύνάμις.

the solution of the problem. If they are interested simply in maintaining their own position, the gulf between the two groups will not be narrowed.”³

Conversely, Paul titles the second group of people as *weak*, using the negative form of the word used for the strong (*adynatos*); meaning “lacking capability in functioning adequately.”⁴ The two terms Paul uses here to identify these two groups are the same words used in chapter 14, which strengthens the truth he is addressing the same two categories of people in chapter 15. The opposing terms alone define well the differences between the two groups—one has the ability to bear weaknesses, while the other does not. Therefore, the weak brother needs the strong and the strong has an obligation to help the weak by carrying his burdens.

The Nature of This Relationship (Rom 15:2-3)

The primary duty of strong believers is to bear the weaknesses of the weak ones because they have the ability to help those who are unable to help themselves. The mandate comes from a hapax legomena term *asthenēma*, meaning *weakness*.⁵ For whatever reason, the weaker believer in Rome needs help to become stronger and Paul appeals to the stronger believer to help him accomplish this strengthening.

In fulfilling his mandate to bear the weaknesses of the weaker brother, the strong believer needs to be selfless, never helping for personal benefit; rather he exists for

³Everett F. Harrison, *The Book of Romans*, in vol. 10 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 151.

⁴BDAG, 22.

⁵Ibid. 142. Although *weakness* is preferred here and the NASB, translations render this word variously, *infirmity* (KJV), *failings* (INT). The context of Rom 14-15 supports *weakness* as the best rendering.

the benefit of the weaker (Rom 15:1). The problem of the weak might be sin, which the strong believer has an obligation to lovingly address (Gal 6:1). However, it may be matters of immaturity that need to be built up (Rom 15:2). Douglas Moo summarizes well the character and burden-bearing role of the strong believer in the life of the weak believer:

This does not necessarily mean that the “strong” are to adopt the scruples of the “weak.” But what it does mean is that they are sympathetically to “enter into” their attitudes, refrain from criticizing and judging them, and do what love would require toward them. Love demands that the “strong” go beyond the distance implied in mere toleration; they are to treat the “weak” as brothers and sisters.⁶

Paul teaches in a straightforward manner that the strong have an obligation to help with the weak, yet he appeals to the example of Christ to motivate the strong into fulfilling said obligation (Rom 15:3). Paul urges the strong to imitate Jesus’ example of selfless service for the sole purpose of another person’s strengthening. Jesus did not go to the cross for his own interest; rather he took upon himself the reproaches that were rightly designated for the Father. Moo supports this interpretation by suggesting that “the reproaches or insults of the people that were directed at God fell on himself instead.”⁷

As the strong believer bears the inabilities of the weak, he must do so with the desire to see that person grow in biblical maturity because the weak still has that mandate (Col 1:28). Robert H. Mounce suggests two important goals: “The goal is to help them develop into more mature Christians (Rom 12:2). The goal is the benefit of the one in greatest need of help” (cf. 1 Cor 10:24, 33).⁸ These are quintessential goals of any

⁶Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 866.

⁷*Ibid.*, 868.

⁸Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Romans*, The New American Commentary, vol. 27 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1995), 259.

discipleship and must always be present in formal biblical counseling. One way in which the strong can build up the weak is through formal biblical counseling. In fact, it is a prime ministry through which one can practice this passage.

The strong must be always cognizant of the inabilities of the weak, and have the patience necessary with those who bring an extra measure of problems with them. Conceptually, this applies especially to the counselee who demonstrates a reading problem because he already has two proverbial strikes against him. First, he has a problem for which he seeks biblical counseling. Whether he struggles with sexual purity, anger, or depression, he is in need of biblical counseling. This alone would qualify him as *weak* according to this passage but then there is strike two—he has a reading problem. These two realities make him even weaker and in dire need of the strong person who can help bear his load. However, despite the obstacles, he can have hope that his weaknesses are merely limitations, not impossibilities.

The Content of This Relationship (Rom 15:4-5)

From where is the stronger person supposed to glean his ability to bear the weaker person's weaknesses? Towards where does the strong direct the weak? From what source do the strong and weak person glean their hope that they can really accomplish this burden-bearing task? One might automatically conclude the stronger person's ability to help the weaker person rests within himself—after all, he is the stronger believer. Paul might be the epitome of a strong believer, but even he relied on an outside source for his content in helping the weak.

Simply put, Paul had the Scriptures which enabled him to learn what was needed to become strong (Rom 15:4). Paul states rather succinctly the very purpose for the Scriptures that he had at that time was for his education and, within this context, learning how to help the weaker person. Rather than hoping the weaker person can “pull up his bootstraps and get it done,” Paul emphasizes the Scriptures are paramount to one’s growth and will move them from weak to strong. Therefore, the strong and the weak must not neglect the content of the strengthening—the Bible.

Moreover, Paul identifies the fact that the Scriptures provide two important, necessary elements that will be helpful for both the strong and the weak to endure the process of moving towards spiritual maturity (v. 4). The first element is *patience*. The stronger believer will need a heavy dose of this, especially in a situation when someone has reading issues. The counselor will be challenged to bring the Scriptures to bear on the weaker brother’s life and it will take time to develop questions to expose the specific reading problem. A counseling situation void of reading problems is challenging enough and takes a lot of time, however, in this situation, time will be lengthened in order to compensate for the reading obstacle that gets in the way of traditional counseling methods. Therefore, the counselor will need to develop methods to bear with what is lacking regarding the specific reading problem that is diagnosed.⁹

The weaker brother (counselee) will also need the patience the Bible gives because he has multiple, personal obstacles on his path to help. Potentially, if he is dealing with a sin issue, he has a lifetime of unbiblical thinking and desires that has manifested themselves into ungodly behaviors, bringing him to the point of needing

⁹Chapter 3 of this project offers the counselor several methods to help the person who has a physical disability that renders him unable to read at all or those with limited reading abilities.

counseling. The strong has an obligation to uphold the weak in areas unrelated to sin, which is normal for most counsees but the counselor and counselee in this situation will need to put forth the effort necessary for overcoming whatever reading problem keeps him from the Bible.

The second helpful element the Scriptures contain is *comfort* (*paraklēsis*). Along with patience, the weaker brother will need encouragement from the Scriptures in order to attain victory over his problems and reading issues. The weaker believer needs to “meditate his comfort and encouragement by speaking through his Word to the hearts of receptive believers.”¹⁰

The counselor and counselee will need a lot of hope because the process will be difficult, trying the patience and comfort of each of them. Nevertheless, Paul identifies their ultimate source of hope as the Bible (v. 4). Paul makes a logical argument. Since the Scriptures will teach the strong how to help the weak become stronger, and since the Scriptures are patient and comforting, it only makes sense that the Scriptures provide the hope necessary to bring about the necessary changes. The counselor will need to continually direct the counselee to the Scriptures for the hope he will need to solve his problems, which applies to the counselee who manifests either a physical or non-physical reading problem. If the person has a physically based reading problem, then he will have to glean from the Scriptures in such a manner as hearing or braille.¹¹ Regardless of a counselee’s reading problem, he can have the same hope afforded to all who can read the words of Scripture. If for no other reason at all, it is a

¹⁰Mounce, *Romans*, 260.

¹¹Chapter 3 of this project gives specific ways that a counselor can impart the Scriptures to someone who has a physical reading disability.

desire for hope in the Scriptures that should motivate the counselor to help the counselee get beyond his reading deficiencies.

Patience and *comfort* are not only indicative of the Bible, but are also two realities of God, himself (Rom 15:5), thereby giving the stronger and weaker believer additional content for spiritual growth. The patient and comforting Scriptures were penned by the very breath of a patient and comforting God, both of which will enable the weak person to break the bonds of his struggles and become stronger. These are tremendous resources that are at the disposal of all believers—resources that are far too often ignored or minimized, whether intentionally or not. The strong and weak believer must move from whatever other resources are vying for their hope and ability and turn towards the two divinely enabling resources that were true for the Roman believers in the first century.

The Goal of This Relationship (Rom 15:5-6)

The weak person who has a problem for which he seeks biblical counseling should benefit greatly from the help of a stronger believer. As the stronger person bears the weaker person's load, using the Scriptures, the weaker can overcome the problems in his life. However, that is not the main goal that Paul has in mind. As the two people work together, the ultimate goal is unity through like-mindedness in Christ (Rom 15:5). The differences between the strong and weak brother actually create a gulf between them, which is a problem in many ways as Paul explained in chapter fourteen. Disunity was a major problem in Corinth (1 Cor 1:10-13) and Paul corrected the believers there in a plain manner (2 Cor 7:8).

Likewise, in Romans, Paul is dealing with the separation between the spiritual “haves” (strong believer) and the spiritual “have-nots” (weak believer). Therefore, his ultimate concern is that the strong and weak would be united despite the spiritual chasm that exists between them. He stresses this concern by admonishing the strong to uphold the weak in order to bridge the gap that exists between them so that they can, “with one mouth, glorify God” (Rom 15:6). Believers have an obligation to glorify God together, despite “levels” of spiritual maturity.

Romans 15:1-6 Applied to Biblically Counseling Those with Reading Problems

The notion of unity has significant impact in the biblical counseling of people who demonstrate a reading problem. Sometimes a reading problem is sin based and these sin issues keep someone in the weak category, needing the help of a strong believer. For example, a person who is undisciplined in general reaps the consequences of his languid choices (Gal 6:1-7) and, most likely, will not put in the energy necessary for reading the Bible or any other resources that will help him with his problem. He may be in a predicament because of his series of choices that were easy, enabling him to give in to his laziness. The counselor will have to help the counselee break through the barrier of laziness that keeps him from integrating regularly with the Scriptures—the very words that will help him with his problem (Prov 6:6, 12:24, 20:4; 21:25, 26:24; 1 Cor 15:58; Eph 2:10, 4:28; Col 3:23-24; 2 Thess 3:6-15; Heb 6:10). As long as the lazy person continues down this neglectful path of lackadaisical reading habits, he expands the gulf between him and the strong person, rendering them unable to glorify God together with mind and mouth.

The same unifying dynamic is required when apathy (another sin-based reading issue) hinders the counselee from receiving the biblical help that he needs. A person who does not care to read will need to be counseled to care enough about reading that he grows in his weakness so that he can glorify God with the strong believer. Apathy may be a significant reason why the counselee can find himself in the counseling room in the first place. General counseling topics like depression, fear, marriage issues, often have apathy at their source because a person's uncaring approach to life can spiral downward into a myriad of difficulties. Ultimately, the counselee should desire victory, not only for his own benefit, but also, as he is unified with other believers, for the sake of God's glory. Therefore, the counselor should know some Bible passages that demonstrate what genuine care for spiritual issues looks like (Ps 51; John 14:21; Eph 1:15-16; Rev 2:4).

Finally, the strong believer can help the weak believer in issues that are unrelated to sin. In general, the weaker brother might be dealing with suffering as an innocent victim at the hands of another person. The strong person must carry that weight for the weaker person, using the Bible to help him suffer well (1 Pet 2:18-25). In helping the counselee with his problem through the Scripture, he will also be able to impart some pragmatic methods for helping the weaker—methods about which the next chapter of this project will instruct.

Ministry of The Word Is Hard Work and Must Include Everyone (Col 1:24-29)

The Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Colossae in order to solidify the young believers in their faith in Christ. The passage under scrutiny here follows Paul's treatise

on assuring the Colossians of their eternal glory that is based on their faith in Christ (Col 1:3-5). Furthermore, Paul boldly proclaims the preeminence of Christ over all things by articulating many important doctrinal truths that prove His status. Generally, Paul teaches the Colossians that Christ’s unsurpassing identity has direct bearing on them because He is preeminent over His body—the church (vv. 9-18). Paul then connects Christ’s sacrificial work in the lives of the Colossians to his very own sacrifice for them (vv. 9-29).

Ministry of the Word Is Hard Work (Col 1:24-27, 29)

Paul uses some very specific terminology to engage with the Colossians, letting them know of what his sacrifice for them entailed. He writes that he has “sufferings (*pathēma*) for you” (Col 1:24), yet rejoices in them. Paul experienced misfortunes and afflictions for the Gospel’s sake—sufferings that Christ predicted would happen to him (Acts 9:16). Nevertheless, from Paul’s perspective here, he went through these things for the benefit of the Colossian believers. Paul saw this responsibility as a “stewardship from God” (Col 1:25), indicating that he took his role as a minister very seriously and his willingness to suffer for it clearly enforces that thinking.

Paul also writes that he labored (*kopiaō*) for the Colossians (v. 29). Peter T. O’Brien cites that this word was used “in secular Greek of ‘a beating,’ ‘weariness,’ ‘exertion,’ and was the proper word for physical tiredness induced by work.”¹² Paul quickly follows “labor” with “striving” (*agōnizomai*), which is used here of a generic

¹²Peter T. O’Brien, *Colossians and Philemon*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 44 (Nashville: Nelson, 2000), 90.

struggle.¹³ These two terms together, along with Paul’s struggles mentioned previously, provide a comprehensive outlook into his hard work for the people of Colossae—one cannot claim that Paul was lax or indifferent in his ministry for the Lord.

Paul qualifies his hard work. Even though he put a lot of individual effort into his ministry of the word, he also knew that his efforts were actually the manifestation of God working through him (v. 29). In other words, Paul could have completely exhausted himself for the Colossians, but if God did not work mightily through him, then his efforts would have been in vain. Paul was a willing conduit, being used of God for the benefit of the Colossians.

Ministry of the Word Must Include Everyone (Col 1:28)

The reader of Colossians might ask, “What was the content of all of Paul’s effort?” He succinctly answers this for the reader—the truths of Christ (Col 1:28), which he “preached (*katangellō*) to every man in all wisdom,” thereby, disseminating the truths of Christ for all to hear.¹⁴ Paul proclaims Christ with two specific elements. The first element of Paul’s preaching is a “warning (*neutheteo*)” to the Colossian believers that they not stray from what they have come to know is true.¹⁵ The second element of Paul’s preaching is “teaching (*didaskalos*)” as he brought forth the general truths of Jesus Christ to the Colossian believers.

It makes sense that Paul worked hard for the Lord because his preaching was

¹³BDAG, 17.

¹⁴BDAG, 515.

¹⁵Douglass J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and Philemon*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 160.

comprehensive. Four times in verse 28, Paul uses the word, “all/every (*pas*).” In one instance it modifies the amount of the wisdom that he proclaimed to the Colossians, which included all that he knew of Christ and whatever wisdom was revealed to him. Although the comprehensive wisdom is important, in this verse, Paul is emphasizing the comprehensive nature of his audience because he refers to *every man* three times. He is very concerned that the Colossian believers know that he preached to everyone, without exception and that the task was extremely laborious.

The Old Testament contains a significant testimony of someone who was diligent with the Word and then impacted others. Ezra spearheaded the spiritual resuscitation of the nation of Israel after their return from Babylonian exile (Ezra 7-8). Ezra was able to bring the Temple practices back to the people as they returned to Jerusalem. How did Ezra know what God expected? He read, learned, and then taught God’s word (v. 10). Not only did Ezra personally benefit from the exercise of reading God’s word but the impact was felt on a national scale.

In a similar fashion as Ezra, the Apostle Paul expresses that one’s hard work in the Word will have an impact on others. Paul had a specific goal in mind for every man—that each one becomes mature (*teleios*) in Jesus Christ (Col 1:29). Moo defines *teleios* in this verse as “the quality of being so wholehearted in one’s devotion to the Lord that one can be said to be blameless in conduct.”¹⁶ R. C. H. Lenski agrees that *perfect* in this verse is equated with spiritual maturity: “each and every believer is to stand forth so that all may see him as one who is spiritually complete and mature.”¹⁷ Everyone’s

¹⁶Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and Philemon*, 161.

¹⁷R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing 1964), 82.

spiritual maturity represents the culmination of all of Paul's hard work in preaching to everyone through warning and teaching. Paul's love for the Colossian believers was the motivating force behind his ability to having endured the hard work of the ministry. Likewise, counselors should put in the hard work of counseling out of a genuine love for people. As the counselor matures in his love for his counselee, then he will be able to endure the hard task of counseling those with reading problems.

Colossians 1:24-29 Applied to Biblically Counseling Those with Reading Problems

The person who demonstrates a reading problem brought on by a physical disability might think he is absolved from using the Scriptures for his spiritual growth, or more specifically, for help with his problem for which he came for counseling. Moreover, the biblical counselor might also consider a counselee's reading disability as an instance wherein he might consider he has an excuse for relinquishing his responsibility to bear the Scriptures into the life of this counselee. He may think, "This is beyond the scope of my responsibility and ability." The passage under review in this section will prove that neither the counselor who is faced with such a person, nor the counselee is excused from using the Bible for spiritual growth.

Since biblical counseling is concerned with the maturity of believers, two points from this passage speak directly to counseling people when reading issues get in the way. First, the biblical counselor must put in the hard work necessary to help his counselee towards spiritual maturity. As the biblical counselor seeks to provide help, he cannot pick and choose with whom he does the ministry of biblical counseling. He must not neglect those who demonstrate reading issues. Using the Bible to help someone who is unable to read will be a difficult task. The context and rationale portion of chapter 1

demonstrated the lack of current training material to equip biblical counselors in how to help people when reading issues get in the way. Due to this void, the biblical counselor will have to put in added time in order to reflect Paul's zealousness towards another person's spiritual growth. The biblical counselor will need to know how to decipher whether a counselee cannot read because of a verifiable physical deficiency or whether there are non-physically related issues at hand. This discernment will require hard work—hard work such as the Apostle Paul exhibited.

As important as the implications are for the biblical counselor, the counselee who has reading issues must also take an account of his own spiritual maturity. Paul's comprehensive term *all* applies to everyone without exception, which includes the believer who demonstrates reading issues. In other words, the counselee with a reading problem does not have an excuse for remaining spiritually immature—again, Paul wants “*every man* to be mature in Christ Jesus.” The person with reading issues is not exempt from the effort required to maximize spiritual maturity and the two will have to work well together due to these extenuating circumstances.

Only God's Word Will Expose the Real Problem (Heb 4:12)

This section will demonstrate that the counselee who manifests a reading problem will receive the help he needs from a book—the Scriptures. When it comes to reading problems, whether physical or non-physical, the Bible will be the primary source from which the counselee will glean his hope and the help for which he seeks. This approach might seem counterintuitive given the nature of reading problems, yet the passage under examination will prove that only the Bible will bring to light the intentions of the counselee's heart. Therefore, those with reading problems would be wise to be

sure, somehow, that the Bible is the source of their spiritual growth. A faithful exegesis will convince the counselor and counselee that authentic hope and help is based in the Bible because of what it *is* and what it *does*.

The writer of Hebrews desires the readers to understand well, among other truths, the perfect sacrifice and the High Priestly role of Jesus Christ. The reader of Hebrews is reminded of many of the people, places, culture, and religious liturgy that figured prominently within the history of God's people, Israel. Moreover, God desired that Moses and his people enjoy the rest that would be afforded them in the promised land, yet the Israelites were rebellious and disobedient toward God, which was based on unbelief (Heb 3:16-19). Consequently, they did not benefit from that specific rest in the Promised Land, free from the trials of the wilderness (v. 9). Despite the fact that the Israelites forfeited the blessing of rest through their disobedience (Heb 4:6), the writer of Hebrews assures all believers of God's promise for a future rest, which has been fulfilled in the person, Jesus Christ (Heb 4:1-10).

The immediate context of the verse under examination reveals the future rest calls for obedience today (v. 11). Just as the Israelites fell short of their wilderness rest through disobedience, this verse teaches believers today must obey God in order to enjoy the rest that is still to come. This truth begs the question, "How do I know what is expected, so that I can obey God and enter his rest?" The answer is given in the subsequent verse—the verse that is the focus of this exegesis (v. 12). The exegesis will conclude with some specific ways in which the truths of this passage has direct implications for the counselee who desires to change, but has a reading problem standing in the way of that change.

Hebrews 4:12 Expresses What the Bible Is

Hebrews 4:12 provides the aforementioned inquisitor with the means for obedience to God—his Word (*ho logos tou theou*). This specific genitival construction is used in multiple places in the New Testament, especially in the writing of the Apostle Paul (Rom 9:10; 1 Cor 14:36; Titus 2:5) and enforces the truth that the words provided originate from God, himself. They belong to him and were given by him. In this context, the author of Hebrews is referring to the fact that God’s promise of rest to the Israelites was sure because it originated from him.

Likewise, the promise of a future rest for all believers is sure—it will come to pass because this promise also originated from God. Similar logic exists within the primary verse for the doctrine of inspiration of Scripture (2 Tim 3:16-17). How is it that the Scriptures are profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness? It is all of these only because it originates from God. Specifically, they are God-breathed. Similarly, the Word of God in this Hebrews verse has three important intrinsic qualities that will manifest themselves into action.

The first intrinsic quality is described by the term *living* (*zaō*), which is at the beginning of the verse in the Greek, serving in the first predicate position, concretely describing the Word of God.¹⁸ The verbal adjective gives animation to the subject of the sentence, which is the word of God. Therefore, one can be assured beyond a shadow of a doubt that God’s word it is not dead. Leon Morris says that *living* (along with *active*) is

¹⁸Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 618.

the “dynamic quality about God’s revelation. It does things.”¹⁹ The specific actions of this living word will be brought to light later in this verse. but the opening of the verse emphasizes that the spoken and written word of God is alive.

The second intrinsic quality of the word of God is *active (energēs)*, being effectual or able to bring about its intended purpose.²⁰ The word of God is alive, but it is not stagnant. Regarding the effectual end to which the word of God brings the reader, the New Bible Commentary states that the word of God “achieves the purpose for which it is uttered by God.”²¹ The two terms *living and active* together forges a firm image in one’s mind that the word of God is alive and it works.

The third intrinsic quality of the word of God is that it is *sharper than any two-edged sword*. The term, *sharper* is actually two words in the Greek, meaning literally “beyond sharp (*tomōteros hyper*).” The qualitative word, *hyper*, marks the sharpness of the word of God as surpassing that of any sword that someone could yielded. The writer alludes the sword as a metaphor in order to draw the reader to an understanding of the abilities of the word of God. The word of God is indeed sharp and the metaphor is further enhanced and applied when the end of the verse is brought into view. The sword was a common implement, known throughout the Roman Empire by citizens and government officials because it served as the primary weapon for the Roman military.²²

¹⁹Leon Morris, *Hebrews*, in vol. 12 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 44.

²⁰BDAG, 335.

²¹D. A. Carson, *Hebrews*, The New Bible Commentary, 21st Century ed. (Leicester, England: Intervarsity Press, Logos Research Systems, 1994), n.p.

²²The Ancient History Encyclopedia, “Gladius Hispaniense,” published April 28, 2011, accessed October 4, 2014, http://www.ancient.eu/Gladius_Hispaniense.

The first century recipient of these words in the book of Hebrews would clearly understand this metaphor because a literal word is sharp and it pierces. Although the metaphor is similar in some ways, there is one major difference between the literal sword and the word of God—the word of God is able to pierce to places that an actual sword cannot. The Bible is the primary weapon in the counselor’s arsenal and must be used at every counseling turn. The counselee who has a reading problem must come to thoroughly read and apply it because it is a truly unique resource.

Hebrews 4:12 Expresses What the Bible Does

A literal two-edged sword is designed for cutting and in battle, “in skilled hands, [it] could lop off heads and limbs.”²³ The term, two-edged sword clearly defines the weapon as having dual sides that are equally sharp, that comes to a point on the end. The sword is sharp on two sides and is designed to function in a certain way. It has uses. The sword accomplishes nothing if it is idle. Likewise, the word of God is alive, effectual, and sharp and it is not designed to remain idle. It is designed to function in a certain way. The word of God has two uses described in this verse.

The first use of the word of God is as a penetrator (*diikneomai*). A sword penetrates/pierces into which it is thrust because that is how and why it was intentionally designed. The point of the sword pierces that into which it is plunged, while the two sharp edges cut and divide the flesh in two. In a similar way, the word of God pierces into the immaterial constitution of a human being, dividing the *soul and spirit, and the joints and marrow*. John Phillips wisely observes the use for God’s word in this division,

²³Ibid.

“God’s Word cuts right through all profession of faith, stripping away that which is merely natural from that which is truly spiritual.”²⁴

A second use of the word of God is as a *discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*. Discerning is a significant deviation from the picture of the sword thus far because both a literal sword and the word of God penetrates and divides, but only the Bible is able to weigh one’s thoughts and desires. There is no correlation to a literal sword—it is here that the author of Hebrews makes a strong break from the metaphorical use of a sword.

Other Scripture refers to the concept of the believer to dissect the Bible, which enhances the point that the writer of Hebrews makes. Paul charged Pastor Timothy to be a diligent student of the word of God (2 Tim 2:15). Both Timothy and the counselor/counselee can be encouraged, knowing that he can be “approved by God” when he is diligent in dissecting the Word. Moreover, the counselee will then know the difference between truth and “profane babblings” when he rightly dissects the Bible (v. 16). Consequently, the counselee will know what is unholy and once he has identified that which is unholy, he can honor God by doing the opposite. Therefore, Hebrews 4:12 and 2 Timothy 2:15 emphasize that hard work and diligence in dissecting the Word should result in godly attitudes and actions.

The *discerning (kritikos)* is a recognizable term within the Roman judicial realm, as a judge would pronounce a final verdict based on the evidence that was provided. Jesus knew this well, based on his own experiences of having been moved from trial to trial, during the night before his crucifixion, and having Pilate render a final

²⁴John Phillips, *Exploring Hebrews* (Chicago: Moody, 1977), 78.

decision based on the appeal of the Pharisees and citizens (Matt 27:15-26). Like a judge, the Bible stands as the final arbiter on the intentions of one's heart, rendering the person guilty or innocent of violating its standards. The Bible will be able to have its judicial reckoning based on the depth of its penetration. Therefore, a key element of this use of God's word is just how deep it penetrates—to the immaterial *heart*, which is the innermost aspect of man.

God uses the writer of Hebrews to verify what the Old Testament states rather succinctly in that one should “guard your heart, for out of it flow the issues of life” (Prov 4:23). Moreover, Jesus taught this principle to the Pharisees who were concerned that he and his disciples were defiled because they did not cleanse their hands before eating a meal. Yet, Jesus corrects them that, “those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man” (Matt 15:18). Hebrews 4:12 helps the believer to know that he must turn to the Bible in order to cultivate the heart towards godliness.

Hebrews 4:12 Applied to Biblically Counseling Those Who Have Reading Problems

Many resources are at the disposal of the person who desires help for a particular problem in his life. Government subsidized programs or private practitioners provide counseling services for those in need. Often these resources are armed with prescription pads and coping mechanisms that do not deal with root problems nestled deeply within the heart. None of these are able to do what the Bible can do, which is to expose the thoughts and intentions of the counselee's heart. John MacArthur expresses well how all other avenues for dealing with the heart fall short of what the Bible can do:

God's word is the perfect discerner, the perfect *kritikos*. It not only analyzes all of the facts perfectly, but all motives, and intentions, and beliefs as well, which even the wisest of human judges or critics cannot do. The sword of His Word will make no mistakes in judgment or execution. All disguises will be ripped off and only the real person will be seen.²⁵

A literal piercing of a literal sword is painful and so should be the word of God as it penetrates into the depths of the immaterial aspect of the human constitution. It should bring about conviction in the heart of the problem-filled person, yielding change.

Therefore, if the counselor does not see change in his counselee, he can always revert back to the assumption that the Bible has not been maximized in the counselee's life.

Moreover, the writer of Hebrews drives home the concept of the sword with a terse statement about the issue of obedience to God's word, "And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give* account" (Heb 4:13). All people must give an account to God for things done during their life. Everything will be revealed to him. No doubt this accounting is relative to the piercing of the word of God into the heart of the person, requiring a response on his own behalf. Gene Smillie rightly observes that "the one who hears the Word is exposed by it, stretched out and laid utterly naked before the eyes of the one to whom, in turn, the hearer must now respond with a word of his own."²⁶

Therefore, applying Smillie's biblical sentiments, the person who demonstrates a physical or non-physical reading problem must be able to glean the word of God, so he can benefit from its penetrating ministry. Since only the Word of God can do this, then

²⁵John MacArthur, *Hebrews, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1983), 105.

²⁶Gene R. Smillie, 'O Logos Tou Theou' in Hebrews 4:12-13," *Novum Testamentum* 46, no. 4 (2004): 358-59.

the biblical counselor must be able to compensate for any reading difficulties on the part of the counselee by finding ways to expose the counselee to the Scriptures. Furthermore, homework is a paramount element of biblical counselor's methodology, then he must insist the person who has a sinful resistance to reading being reading the Bible. He must also be able to provide practical help and resources for the counselee who demonstrates a physical reading disability, which will be a major topic of chapter three of this project.

Biblical and Theological Summary

The logic holding all of the three exegetical rationales together is the fact of the person who demonstrates a reading problem is not exempt from receiving biblical counseling. Moreover, the Bible is absolutely necessary for his spiritual strengthening, especially in the area(s) for which he sought counseling. The counselee does not need to deal with his problem all by himself. In fact, he is actually unable to do it on his own. He has the resource of his local church that should have competent, strong believers to help him carry his burden—the burden that is complicated further due to his reading problem. The strong, biblical counselor is required to bear with the sin-based and non-sin-based weaknesses of the counselee, guiding him in the word towards biblical expectations and godliness.

God still requires the counselee to grow spiritually, according to the Bible, even though he has a physical or non-physical reading problem. The counselor's desire should model Paul's desire that *all* believers grow spiritually, motivating him to do the hard work of ministering to those whose reading problems hinder the counseling process. Undoubtedly, this will require hard effort but it will model the Apostle Paul's labor for the spiritual growth of the Colossian believers.

The biblical counselor must use the Bible in order to bring about the changes necessary in the counselee's life (Heb 4:12). John Phillips writes about how this verse applies to problems in life:

It is only the word of God brought to bear upon the issues of life which can reveal what is carnal and what is spiritual. It is a discerner, a critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart. As we read the word of God it probes into the inner recesses of our being and explores all of our motives.²⁷

The counselee who has a problem must do everything within his power to allow the word to pierce his heart, revealing his intentions. He must do so with a measure of urgency, knowing he must one day give an account to God.

Through all of this, the counselor must encourage the counselee to be a competent "Berean" who "searches the Scriptures" (Acts 17:11). A sin-based reading problem is not an excuse for neglecting the work necessary in grasping God's Word. Likewise, the counselee who has a verifiable reading disability will need do the hard work of knowing God's word—being a Berean. The effort will be more challenging but he must be able to eventually "hide God's word in his heart" whether he actually learns to read or uses another audio-based method (Ps 119:11).

The biblical counselor must be equipped to be able to bring the Scripture to its effectual manifestation in the life of the person who has reading problems. The remainder of this project provides tools for the biblical counselor to be able to diagnose a specific reading problem and then be able to use them to help the counselee overcome that reading issue in order to receive the help for which he came.

²⁷Phillips, *Exploring Hebrews*, 78.

CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES RELATED
TO COUNSELING THOSE WHOSE READING
PROBLEMS HINDER THE PROCESS

As the previous exegesis determined, the counselee who gleans from biblical counseling needs to use the Scriptures to deal with his problems. However, a problem exists within biblical counseling: “*How* does a biblical counselor accomplish the worthy task of counseling those whose reading problems hinder the process?” The biblical counselor will need to be wise in order to precisely determine which reading issue the counselee is manifesting in the counseling room, thereby being able to competently fulfill his calling as a biblical counselor. The material in this chapter will help counselors to *understand* two categories of reading issues, and then provide the counselee the ability to *overcome* the reading problem which hinders his ability to receive help for the problem that brought him to counseling. Having followed this formula, the counselor will be able to competently use the Bible to help work on the problems of people who struggle with the act of reading.

Reading problems are complex and sometimes subtle, yet they can be overcome to provide the counselee with the best help possible for the problem for which he sought counseling. The first category of reading problem consists of those that are spiritually based. As stated earlier, the reader up to this point might equate the term “reading problems” as solely having to do with illiteracy or other physical disability that

renders someone unable to read at all. However, counselors need to know some of the other ways that reading issues apply in the biblical counseling ministry. The essence of these ways have nothing to do with a physical inability or disability but are spiritual in nature. Spiritually based reading problems are those which the counselee can change as he comes to grips with some attitudes unfitting a believer according to Scripture.

The second category of reading problems consists of issues based on an actual reading disability, two of which the following sections will clarify in detail. The counselee who falls into this category has a visual impairment or significant learning deficit that will drastically affect the progression of the biblical counseling sessions. This section will detail both of these kinds of reading problems and consider how the counselor can compensate for them. The following section will help the counselor to understand, diagnose, and treat three kinds of spiritually related reading issues, giving the counselee renewed hope for his problem for which he seeks counseling.

Three Spiritually Based Reading Problems

The Problem of Apathy

The first spiritually based problem is apathy, which can be manifested in one's discipline of reading. The counselee in this category does not care to read or is indifferent about the possibility of reading, even when it yields help for his specific problem. In fact, regarding the destructive nature of apathy in general, Albert Einstein famously said, "The world will not be destroyed by people who do evil, but by those who

watch them without doing anything.”¹ Generally, apathy is a heart issue manifesting itself in many ways in society at large. Apathy keeps people out of the voting booth or leads to the neglect of the plight of his fellow man or environment. Francis Schaeffer makes a strong case that, even though the youth of the 1960s were politically active, it soon waned and the drugs that accompanied that activism led to a general apathy at the beginning of the next decade. His final assessment is that “apathy was complete.”² The world suffers from the destructive forces of apathy and the biblical counselor will want to help the counselee to see how apathy towards reading will hinder his spiritual progress.

Indeed, apathy is a spiritual issue and is equally destructive in the spiritual realm as it is in the world at large. The biblical counselor will need to stress the importance of apathy to the counselee because of its impact on his spiritual vibrancy. Often, the counselee will display apathy in other areas of his life that the counselor can investigate, using Jay Adam’s extensive data-gathering method.³ Using this approach, the counselor will examine other situations in the counselee’s life wherein apathy is detrimental. For example, the overweight counselee may not think of his eating habits as a spiritual matter—he is unintentionally apathetic. He may be simply indifferent about his eating habits. He might not be intentionally stubborn, thinking to himself, ‘I am going to eat what I want. Who cares what God thinks? Moreover, who cares what the Bible says about it?’ In this instance, the counselee may have never honestly considered

¹Biography, “Albert Einstein: Physicist, Scientist (1879-1955),” accessed March 22, 2015, <http://www.biography.com/people/albert-einstein-9285408>.

²Francis Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005), 209-210.

³Jay Adams, *The Christian Counselor’s Manual: The Practice of Nouthetic Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973), 255-56.

the Bible's teaching about eating. In the same way, perhaps this counselee never considered the Scriptural principles cited in the previous exegesis regarding his need for reading the Bible.

To complicate matters, an apathetic individual is often wrapped up in his own world, failing to see anything beyond his own circumstances. Anything that exists beyond the world he has created for himself is unimportant to him. His belly is full, he enjoys his hobbies, his sexual needs are met, his house is cared for—which are, in his estimation, all that he needs. He is unconcerned about anything beyond these things. Again, this is often unintentional or unknown to the counselee, being rooted in the habits he has created for himself. Nevertheless, sinful behavior always extends from his sinful heart, which will not be easily changed. Paul Tripp relates this to the principle of being spiritually blinded, unaware of the significance of his plight. “Our most important vision system is not our physical eyes. We can be physically blind and live quite well. But when we are spiritually blind, we cannot live as God intended.”⁴ The counselee must understand that he may be experiencing this harsh reality in his own attitude about the need for change.

As it relates to reading, the counselee must cultivate a genuine heart change that leads to behavioral change. He must put off the old habits of indifference towards reading and become convinced that, for his own spiritual good, he must begin to develop the habit of reading. He can no longer remain apathetic about reading and must include it into his realm of those things which are important to him.

⁴Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Press, 2002), 53.

The counselor will need to know how to diagnose whether or not apathy is the actual reading problem. The biblical counselor will be well-served to gather as much information from the counselee he can. One way of accomplishing this is to ask good questions by focusing his questions on areas related to the frequency of spiritual disciplines to see if he is indifferent towards spiritual growth in a general way. The counselor can ask good questions to diagnose apathy. “How often do you attend church?” “What is the last thing you learned from a sermon?” “How do you serve others?” “How often are you having personal devotions?” The counselee’s answers will reveal how much importance he places on spiritual things, giving the counselor some indicators about why he is indifferent about reading the Bible and other materials that are beneficial for his spiritual life.

The counselor will need to get specific about apathy as it is related to his reading, by asking some pointed questions to determine his reading habits. Continual data gathering will help reveal that perhaps the counselee can read, but will read only those things that are important to him. “If your doctor gave you a book that would help you beat your cancer, would you read it—why or why not?” “Would you read a book that would help you hunt, why or why not?” The counselor can hone in on some things that have already been revealed as important to the counselee, then be able to apply the principle of reading to it. This process will show the counselee he will read things that are important to him but will not read things related to spiritual growth. The counselor can show the counselee that this logic proves spiritual growth is not as important to him as his physical health or his favorite hobby. Such a line of reasoning can begin to sear the conscience for the need of spiritual growth through reading.

As the counselor asks good questions, he accompanies them with strong listening skills that will reveal some issues pertinent to apathy. Revelations will come to the counselor through statements from the counselee such as “I don’t read,” “I never read,” “I don’t think reading is important,” or “please don’t ask me to read.” In order to help with the diagnosis, the counselor should determine if apathy is a pattern by examining other areas of the counselee’s life. Is he apathetic about parenting, husbanding, working, or home maintenance? If the counselee is with a spouse or other person, the counselor can glean some of this necessary information from a mate directly and enable the counselor to receive a well-rounded view of the counselee’s propensity towards apathy.

By examining these areas, the counselor can begin to determine what is truly important to the counselee, but to do so, he will need to discover the opposite end of the apathy spectrum by defining what the counselee does with urgency. Does he maintain the vehicles in good time? Does he seek the latest video games as soon as they are released? Good questioning is the key to reveal what is most important to the counselee, thereby revealing those things to which he is apathetic—things that may actually be more important to God than he realizes. Certainly there are many important things in a person’s life that require regular attention but this line of questioning shows the counselor just how important the counselee views spiritual growth relative to other things in his own life. The counselee does not have the luxury of being indifferent about his spiritual growth. Therefore, developing a habit of reading will provide a method by which he can accomplish spiritual growth on his own—long after he finishes with formal counseling sessions.

The counselor then moves to compensate for the counselee's apathy about reading. As Lane and Tripp wisely assert, "Nothing is more obvious than the need for change. Nothing is less obvious than what needs to change and how to do it."⁵ Once apathy towards reading has been clearly diagnosed, the counselor then seeks to help the counselee to prioritize regular Scripture reading into his life. He will be positioned well to receive the help for which he went to counseling. The counselor needs to administer robust teaching and homework in order to provide the counselee with the conviction he needs regarding the importance, prioritization, and urgency about reading.

Three important passages will provide what the counselee needs in order to help him develop a conviction against indifference and develop reading as an urgent priority in his life. First, there is a strong connotation of apathy in Jesus' condemnation of the church at Laodicea—he calls the believers there, "lukewarm" (Rev 3:16). They were neither hot nor cold; instead their wealth made it easy for them to be indifferent about their works as a collective body. Consequently, their works profited nothing from Christ. In fact, their lackadaisical attitude toward working for Christ bothered Jesus much more than if they were simply ignorant of their responsibilities altogether. The principle of Jesus' attitude about indifference towards the Laodiceans' works should compel the counselee, who is indifferent about reading, to correct his attitude. When his attitude changes, his works will become those of Jesus.

Second, the counselor can help build the counselee's conviction to read by teaching the principle of urgency (1 Thess 5:1-11). Regardless of one's eschatological scheme, one cannot miss the sense of urgency that the Apostle Paul gives to the

⁵Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp, *How People Change* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2008), 17.

Thessalonians in his treatise about the imminent Day of the Lord. Urgency should press the counselee to prioritize reading God's word that will help him to understand the principles that play into his problem for which he came to counseling.

Third, the Apostle Paul admonishes Pastor Timothy by emphasizing the fact that he could not become indifferent about teaching sound doctrine (2 Tim 4:2-4). Although this is a specific warning to Timothy regarding the importance of his teaching role as Pastor, the counselee can take to heart the general principle to be ready in every season to know and defend sound doctrine and living (v. 2). The counselee's indifference should be replaced with an urgency (be ready) to grasp as much of God's word as he can in order to know and grow because he does not know how much time he has left. The goal will be to rearrange priorities to the extent that reading Scripture and integrating its principles becomes of paramount importance in his life. These convictions of importance and re-prioritization of the Scriptures should be catalyzed by a healthy sense of urgency within the counselee's life.

The Problem of Laziness

The second non-physically related reading issue is laziness—a slightly different trait than the aforementioned apathy. Most of the time, laziness has a measure of intentionality, which is often lacking with indifference. Laziness can manifest itself in other ways within the counselee's life, but unlike the subtle nature of apathy, laziness is much more obvious to the counselor and to those in the counselee's life.

The counselor should understand laziness in a technical way. *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* teaches that laziness is the propensity to be “disinclined to activity or

exertion; encouraging inactivity or indolence.”⁶ This technical definition reveals an important characteristic of laziness. One who exemplifies laziness prefers ease and comfort over and above the necessary hard work for certain tasks or goals. Although a formal definition of laziness is helpful, so is a healthy description of this loathsome characteristic.

The book of Proverbs describes laziness in some very clear ways that will help the counselor and counselee to grasp the seriousness of it, especially when it hinders the counseling process. For example, the slothful person is directed to the lowly ant in order to gain a sense of hard work (Prov 6:6-11). Proverbs also describes the fact of a lazy person who, having his fields go unkempt, is also a very financially poor and hungry person (Prov 24:30-34). R. Kent Hughes suggests some reasons why discipleship is lacking at large when he suggests, “Several common-sense reasons could be tendered, such as poor teaching or individual sloth.”⁷ The latter is certainly in view here. The diagnosis and treatment sections will further demonstrate that understanding laziness is extremely critical in the biblical counseling room because, in some circumstances, laziness might be a root cause for other significant problems in the counselee’s life such as depression, anxiety or gluttony.

In order to diagnose laziness as a cause for one’s lack of reading, the counselor will need to address habits of laziness as they surface in other areas of life. The counselor should give the counselee a chart, by which he tracks what he does in the

⁶*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, “Lazy,” accessed March 11, 2015, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/lazy>.

⁷R. Kent Hughes, *Disciplines of a Godly Man* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 17.

course of a week.⁸ The chart allows for an honest reporting of what the counselee did throughout the week, revealing major portions of wasted time with inactivity. When the counselee returns the following week, the counselor can take this information and use it to diagnose laziness in the counselee's life. For example, the lazy person would be more likely to have several hours given to television viewing, video game playing, Facebook updating, over sleeping, or talking on the phone. An unhealthy balance towards things that generate a lazy life will be clearly shown as the counselee honestly fills in the chart.

Like the diagnosis of apathy, the counselor will also need to explore other areas of the counselee's life to determine if laziness is a problem. Those closest to the counselee will be a lot of help here. For example, would the wife admit the husband is lazy? Is he involved in church and at what level? Does his house need many repairs? How is his work performance? If the counselee is a woman, does she keep a clean home? Would her co-workers say that she is a hard worker? What would the children suggest about her work ethic?

Another sure indicator of laziness is the level of effort the counselee puts into the homework given by the counselor from week to week. A biblical counselor will quickly diagnose the difference between those who put good effort into their homework from those who don't. If the counselor suspects the counselee has put minimal effort into his homework, he will want to ask him about the specific times and occasions for doing his homework. For example, did he do his homework throughout the week or did he do it just prior to the counseling session? If it is the latter, then the counselor must assess what exactly the counselee did with the rest of his time throughout the week. This will surely

⁸See appendix 3 for the resource, "Diagnosing Laziness Exercise."

solidify to the counselor of his initial suspicion of laziness in the counselee's life is the actual truth.

Furthermore, the counselor can gather some non-verbal data about the counselee, helping him to properly diagnosis laziness. The counselor can consider the counselee's hygiene. Is he generally unkempt, having messy, unwashed hair? Does he have excess hair in the nasal cavities or ear? Are his clothes in disarray or is he wearing the same clothes each week? Does he display body odor? Are his teeth clean? At the surface, these questions might seem petty or judgmental, but when laziness is a lifestyle, it can be readily noticed by the astute counselor who knows the proverbial lazy person becomes impoverished. Indicators like these do not always mean the counselee is lazy, but sometimes they do. To help with an accurate diagnosis, the counselor can readily observe laziness in a counselee's life in a general way, and he will not need to make a giant leap to determine whether or not he is lazy about reading.

The counselor must press the issue of laziness and its application to reading because of its enormous implications for solving his problems. Therefore, in treating laziness towards reading, the counselor will need to prioritize discipline in all areas of the counselee's life. J. Oswald Sanders speaks forthrightly about the disciple's need for making spiritual disciplines a necessary ambition, "Many fail to achieve anything significant for God or man because they lack a dominating ambition. No great task was ever achieved without the complete abandonment to it that a worthy ambition inspires."⁹ Reading does take ambition and mental energy—energy the lazy counselee does not normally like to exude. He may wish to default to an easier route like medications, but

⁹J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Discipleship: Principles of Following Christ for Every Believer* (Chicago: Moody, 1994), 67.

the counselor should push the counselee towards forging a disciplined, regimented reading schedule that will help him to see that hard work pays off. Disciplined reading can be the first step to help the counselee to forge new habits in other important areas of life including family, employment, hygiene and church. Chances are, once the lazy counselee becomes disciplined in reading and applying his Bible, then he will be more inclined to put forth the hard work required in order to overcome the problem for which he came to counseling in the first place.

The counselor can give some good Bible passages to the counselee which should help him to build some necessary, biblical convictions about laziness. The book of Proverbs offers many quick statements about laziness but one extended passage offers a substantive treatise of the problem (Prov 26:13-16). The lazy person finds excuses for not taking on life's responsibilities, including seeing a "lion in the street." The lazy person is fearful. He allows these fears to keep him from addressing his daily tasks and problems. All the while, the lazy person rationalizes his laziness by focusing on the daunting obstacles in his vision. Instead, he stays in his bed, turning back and forth—even being too lazy to move his hand from his chest to his head (v. 15). Finally, a lazy person will not heed the wisdom of others. Instead, he believes his laziness is a good indicator of his own wisdom. However, the Scriptures teach the opposite is true because there is more hope for a fool than one who is right in his own eyes (v. 12). Ultimately, the lazy person must be willing to heed the counsel of his counselor and he can learn this through a robust homework assignment in this passage.

Another helpful homework passage will warn the counselee that he must become self-sufficient instead of relying on others for everything (1 Thess 4:11-12). Paul

assures the believer that as he learns to work hard, then he will not need to depend on others. Although every believer has a need for corporate dependence at times, each person must develop the habit of pulling his or her own weight. The counselee should begin to read for himself and for his own benefit, when laziness tempts him from doing so.

The discipline of reading and studying the Scriptures was very important in the mind of Paul as he pressed Timothy to be the best Pastor he could be (2 Tim 2:15). Paul enforced to Timothy that he must understand that hard work will be involved if he is going to be an approved worker. The specific emphasis here is Timothy's hard work with the Scriptures positioning him to be able to rightly discern the word of truth. Although this is especially true for the role of Pastor, the counselee can glean from the general principle hard work in order to rightly divide God's Word. The work is worth the benefit of handling and applying the Scriptures in a truthful way. Important homework assignments based on biblical teachings should help the counselee immensely as he will need to put forth the effort in reading that will eventually benefit him as he begins to put in the hard work of overcoming his problem for which he came to counseling.

The Problem of Unwillingness

The third non-physically related reading issue is an unwillingness. The term unwillingness can be understood synonymously with rebellion and/or stubbornness. In this situation, the counselee knows the importance of the Bible for his help, yet has determined he will not read it. Although the reasons might be many, he is without excuse for following the counselor's instructions to read the Bible and other reading material he administers. Since he is without excuse, this issue is perhaps the most problematic of the

three non-physical reading issues because it is overt sin and if unwillingness remains unchanged, it could lead to the cessation of future counseling sessions.

The counselor will recognize unwillingness on the part of the counselee if he has a firm understanding of this all-to-common trait. A technical description is simple—an unwilling person *resists*. A healthy description will give the counselor some things to look for in the counselee as he works with him. An unwilling person tends to shun authority, thinking rules do not apply to him, or believing he can exist without them altogether. Furthermore, the rebellious person often offends others, especially those in authority over him. The reasons for his rebellion could be many and may have been used since childhood, so the habit of rebellion is strong at times. The Reading Is Fundamental organization offers several reasons why a child might not want to read, even though the child is physically able: inadequate time; boredom, difficulty, lack of importance, or lack of fun.¹⁰ Some of these child-like excuses might be given of adult counselees. Nevertheless, when a counselee refuses to read at the counselor's behest, then the counselor must spend some time dealing with the underlying issue of rebellion.

Whereas the lazy counselee will put minimal effort into his homework, the unwilling counselee puts no effort into it. To best help the counselee overcome and get the help he needs with the problem for which he came to counseling, the counselor will need to be sure he is dealing with overt rebellion instead of something else. The counselor can look for some indicators that the counselee is indeed rebellious about reading and not merely indifferent about it.

¹⁰Reading Is Fundamental, "Children Who Can Read But Don't," accessed February 27, 2015, <http://www.rif.org/us/literacy-resources/articles/children-who-can-read-but-dont.htm>

These indicators fall into two general categories of rebellion: overt and silent. The counselor can look for proof of a rebellious spirit towards reading that is overtly demonstrated, which is often the easier of the two to detect. The rebellious counselee may say, with an air of prideful superiority, “I am not going to read, so don’t ask me to do it.” In such a statement, the counselee reveals some very important problems. First, he is reversing the roles of the counseling process and procedure. The counselee thinks he knows what is best for his problems by assuming that reading Scripture is not the answer, and he seeks to become the counselor. Simply put, the counselor can’t allow this—he must maintain his position as leader of the counseling process. Logic suggests that, in the same way a person cannot function as his own surgeon, a counselee cannot function as his own counselor. If he could, then his life would be problem free and he would not need a counselor at all. The second problem revealed in the counselee’s statement is his problem with authority, which is the defining mark of a rebellious person. If he bucks the counselor’s authority by refusing to read, he will most likely defy or question the counselor at every turn in future counseling sessions.

Next is the silent rebel. The silent rebel is more difficult to initially ascertain because the person may appear to have only a quiet or shy disposition. He does not verbally offer such forthright statements as the overt rebel, but he says a lot in his silence. The counselor should be aware of many non-verbal cues that a silent rebel might have in his repertoire. The counselor might recognize some instances of childish rebellion, such as remembering some of the body language an unruly child presented to him. For example, the counselor might see a counselee refuse to make direct eye contact with him, looking away as he speaks to him or rolling his eyes because of something he does not

want to do that his counselor desires. He might also shrug his shoulders out of frustration at a suggestion about needing to read the Bible or other resources given to him. The silent rebel is crafty, but again, a tell-tale sign of a silent rebel is a refusal to do his homework or to put minimal effort into it.

Once the counselor suspects rebellion is a problem with the counselee, he will need to provide some biblical homework to help build the conviction about his thinking and actions, which are wrong and need to change. Paul Tripp offers a good analogy and method for dissecting the rebellious heart:

Biblical truths having to do with authority, sowing and reaping, the nature of truth and falsehood, wisdom and foolishness, law and grace, confession, repentance and forgiveness, and the nature and function of the heart all get put on the table in the midst of these crucial moments of submission, and rebellion.¹¹

Therefore, the best treatment for a rebellious person is to read and study specific Scriptures speaking to the heart of this important problem that is looming over the counseling time and, which consequently, hinders the help for which he came.

The rebellious counselee who refuses to read must place himself under the submission of the Bible. If he does not, then the counselor has no recourse but to terminate the counseling. However, as long as the counselee is willing to submit to the Scriptures, then there is help and hope for the counselee in biblical counseling (Rom 15:4). Two major passages deal with rebellion about which the counselor will need to expose to the counselee through homework and teaching.

An excellent passage that will help the rebellious counselee to see the folly in his thinking is God's rejection of Saul as King of Israel (1 Sam 15:10-23). Samuel the

¹¹Paul David Tripp, *Age of Opportunity: A Biblical Guide to Parenting Teens* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2001), 26.

prophet presented King Saul with the sobering news that the Lord was displeased with the lack of complete obedience to His command to not bring any spoils of war from the Amalekites (vv. 15:2-3). However, Saul did bring back many of the finest livestock from the victory over the Amalekites and spared King Agag's life in the process (v. 9). Although this act seems noble, Saul actually disobeyed God's clear command. Based on this defiance, Samuel pronounces judgment to Saul on the Lord's behalf (vv. 22-23). The judgment contains some specific elements that would serve as a good warning to the counselee who is rebellious about reading.

First, God equates Saul's partial obedience with the sin of witchcraft, calling it rebellion. Instead of obeying the Lord completely, he was obeying the father of witchcraft, Satan. In his rebellion, Saul figuratively shakes his fist at God. Second, Saul was guilty of rejecting God's words. Saul was acting on his own, independently of God. When Saul rebels, he bucks God's authority, replacing it with his own. Saul's rejection of God is the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back—being the thing that led to God's rejection of him and the loss of his regal status. The counselee must be motivated to read instead of rebelling because God clearly despises rebellion and rejection of His word. Although the counselee must understand the judgement was specifically for Saul, he can certainly conclude God's unwanted attitude toward those who reject His word.

The people of Israel provide another example of rebellion towards God's desires and the consequences that accompany it (Ps 81:11-12). The Psalm is quite dichotomistic as the reader begins the chapter as a celebration during a festival that was prompted by Yahweh's care for them (vv. 1-7). The Psalm takes a drastic turn as God admonishes the Israelites for their practices of idolatry (vv. 8-12). The Psalmist also adds

to their anguish by reminding the people of all of the wonderful benefits they would have enjoyed should they have obeyed God instead of the false idols (vv. 13-16).

The heart of this Psalm includes the root problem behind their disobedience and slide into idolatry. God says that they did not listen to Him because they had “stubborn hearts” (v. 12). He adds that they listen not to God but walk about in their “own counsels.” Stubbornness is likened to rebellion and the counselee must confirm this truth in his own heart. The heart is the important battleground for dealing with such heinousness as rebellion toward God and the counselor must impress the sobering reality of rebellion to his counselee. Moreover, the counselee must not rest in His own counsel but the counsel of God, which will never happen if he remains in a rebellious state towards God’s word.

The counselee who is apathetic, lazy, or rebellious towards reading has one important characteristic in common with the others that the counselee must address—pride. Pride is a critical characteristic, keeping one in the doldrums of apathy, laziness, or rebellion. The rebellious counselee must become humble, setting his prideful tendencies aside for the sake of his own spiritual good. In fact, not single area of a person’s life remains unaffected by the pride that resonates deep within oneself. The counselee will not get far until he has mastered the desirable characteristic of humility. In writing to husbands, Stuart Scott states well the all-encompassing destruction that pride plays in the Christian life by highlighting the necessary trait of humility:

It is probably safe to say that humility is the one character quality that will enable us to be all Christ wants us to be. We cannot come to God without it. We cannot love God supremely without it. We cannot be an effective witness without it. We cannot love and serve our wives without it. We cannot lead in a godly way without it. We cannot enjoy physical intimacy the way God intended without it. We cannot communicate properly without it. We cannot resolve conflict without

it. We cannot deal with the sin of others rightly without it. We cannot even resist sin without it. In short, we must embrace and live out humility in order to truly live and be who God means for us to be.¹²

The biblical counselor should add to Scott's logic that the counselee who is rebellious toward reading, actually limits help for his problem(s). Therefore, pride must be uprooted if the counselee is unresponsive and unchanged by any of the aforementioned Bible studies.

Physical Reading Disabilities

Sometimes, the biblical counselor is faced with someone who has a verifiable reading disability that would severely limit his ability to receive biblical instruction for his problem. The counselee will not be able to study the Scriptures for himself in the traditional manner of someone who reads fluently. The reading disabled person processes information differently and the biblical counselor should know some of the ways this happens and be able to compensate for it. The counselor must be careful to avoid the pitfall of thinking that the person who has a reading disability is an unintelligent person. The testimonies of Walt Disney, General Patton, Albert Einstein, and Whoopi Goldberg attest to the truth that one can have a reading or learning disability and still attain success.¹³

Challenges take even the most trained and experienced biblical counselor into previously uncharted waters. What is the biblical counselor to do when someone is

¹²Stuart Scott, *The Exemplary Husband: A Biblical Perspective* (Bemidji, MN: Focus, 2000), 175. Stuart Scott's booklet, *From Pride to Humility*, should be used over the course of several weeks to help the counselee be able to have victory over his prideful attitudes that keep him from reading and receiving the help for the problem(s) for which he came to counseling in the first place. See Stuart Scott, *From Pride to Humility: A Biblical Perspective* (Bemidji, MN: Focus, 2002).

¹³Elizabeth Russell Connelly, *A World Upside down and Backwards: Reading and Learning Disorders* (Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 1999), 18.

depressed or experiencing an addiction of some sort but is unable to read the Scriptures or complete homework in a normal manner? The remainder of this paper will help the biblical counselor to understand some of the major kinds of reading disabilities, and how to compensate for them. The following rudimentary skills should give the counselor the confidence and ability to help those whose reading disability hinders the normal counseling process.

Although the biblical counselor does not normally diagnose a physical reading disability (unless he happens to be trained to do so), he should understand the nature of some of the more common disabilities. The counselor can understand how the counselee understands his disability by allowing him to express how his disability limits him. An adult counselee will be able to express to his counselor the specific reading disability that he has and even provide data about how, where, or when he received this diagnosis. It is not the goal of the biblical counselor to diagnose a specific reading disability, but he can be aware of some signs that will prompt proper clinical diagnosis.¹⁴

If the counselee is unaware of a physical disability, or if the counselor is counseling with a young person who has not been diagnosed, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends three steps that will help the counselor to help the counselee to get a proper diagnosis.¹⁵ The first step is to have a clinician perform

¹⁴The biblical counselor will want to be kept abreast of any diagnosis done by another professional, including educators or physicians. The visual impairment diagnosis will be helpful to the counselor, but other diagnoses might be problematic, such as ADD/ADHD, social disorders, test anxiety, or many other so-called disorders. The biblical counselor should be educated about the problems with such labels. See, David M. Tyler and Kurt P. Grady, *ADD: Deceptive Diagnosis* (Bemidji MN: Focus, 2008), Charles D. Hodges, M.D., *Good Mood, Bad Mood* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherds Press, 2012), and Edward T. Welch, *Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2001).

¹⁵American Academy of Pediatrics, "Learning Disabilities, Dyslexia, and Vision: A Subject Review," in *Pediatrics* 102 (November, 1998): 1218. Although the Academy focuses these steps for children, adults can also benefit from this common-sense process.

vision screening according to national standards. Second, if he cannot pass the recommended screening test, he should be referred to an experienced ophthalmologist. Third, those with educational problems and normal vision screening should be referred for educational diagnostic evaluation and appropriate special educational evaluation and services. The AAP warns the screener that diagnostic and treatment approaches that lack objective, scientifically-established efficacy should not be used. The biblical counselor should always make certain his counselee get a clinical reading diagnosis and work in tandem with his physicians for his best care.

The remainder of this chapter will help the biblical counselor to understand and compensate for some specific reading disabilities. In academic writing, the category of reading disabilities falls under the greater categorical umbrella of learning disabilities.¹⁶ However, Shantell Berrett states that “the most common learning disability is difficulty with language and reading.”¹⁷ Therefore, the biblical counselor needs to be well informed about specific visual impairments that impede reading and comprehension, so he can counsel effectively. The two reading disabilities discussed here will be dyslexia and illiteracy. The chapter will conclude with some insights for biblically counseling adults who are not disabled in any way but who never learned how to read.¹⁸

¹⁶Learning disabilities will impact counseling in some ways but not necessarily due to a reading problem. For example, a person with mild autism or Asperger’s can read but will have difficulty communicating what he has learned or interacting with the counselor. Learning disabilities like these extend beyond the scope of this project.

¹⁷Shantell Berrett, *Learning Disabilities 101: Everything You Need to Know about How Learning Disabilities Affect Reading Skills*, Reading Horizons eBook, accessed October 17, 2014, <http://athome.readinghorizons.com/Media/Default/Documents/LDe-bookRH.pdf>.

¹⁸I have counseled at least one person from each of these learning disabilities.

Understanding the Dyslexic and Illiterate Person

The first reading disability that directly impacts the process of biblical counseling is dyslexia, a term derived from the two Greek words *dys* (difficulty) and *lexis* (words).¹⁹ Dyslexia is “difficulty in the use and processing of linguistic and symbolic codes, alphabetic letters representing speech sounds or numeric representing numbers or quantities.”²⁰ In simple terms, the dyslexic counselee sees letters in a mixed fashion, mostly inverted or upside down. Consequently, he misinterprets a *d* for a *b* (or vice versa) or a *p* for a *q* (or vice versa). When many words are strewn together in sentences and paragraphs, attempting to read becomes overwhelming to the dyslexic. As with many other learning disabilities, there is a spectrum of severity with dyslexia. Therefore, one dyslexic counselee might read at a very slow pace, fighting through many words in a given sentence, while another might move along a little faster, having trouble only with certain letters and words. It is not the biblical counselor’s responsibility to formally diagnose or teach the dyslexic how to read, but he needs to be able to provide biblical help despite this physical limitation. The counselor might have a counselee who has never been formally diagnosed and might need to be aware of some of these simple cues in order to help him get diagnosed.

A prominent research project called the Connecticut Longitudinal Study concluded that dyslexia does not change over time; instead, it is persistent, which is

¹⁹Connelly, *A World Upside Down*, 18. The inability to work with numbers technically exists under a separate category of learning disabilities called Dyscalculia.

²⁰Barrett, *Learning Disabilities*, 4.

especially noticeable when a dyslexic is compared to his peers. Sally Shaywitz notes that this study proved that dyslexia is “quite decisively a chronic condition and that it does not represent a lag in reading development.”²¹ The findings here are in comparison to one’s peers because a young person born with a visual impairment like dyslexia can improve overtime but “the gap in reading ability between good and poor readers remains.”²² The dyslexic reader will most likely never catch up to the normal reading ability of those around him. Therefore, it is important for the biblical counselor to understand that a dyslexic reader will still have some reading troubles well into his adult years.

In addition to someone who is dyslexic, the biblical counselor might have an opportunity to counsel an adult who has never learned to read or has an extremely low reading level. There are, in fact, “30 million adults in the U.S. who have trouble with basic literacy—they struggle to read a menu, a pay stub, or a bus schedule.”²³ The biblical counselor will need to know what constitutes literacy because if his counselee fails to meet these standards, then he is technically illiterate. The National Center for Education (NCE) defines literacy as “using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one’s goals, and to develop knowledge and potential.”²⁴ The definition highlights the unfortunate reality that, although these counsees do not have a

²¹Sally Shaywitz, M.D., *Overcoming Dyslexia: A New and Complete Science-Based Program for Reading Problems at Any Level* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2003), 33.

²²*Ibid.*, 20. Shaywitz refers to this comparative deficiency as “the Matthew effect,” citing Jesus’ words in the Gospel Matthew, “Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they will have will be taken from them (Matt 13:12 NIV).” She concludes that poor readers remain poor readers.

²³National Public Radio, posted October 31, 2013, “Turning the Page On Literacy, Adults Go Back To Class,” accessed April 1, 2015, <http://www.npr.org/2013/10/31/241862699/turning-the-page-on-illiteracy-adults-go-back-to-class>.

²⁴National Center for Education Statistics, “National Assessment of Adult Literacy,” accessed April 25, 2015, <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=69>.

visual impairment hindering their ability to read, they may carry many of the life-long frustrations in a similar manner in which the dyslexic does. The biblical counselor should extend compassion to the illiterate counselee, understanding as the definition states, he has perhaps been unable to attain his goals and potential.

The illiterate counselee may hide his inability, having been able to manage life without reading well or at all by using audio based methods, symbols, small words, color coding or other cues to manage life. Even though this counselee may have learned to navigate through life somewhat, the biblical counselor would be wise to understand the counselee's low reading ability has most likely impacted his life in some significantly negative ways. Statistics support the reality of the NCE definition of literacy that those who are illiterate tend to have economic and other social problems. A National Public Radio report cites economist Stephen Fuller of George Mason University as saying, "People with low literacy are more likely to need unemployment checks, food stamps, and subsidized housing. And they are more likely to end up behind bars."²⁵ The biblical counselor should be well aware of the fact that a counselee's reading inability has created some unwanted results for the counselee. Moreover, his reading inability may have contributed to the problem for which he seeks counseling, whether its financial, marital, or other personal problem(s).

Counseling the Dyslexic and Illiterate Person

As the biblical counselor administrates the counseling session, there are seven

²⁵National Public Radio, "Adding Up the Cost of Low Literacy Among Adults," posted October 30, 2013, accessed April 3, 2015, <http://www.npr.org/2013/10/30/241910094/adding-up-the-cost-of-low-literacy-among-adults>.

principles he can keep in mind when working with the someone who is dyslexic or illiterate. First, The counselor should move session along quickly, especially in the teaching portion. Biblical counselors should be excellent teachers of the Word, but will need to be sure not to bog down the dyslexic or illiterate counselee with long didactic segments. He will want to use plenty of examples and illustrations to drive home his points instead of reading long portions of Scripture.

Second, the biblical counselor would be wise to utilize another person in the room when counseling those who struggle to read. The extra person could be a friend of the counselee, who is there for long-term accountability, or he could be a co-counselor. The purpose of this extra person is to divert the attention to someone other than the counselee, allowing the other person to read when necessary. The added person can offer insights and encouragement and provide relief from the pressure of the literature-centered biblical counseling to the often self-conscious dyslexic or unlearned counselee.

Third, the counselor should limit the amount of reading aloud the counselee who struggles to read does during the counseling session. Using the alternative methods suggested here will prevent the session from stalling as the counselee fumbles through written words and it will minimize the frustration the counselee may experience. The counselor will also need to be very sensitive to the counselee's limitations by assuring him he will patiently listen to him as he reads and will not prod him to read faster. The counselor must not condemn, laugh at, or sigh as the counselee attempts to read during the counseling session. Only as the biblical counselor understands the limitations of his counselee, will he be able to counsel him with the help and hope that the Scriptures offer. The counselor will have success in doing so when he counsels the reading disabled

person within the scope of his ability, thereby minimizing frustrations, and ultimately providing help for his problem(s). He will avoid—not completely eliminate—many of the setbacks that would come should he unknowingly press a counselee to do something he is physically unable to do.

Fourth, the biblical counselor will need to use simple terms, avoiding complex words with the counselee. As the counselor instructs biblical principles, he ought to tame his normal theological jargon for the sake of the counselee who has a reading disability. He should be able to explain these complex words using simpler ones, especially when they are connected to the counselee’s homework.

Fifth, the biblical counselor will have to adjust his normal counseling method in order to help the reading disabled counselee with the problem for which he sought counseling, whether it’s for a marital issue, depression, addiction, anxiety or other crisis. In fact, over time, the counselor might determine that the counselee’s inability to read plays an important part in his current crisis in life. To provide the best possible help, the counselor will have to remember and practice the key principle for counseling those who are unable to read, which is to proceed slowly. The adult non-reader can be very anxious or self-conscious about his reading disability, having endured a lifetime of frustration. Therefore, moving slowly should put the counselee at ease and assure him the counselor has his best interests in mind. Everything will be slower, including the weekly homework accountability and teaching segments within the hourly counseling session. In fact, the biblical counselor should plan to meet for a longer time each week than he would with a counselee who reads well.²⁶ Furthermore, the biblical counselor should

²⁶Normal biblical counseling sessions are usually an hour long, but the counselor who has a counselee who is deficient in reading should plan for at least ninety-minute sessions.

plan to counsel the reading disabled counselee for many more weeks than he would a counselee who reads proficiently.²⁷ The slow nature of the counseling process will push the counselor's patience, so he should be ready for it by praying for an extra measure of wisdom, strength, and patience to endure this challenge.

Sixth, as the counselor proceeds slowly, he needs to administer reasonable homework assignments to the counselee, taking into consideration the counselee's weekly time schedule. The biblical counselor should always monitor the breadth and depth of homework that he administers to the counselee, but this becomes even more vital when the counselee has a reading deficiency. The counselee who struggles to read might become frustrated at the very notion of doing weekly homework, mainly due to the fact that it will take him a lot longer than someone who reads well. Many of the following counseling suggestions will help to simplify the counselee's time but the counselor will need to adjust the amount of homework he gives, according to the counselee's pace of completing the homework.

Seventh, the counselee who struggles to read will benefit from repetition. Since time is a consideration, the counselor will need to determine the most important elements that play into the counselee's situation and reinforce them in multiple ways. For example, when the counselor introduces biblical truth about depression, he can teach it to him in the counseling session using some of the following methods. He then can proceed to give the counselee homework, including what was just taught to him, requiring him to repeat these principles to him in the following session. Through these

²⁷The biblical counselor should plan for 15 to 18 weeks of counseling instead of the standard 12 to 15 week range suggested for normal biblical counseling.

three steps, repetition should have its effectual work, yielding change for the counselee.

Once the counselor implements the seven counseling principles above, he increases in his ability to successfully impart biblical truth to the counselee for the problem that led him to counseling. Helping a counselee despite a physical reading disability might be new territory for the biblical counselor, so he will need to integrate creative, unorthodox biblical counseling methods in order to bring the Bible to bear in the counselee's life. The counselor can ask the counselee about some methods of comprehension that have worked for him over the span of his life. The following represents some of the multisensory methods and strategies about which the biblical counselor should become familiar and proficient in implementing into the counseling of those with reading deficiencies.

The biblical counselor can use some methods that involve manual activity, called kinesthetic learning. Here, the counselor and counselee can compensate for a reading inability by focusing on doing something with the hands, while learning how the Scriptures can help him with the problem for which he came to counseling. One kinesthetic method is having the counselee develop flash cards for use in the biblical counseling practice of putting off the old man and putting on the new man (Col 3:1-17; Eph 4:20-32).²⁸ Have the counselee label the top of one side, "put off" and the bottom of the same side should have a word that describes what he should put off, such as, "anger," with a Bible verse included. In the middle of the same side, the counselee can draw a picture of an angry face.²⁹ The reverse side should have the words, "put on" at the top

²⁸Jay Adams, *Manual*, 176ff. Adams refers to the put off/put on principles as the more technical terms, dehabituating/rehabituating.

²⁹ See appendix 4 for a visual illustration of this teaching method.

with the godly attribute listed at the bottom that is the opposite of anger, “problem solving,” with a Bible verse reference on the other. In the middle of the reverse side, the counselee can draw a picture of something that reminds him of problem solving, such as a calculator. He can refer to these cards as needed in order to reinforce the principles that are pertinent to his specific problem for which he sought counseling.

Another way to involve the counselee’s hands as a substitute for reading is to teach some of the biblical counseling concepts using modeling clay. For example, the Idols of the Heart concept refers to one’s propensity to substitute the worship of God for something else that is dominating his desires (Ezek 14:1-11). The counselor can teach this concept by molding a piece of clay into the shape of a heart while teaching the importance of the existence of idols in the heart of the counselee. The counselor should clarify the distinction between statue idols and heart idols by explaining the golden calf episode from Israel’s history (Exod 32). The counselor can have the counselee create idols from his own heart using the modeling clay.

Another medium by which the counselee can grasp the word of the Lord despite his reading limitations is music. The biblical counselor can incorporate music into the homework for the counselee, using selections which speak to the counselee’s particular issue. For example, Christian music artists Third Day’s song, “Light at the End of This Tunnel” can encourage the counselee to keep his eyes on the Lord as he works through his specific problem that brought him to counseling. The counselee can download it or listen to it online, memorizing the words and content. The counselor can follow up this homework assignment by asking the counselee specific questions about the song, its meaning, and how the counselee can apply the principles therein. Therefore, the

counselor will need to make sure the song selections support and enhance scriptural teaching. The counselor will also need to make sure that the song fits in to the counselee's preferred style of music in order to minimize unnecessary pitfalls. The counselor can ask for the counselee's help to determine whether he enjoys hymns, choruses, contemporary songs, or a mix of any or all of these kinds.

A large part of the biblical counselor's homework repertoire is Scripture memorization. Since the counselee struggles to read, an audio-based learning method can enhance Bible learning and help for his problem in a significant way. The counselee has many resource options at his disposal including the Bible on CD, phone or tablet applications. These resources should become second nature to the counselee and the counselor should take the time to get to know some of the resources available to the reading disabled in order to offer them as suggestions to the counselee. For Scripture memorization purposes, the counselee will need an audio program that has the capability to single out a certain verse for repetition, instead of a program wherein one person listens to another person who reads the Bible out loud from cover to cover.

Another alternative learning method that will help the dyslexic or unlearned counselee is role playing. Some role playing in secular counseling focuses on hypothetical situations and characters: however, in biblical counseling, role playing can be used to teach actual biblical accounts and principles. For example, the counselor can help the counselee to understand the dynamic of suffering and the sovereignty of God by having him listen to the Genesis account of Joseph on his audio device. He could even watch the animated movie, *Joseph: Man of Dreams*.³⁰ When he returns the following

³⁰*Joseph: Man of Dreams*, DVD, directed by Rob LaDuca and Robert C. Ramirez (Glendale, CA: DreamWorks Animation, 2000).

week, he will act out several of the situations in Joseph's life such as being thrown into a pit, being sold into slavery, and being falsely accused by Potiphar's wife. He can then role play answers to different questions. "What feelings/sensations would you expect Joseph to experience?" "How would you feel about God if you were in a similar situation?"

Through biblical counseling training, the counselor should have been exposed to different diagrams which emphasize a particular passage or spiritual growth principle.³¹ Diagrams are generally popular and well-received by a counselee who reads well because they help him to retain a biblical counseling principle with greater success. The effectiveness of diagrams would be significantly multiplied when the counselee has a reading disability. The counselor can teach the biblical principles related to his problem through a diagram and then ask the counselee to study and practice the diagram on his own during the week as part of his homework assignment. The counselee should then act as the teacher the following week, explaining the diagram to the counselor, complete with practical application to his own life.

Finally, the biblical counselor can use some children's material to reinforce biblical passages and principles. The biblical counselor should be working in conjunction with his local church, which most likely has a variety of children's ministries including Sunday School, mid-week club, AWANA, or Vacation Bible School. Any of these ministries should have some material and methods for addressing biblical principles

³¹Some standard diagrams that are used in biblical counseling are the "Y Diagram—Pleasing God or Pleasing Self," and the "Put Off/Put on Chart from Ephesians 4." See Grace Fellowship of Covington Kentucky's ministry website for these and other helpful diagrams. These can be accessed at <http://graceky.org/counselors-toolbox/>.

at a child's level, which would be especially helpful for the adult who reads at that level. The counselor will need to choose the children's material that includes a clear Gospel presentation that he can use, should his counselee need to place his faith in Christ. Some good, trustworthy children's material can highlight some of the basics of spiritual growth, which this paper defined previously as being synonymous with biblical counseling.

One excellent resource is the booklet *Welcome to the Family* by Valerie Wilson.³² This resource covers salvation, believer's baptism, the Holy Spirit, spiritual growth, and church life. Children's material uses words and visual aids that are not too complex, being fit for the counselee who reads slow or the adult who reads at a child's pace. The counselor doesn't necessarily need to teach everything in the book, but it provides a good homework resource and discussion points for dealing with any problem for which the counselee sought counseling.

Conclusion to Counseling the Dyslexic and Illiterate Counselee

The biblical counselor must maintain his own commitment to the Scriptures and their application to the lives of those who come for help in their time of deep need. Most likely, this conviction will be tried when he seeks to help a person who struggles to read. He might be tempted to abdicate his responsibility to another, in his estimation, more qualified person or institution. He may simply give up, feeling as though he does not know how to proceed in such circumstances because he has not been trained to do so. However, he does not have the luxury to defer his responsibility to another, less qualified

³²Valerie Wilson, *Welcome to the Family: A Guide for Kids Who Know the Savior* (Schaumburg, IL: Regular Baptist Press, 2001). I have effectively used this resource in my biblical counseling with three different counselees—twice with those who were adults but had a child's reading level.

person, because he should be convinced that the Scriptures have something to say about every issue of life.

Upon considering and implementing the previous data, the biblical counselor should have a renewed hope and confidence in being able to help anyone who enters his door, seeking biblical answers for his problem. It no longer matters whether or not someone's reading problem is based on a spiritual issue or actual physical disability because the biblical counselor can understand, diagnose, and help people despite these seemingly overwhelming obstacles. The biblical counselor should no longer shy away from the potential that exists for helping people with their problems, even though they struggle with a reading issue.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

The purpose of this project was to instruct the counselors of the Randolph Area Biblical Center (RABCC) to know how to counsel people whose reading problems hinder what might be generally considered a normal counseling process. In hindsight, the project was faithfully developed and implemented with this consistent aim in view. The project rationale and context determined this was a necessary pursuit in order to fully equip the RABCC counselors and those within the Biblical Counseling Movement at large. Essentially, the project was a series of one-hour Sunday School classes, spanning twelve-weeks, wherein the developed material was presented to the RABCC counselors by this project author. The process by which I fulfilled the purpose of instructing the RABCC counselors was as follows.

Project Development (Weeks 1-3)

Much of the development of the material for the project's classroom instruction was achieved during the research for chapters 2 and 3 of this document. The material was researched and presented in a formal manner within the official chapters I submitted to the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. However, in teaching the RABCC staff, I had to tailor the material to maximize their learning. Therefore, I edited the formal document by adhering to the following six specific criteria.

First, the lessons and classroom sessions were structured with an understanding that the RABCC staff consists of laypeople with diverse educational experience. Therefore, in developing the material, the technical terms used in the research was eliminated from the formal document for use in the weekly class handouts. I clearly defined theological terms that I deemed too advanced for my students. The technical language was primarily used within the biblical rationale portion of the series, which was the basis of lessons 1 through 4. Once the class that contained the formal exegesis of the biblical material concluded, the students would be engaged in many hands-on, practical training methods that did not require as much abridgment from the original document research.

Second, I developed the material knowing each student had a three-ring binder for use as a staff member of the RABCC. I asked them to bring those binders to this series of classes as it would serve as part of their ongoing training. I handed out each week's outline at the beginning of each class and the participants inserted them into their binders, so they could keep the material well-organized. I presented each week's lesson in an easy-to-follow outline along with the heading for each week, which included the lesson number and title.

Third, I made sure the first point of every lesson outline was a statement clearly expressing the lesson's objective. For example, the lesson 3 lesson objective reads, "This lesson will teach that biblically counseling those with reading issues will require hard work and must not exclude anyone." My goal was consistent clarity about the direction of each class. If classroom discussion went in a direction unrelated to the purpose, I was able to direct the students back to the purpose statement in order to

maintain focus on the specific topic under discussion. The abridged outline helped me to develop the material in such a manner as always keeping and supporting the main objective for any given week.

Fourth, I needed material to accommodate two different teaching and learning styles. First, for some weeks, my teaching was more didactic than discussion-based. For those weeks, I created handouts with blanks for the students to fill in as I taught, which kept their focus on the teaching time. Second, some weeks I designed the instruction time to generate discussion rather than solely listening to my instruction. One way I accomplished this design was by having the blanks already filled in on the student sheets. However, in whichever teaching method I employed, I always sought to maintain a small, intimate classroom setting where people were close to one another and were always free to interject or ask questions. The RABCC staff meets and ministers together on a regular basis through the official counseling ministry and already have a good relationship with each other, so this was easily accomplished.

Fifth, once we approached the practical portion of the sessions, I designed an assignment for the students to complete for five of the twelve weeks (Weeks 6, 7, 10, 11, and 12). Completing these assignments benefitted the counselors in two ways. First, it helped them to have a “counselee’s perspective.” In the RABCC ministry, the counselors are mandated to give the counselees homework from week to week. Having their own assignments throughout the weeks of training helped them to gauge the amount of homework they give to their own counselees. Second, the material produced through their homework helped to bolster some of the resources in the appendices of this project.

For example, they were to find several songs or hymns that they could use to give to people who struggle to read as a way of helping them with their problems.

Sixth, I created a rubric through which two other certified biblical counselors verified the theological, biblical, and practical reliability of the developed lessons. The material was received well by the two men who frequently noted the material was biblically and theologically sound. The men made frequent reference that the material was very practical and that they would use it in their own ministry as needed.

Project Implementation (Weeks 4-15)

Lesson 1 Review

Lesson 1 introduced the series of classes to the RABCC staff. Prior to the first class, each member of the staff (students) completed a survey to determine his/her understanding of the theological and practical implications pertaining to counseling those whose reading problems hinder the counseling process. Upon arrival to the week 1 class, the students submitted the completed survey. The same survey was completed at the final class, upon which the results were formulated to determine whether or not the instruction material increased the counselors' learning about the topics that were covered.

The purpose of the class series was clearly stated at the outset of lesson 1, which was "to be able to biblically counsel people whose reading problems hinder the counseling process." In fulfilling this purpose, the students were encouraged that they would benefit from the class by increasing their knowledge and skills of counseling. Furthermore, I had anticipated their own spiritual vitality would increase through integrating the instructed Scriptural principles into their own lives.

The lesson 1 introduction class presented the rationale for the class series. Despite the many hours of training already provided to the staff, the hours contained no material for increasing their knowledge about how to counsel people when reading problems hinder the counseling process. The class series was designed to help the counselors compensate for that informational void. The rationale also expressed the fact of the economic and educational deficiencies within the RABCC's surrounding counties stimulated the need for this class. Given these dynamics, the RABCC counselors could expect to continue to treat people with varying degrees of reading problems. Moreover, other biblical counseling ministries will benefit from this important material. For example, those who counsel the children, the elderly, or inmates have a high chance that they will need to compensate for these reading problems at some point during their future counseling ministries.

Lesson 1 concluded with an outline of the major topics that were covered in the remaining classes. The 12 weeks of material was broken down into two major categories. Weeks 1-4 covered the biblical rationale for counseling those with reading problems. The remaining weeks 5-12 covered the theoretical and practical issues related to helping those whose reading problems hindered the counseling process. By the end of lesson 1, the students knew why this class was necessary and understood where the class was headed.

Lesson Two Review

Lesson 2 fit under the broader heading of providing the biblical rationale for counseling those whose reading problems hinder the process. The second week sought to prove the Bible teaches the strong believer (biblical counselor) is obligated to use the

Scriptures in order to help the weak believer (Rom 15:1-6). The students discovered the passage deals with two kinds of believers—those who are “able” (strong) versus those who are “unable” (weak). The opposing terms define well the difference between the two groups because the strong are able to bear with the inabilities of the weak, while those who are unable, need the strong to help bear with their weaknesses. The principles were applied to counseling by concluding the stronger believer has an obligation to help the weaker brother by bearing his weaknesses. The material was designed to motivate the counselors to act because they have a biblical obligation to bear with the weaknesses of the weak. It might be easy for the counselor to abdicate their weakness-bearing ministry, should the counselee be unable to read. However, the Apostle Paul’s mandate does not contain any exemptions. Therefore, the counselors were without excuse because, as the biblical rationale teaches, they must bear with the inabilities of the weak. In doing so, they position themselves well to administer God’s word to those who struggle to read.

The lesson helped the counselor to understand he is to bear with the weak for unselfish gain, because he (strong) is there for the benefit of the weak, not for the benefit of himself. The weak believer’s spiritual growth is the goal and requires complete selflessness on the part of the counselor. The counselor needs to develop patience in order to accomplish this worthy task. The material in the remaining classes would provide some practical tools to help him effectively minister the Bible to the weaker brother.

Finally, lesson 2 emphasized that the strong believer is to use the Scriptures to help bear with the weaknesses of the weak. Herein lies a problem when someone

demonstrates a reading deficiency. The Scriptures is a book and it should be the primary source by which the weak is helped by the strong (Rom 15:4). In fact, this is the driving methodological principle within the biblical counseling community. Moreover, this principle alone provided a strong biblical rationale for the need for this class series to the students. The material from this week also took fifteen minutes of week 3 to complete.

Lesson 3 Review

Lesson 3 continued the broader emphasis of providing a biblical rationale to the students about the need for biblically counseling those whose reading problems hinder the normal counseling process. An exegesis of Colossians 1:24-29 provided the necessary instruction for the two lesson objectives. The first objective was to teach the staff about counseling those with reading issues will require hard work on their own part. The second objective expressed to the counselors was they cannot exclude those with reading problems from their pool of potential counselees, even though they feel unable to help them because of their reading limitation.

The context of the specific biblical text was provided for the students, helping them discover how the passage fits into the Apostle Paul's flow of thought from the beginning of the book of Colossians. In the preceding portion, Paul emphasized many important and theologically substantive truths about the Savior, in Whom the Colossians professed to believe (Col 1:3-5). Paul wrote that Jesus Christ has preeminence over all things including them as a church (vv. 9-18). Paul then likened Jesus' sacrificial work to his own sacrificial work as an apostle towards them as believers in Christ, living in Colossae (vv. 19-29). The passage that was the focus of this lesson fell into this pericope of Paul's writing about sacrifice for others.

The students learned that Paul emphasized his own sacrifice for them was hard work. By sacrificing, Paul physically exerted himself, becoming weary due to his constant struggle for their sake (v. 25). Paul then wrote the content of all of his effort was to warn them not to stray from what they already knew, while teaching them further truths about Christ (v. 28). Paul then reminded them that his warning and instruction was not for a chosen few; rather, it was meant for everyone's spiritual maturity (v. 29).

The lesson concluded with a charge to the counselors to emulate Paul's thoughts and actions towards the Colossians. At the outset of a series of counseling sessions, the biblical counselor cannot pick and choose with whom he does the ministry of biblical counseling—he cannot choose to ignore those who demonstrate reading issues. Using the Bible to help someone who is unable to read will be a difficult task. Due to the reading void, the biblical counselor will have to dedicate added time in order to reflect Paul's zealotry towards another person's spiritual growth. The biblical counselor will need to know how to decipher whether a counselee cannot read because of a verifiable physical deficiency or whether there are non-physically related issues at hand. This deciphering will take hard work—hard work like the Apostle Paul exhibited.

Moreover, as important as these implications are for the biblical counselor, the counselee who has reading issues must also take an account of his own spiritual maturity. Paul's comprehensive term *all* applies to everyone without exception, which includes the believer who demonstrates reading issues. In other words, the counselee with a reading problem does not have an excuse for remaining spiritually immature because Paul wants “every man to be mature in Christ Jesus” (v.28). The person with reading issues is not

exempt from the effort required to maximize spiritual maturity and the two will have to work well together due to these extenuating circumstances.

Lesson 4 Review

Lesson 4 concluded the four-week biblical rationale for the RABCC counselors to be able to counsel those with reading problems. The lesson 4 objective was to demonstrate that the counselee who attends biblical counseling and manifests a reading problem will receive the help he needs from a book—the Scriptures. When it comes to reading problems, whether physical or non-physical, the Bible will be the primary source from which the counselee will glean his hope and the help for the problem that brought him to counseling.

To the counselor and counselee, using the Bible might seem counterintuitive given the nature of reading problems, yet the passage under examination proves only the Bible will bring to light the intentions of the counselee's heart. Therefore, the students learned that those with reading problems would be wise to be sure that, somehow, the Bible is the source of their spiritual growth. The staff worked through an exegesis of Hebrews 4:12, proving real hope and help is based in the Bible because of what it *is* and what it *does*.

In a similar fashion as previous lessons, the students received contextual data in order to help them understand Hebrews 4:12 in the best possible way. The primary truth from the earlier portion of Hebrews serves as a reminder to the Jewish converts that their ancestors forfeited the blessing of rest in the promised land due to their own disobedience (Heb 4:6). Just as the Israelites fell short of their wilderness rest through disobedience, believers today must obey God in order to enjoy the rest, which is still to

come. One might ask the question, “How do I know what is expected, so that I can obey God and enter his rest?” The answer is given in the verse being the focus of this exegesis—follow God’s word (v. 12). The passage concludes with some specific ways in which the truths of this passage have direct implications for the counselee who desires to change, even though has a reading problem standing in the way of change (vv. 13-16).

Having a grasp of the contextual argument, the counselors were taught God’s word is alive and active, instead of simply being words on a page. Furthermore, God’s word can pierce, with far greater intensity, than a literal, two-edged sword. The first-century recipient of these words in the book of Hebrews would clearly understand this metaphor because a literal sword is sharp and it pierces.

Although the metaphor is similar in some ways, there is one major difference between the literal sword and the word of God—the word of God is able to pierce to places an actual sword cannot. The word of God pierces into the immaterial constitution of a human being, dividing the “soul and spirit, and the joints and marrow” (Heb 4:12). It is here the author of Hebrews makes a strong break from the metaphorical use of a sword. The students were sobered by the fact that only the Bible is able to weigh one’s thoughts and desires, thereby having no correlation to a literal sword.

The biblical counselor was taught to apply these truths to their counseling ministry. Many resources are at the disposal of the person who desires help for a particular problem in his life. Government subsidized programs or private practitioners provide counseling services for those in need. Often these resources are armed with prescription pads and coping mechanisms and fail to deal with the root causes of the heart. None of the aforementioned resources are able to do what the Bible can do, which

is to expose the thoughts and intentions of the counselee's heart. Since only the Word of God can do this, it is of paramount importance for the biblical counselor to be able to compensate for any reading difficulties on the part of the counselee by finding ways to expose the counselee to the Scriptures.

Lesson 5 Review

Lesson 5 transitioned from the biblical rationale into the theoretical and practical issues related to helping those whose reading problems hindered the process. The lesson 5 objective was two-fold. First, it helped counselors to understand two categories of reading issues. Second, it introduced them to the first problem of apathy. The portion of the class that instructed the two kinds of reading issues was short, because they were exposed to these in the rationale lesson. However, the reminder of the categories was beneficial because it had been three weeks since lesson one and the Bible exegesis was heavy, perhaps enabling the student forget these important points. After they were refreshed in the difference between spiritually and physically based reading problems, the lesson moved into the issue of counseling the apathetic counselee.

The students were given a definition of apathy as “unintentional indifference.” The point was made that when experiencing apathy, the person often does not intentionally neglect things or responsibilities. Intentional neglect is covered in the forthcoming lesson of the problem of laziness. For the most part, the apathetic person has simply not viewed certain things as important in his or her own life. The key point for the counselee is he cannot remain apathetic about reading the Bible—he must bring the discipline of Bible reading into the circle of things that are important to him. In this

session, the students were given a circle diagram to conceptualize the issue of apathy they could give to their counselees as needed.¹

A question was posed to generate discussion; “What consequences do you see in society due to apathy?” The students were forthcoming with their answers, generating some good discussion. One student noted that ministries at church are neglected, such as not having enough children’s workers. The person argued in this specific instance, the problem is indifference and not laziness—people just do not care about it. Another student noted that a large the number of animals remain unadopted from kennels and humane societies, citing people just do not care about the plight of dogs. Another student piggy-backed off of that sentiment to promote the high number of children who are in foster care and in need of adoption. Finally, a woman proposed that husbands often do not care about their wives, neglecting their God-given responsibilities towards them.

The lesson material gave several good ways to diagnose whether or not apathy is the actual reading problem.² Once the counselor determines the reading problem is apathy, he must be able to compensate for it by helping the counselee develop a conviction about the importance of reading in his own life. The counselor’s best approach is to help the counselee see the dangers of apathy through some robust Bible instruction. The Bible study should convince the counselee reading the Scriptures will have a great impact on their spiritual vitality. The material included some Bible passages the counselor can give to the counselee to root out apathy (Rev 3:16; 1 Thess 5:11; 2 Tim

¹See appendix 5 for the resource, “Apathy Exercise.”

²Chapter 3 of this project for the ways to diagnose and treat the three spiritually based reading problems. The summaries given for lessons 5 through 12 in this chapter will not include all of the diagnostic and treatment information as it would merely repeat what was presented in chap. 3 of this project.

4:2-4). Essentially, the goal will be to rearrange priorities to the extent reading Scripture and integrating its principles becomes of paramount importance in the counselee's life. A healthy sense of urgency should bring about a conviction upon the counselee to reconsider his priorities. Consequently, there should be an increased desire on the counselee's part to read his Bible.

Lesson 6 Review

Lesson 6 sought to instruct the counselors about how laziness can be a problem keeping a counselee from receiving help from God's word for his problem. To introduce the concept of laziness, the counselors were given a homework assignment to complete for this lesson. The students had to find images that demonstrated laziness. One student took a picture of a car in a parking lot of a grocery store, which was filled with junk, including a lot of trash. Another student brought in a cartoon of a farmer who could not get any help from his son, who was more interested in spending time on his electronic device. There was plenty of strong and lively discussion based on these pictures of laziness. Furthermore, through this object lesson, the students identified well with the lackluster results of laziness. Such an exercise could become an actual assignment the counselors could give to their counsees to help them understand these biblical principles.

The lesson material provided a dictionary definition of laziness, but the heart of the information was examining ways that the book of Proverbs describes what a person reaps when he sows laziness (Prov 6:6-11; 24:30-34). The lesson material focused on teaching the counselors how to diagnose and treat laziness. For example, the counselee can keep a concise accounting of everything he did throughout the course of a week by

writing his activities down into a time log. When he returns to counseling the next week, the log will show the counselor what the counselee did with his time. Together they can analyze the chart to determine whether or not the counselee is lazy, if he is doing things such as spending large blocks of wasted time.

The emphasis of this lesson applied to reading problems because the person with lazy tendencies could be lazy about reading, which will not serve him well in the biblical counseling process. Such laziness will prevent him from getting the help he needs for his problems. Therefore, the students learned they need to help their lazy counselee to forge the discipline of reading beginning with the Bible verses cited previously.

Lesson 7 Review

Lesson 7 instructed the RABCC staff about how to diagnose and treat the reading problem of unwillingness. The counselors learned unwillingness is synonymous with stubbornness or rebellion and it is the most easily recognizable of the three spiritually based reading problems. Whether a person's rebellion is overt or covert, the material emphasized the counselee can make great strides in this area, should he be serious about his walk with God.

To prepare for the class, throughout the previous week, the students were to complete a Bible study that they could, in turn, give to their counselee who is rebellious. The homework text focused on King Saul's rebellion against God which was made known to him by Samuel the prophet (1 Sam 15:10-23). The students were given some questions to help them work through the passage in order to draw out the principle of rebellion. What was the event that prompted Saul's rebellion? Who pronounced to Saul

that he was wrong, and on whose behalf was this person speaking? What exactly did Saul do that revealed his rebellion to God? To which other sins does God equate rebellion? What was the consequence of Saul's rebellion? Why does God take rebellion so seriously? What might be some consequences if one chooses to remain rebellious about reading the Bible? The discussion was lively as the students revealed the findings of their Bible study and this inductive learning method was a refreshing approach to the material.

The class instruction concluded with the important dynamic of pride and its manifestation as rebellion. Pride is a critical characteristic, keeping one in the doldrums of apathy, laziness, or rebellion. The rebellious counselee must become humble, setting his prideful tendencies aside for the sake of his own spiritual good. In fact, there is not a single area of a person's life that remains unaffected by the pride resonating deep within. Unfortunately, this counselee will not get far until he has mastered the desirable characteristic of humility. As the counselor deals with the counselee's rebellion, he will need to draw out the pride that is often the root of someone's stubbornness towards God or others (Ps 81:1-16). Lesson 7 concluded the three spiritually based reading problems of apathy, laziness, and unwillingness.

Lesson 8 Review

Lesson 8 began the focus of the remaining classes, which was understanding, diagnosing, and compensating for actual physically-based reading disabilities. The rationale proved the RABCC counselors faced the dilemma of not knowing how to use the Bible in counseling someone is unable to read. The rationale also determined the RABCC and those within the Biblical Counseling movement at large can continue to expect to see reading disabled counsees within their respective counseling ministries.

The lesson 8 objective was to teach the RABCC staff some general principles about reading disabilities. The goal was to give the biblical counselor confidence and ability in helping those whom they had previously been fearful or unable to help due to a reading disability on the part of the counselee. The class began by having students answer, "What are some different kinds of reading disabilities?" The answers were varied, but most had a rudimentary understanding of dyslexia. Other answers included ADD, ADHD, and mental retardation. I cautioned the students that these fall into the broader category of learning disabilities, instead of specific reading disabilities. Surprisingly, no student offered limited sight or blindness as a disability, but they grew to understand this condition as a reading disability through the discussion time and the instruction material. The class also discussed the dynamic of an adult who never learned how to read or who reads at a child's level at best, which is termed illiteracy.

As a biblical counselor, I shared how reading disabilities have been a challenge in my counseling experience. Thus far, I attempted to counsel a dyslexic, two adults who read at a child's level, an elderly woman who could not see well, and a businessman who could not spell or comprehend written material very well. I was somewhat limited in some of these situations, and the difficulties I experienced helped to solidify, in my thinking, the need for the class.

The class material served as a grid through which the biblical counselor could analyze any previous diagnosis the counselee received, whether from a physician or counselor. The biblical counselor will want to be kept abreast of any diagnosis done by other professionals, including educators or physicians. The visual impairment diagnosis will be helpful to the counselor. However, as stated earlier, other diagnoses might be

problematic, such as ADD/ADHD, social disorders, test anxiety, or many other so-called disorders. The biblical counselor should be educated about the problems with such labels.

The session ended with a very helpful list of technology-based learning tools.³ The class discussion was lively and received well because the material shed light on the many resources available to the counselee who struggles to read. For many of the counselors, this lesson material was where the proverbial rubber met the road. Furthermore, the counselors were reminded, in a very practical manner about their role to compensate for the deficiencies in reading, and not to teach them how to read. Many of the resources provided in this series of classes will help them to do just that.

Lesson 9 Review

The lesson 9 objective was to help the biblical counselor understand two reading disabilities—dyslexia and illiteracy, while lesson 10 will give some ways that a counselor can compensate for these deficiencies once they are recognized. At the beginning of the class, the students were given a paragraph found on the internet that was formatted in a manner that a dyslexic person might see it.⁴ The students took turns reading out loud a sentence from the paragraph, which was a challenge for most. It was a fun, engaging, and profound exercise that provided empathy towards those who deal with dyslexia.

³See appendix 6 for a list of technology based learning tools.

⁴Mindsay, “What Does Dyslexia Look Like?” accessed April 10, 2015, <http://www.dyslexia.mindsay.com>. See appendix 7 for the image of this paragraph used in this lesson.

The exercise and teaching material enforced the dynamic that the dyslexic counselee sees letters in a mixed fashion, mostly inverted or upside down. The counselors realized that dyslexia is a chronic condition, for which one can compensate but is never fully cured. The dyslexic reader will always be behind his peers in reading proficiency and lead to many unwanted problems in his life. In fact, the complexity of the counselee's problem(s) might have come as a result of his continuing inability to read well.

The staff also learned that many adults never learn to read well and are technically illiterate. The students were given a formal definition for illiteracy and statistics about the prominent nature of the problem. The adult illiterate counselee may share many of the same, life-long frustrations as their dyslexic counterparts, including financial, social and relational problems. The lesson stressed to the biblical counselor that a counselee's reading inability has created some unwanted consequences. Moreover, his reading inability may have contributed to the problem for which he seeks counseling, whether its financial, marital, or other personal problem(s). The staff grasped this well, and having this working knowledge of dyslexia and illiteracy, were now positioned to compensate for the reading impaired counselee.

Lesson 10 Review

The lesson 10 objective was to give the staff seven general procedures for administering a counseling session to the dyslexic or illiterate counselee. Specific methods of sharing God's truth was the purpose of lessons 11 and 12, but lesson 10 provided important general reminders for the staff as they proceed with someone who is reading disabled. Therefore, a counselor should approach the actual counseling session

differently than he would for a counselee who reads well. The RABCC staff has received training on how to conduct a counseling session for most circumstances, but this lesson provided the first training that they have received for conducting a session for a person with limited reading skills. Lesson 10 was very practical and as one student said upon its completion, “this lesson was what I was waiting for.”

At the end of lesson 9, the students were given an assignment, which they were to have completed for the beginning of class 10. The students were to use their knowledge gleaned from other training of the “put on/put off” concept and adapt it for use with the reading disabled counselee, which is called the Index Card Learning Method. They were given the issue of anger, putting it off in favor of putting on problem solving (Eph 4:26-27). The students were to create an index card, writing “put off” along the top of one side and “put on” along the top the reverse side. They were to draw a picture illustrating anger on the “put off” side and a different picture on the “put on” side, a picture illustrating problem solving. The counselors came to lesson ten well-prepared, having an assortment of creative illustrations and ideas. They will be able to use the card method with future reading disabled counselees, allowing them to glean biblical spiritual growth principles, despite their reading limitation.

The students were reminded of the biblical rationale passage, which reinforced the fact that counseling the reading disabled will take more work and effort than the standard counseling procedure (Col 1:24-29). For example, the counselor should expedite the teaching portion. Every counseling session should have a teaching component, where the Bible is opened up and shared with the counselee. Long, expository teaching segments should be eliminated when dealing with the reading

disabled counselee because he will become frustrated at seemingly endless written words. The counselor should use illustrations or drawings to make his biblical point clear to the reading disabled counselee.

Although the counselor should limit the formal teaching time within each session, the counselors learned the overall number of counseling sessions will be greater than would be necessary for most other counseling sessions. The standard twelve to fifteen weeks of counseling will be increased by roughly five weeks, providing the extra time needed for the reading disabled counselee to get the same care another counselee receives.

Lesson 11 Review

Lesson 10 served to complement lesson 9 while also setting up the final two lessons. The general principles gleaned in lesson 10 provided a good learning environment for the practical learning methods given in the final two lessons. The lesson 11 objective provided the biblical counselor with alternative learning methods to be used in biblically counseling those with reading disabilities. Learning methods included multisensory techniques like kinesthetic, audio, and visual.

Like previous weeks, the counselors were to complete an assignment to prepare for lesson 11. The staff was to provide a simple visual technique to teach the reading disabled counselee about how to deal with anxiety, using the principle they've learned from other biblical counseling training (Phil 4:6-9). The staff had some very creative ways to teach this to the reading disabled.

One student used four colorful miniature pails and colored straws to help the counselee know about putting off anxiety and putting on faith. The counselor instructs

the counselee about how this method will help him to overcome worry. The four pails are placed in front of the counselee. Each pail is labeled and has pictures, from left to right, teaching the biblical principle of “right praying and right thinking” (Phil 4:6-9). The first bucket remains empty, encouraging the counselee to “be anxious for nothing” (v. 6). The second pail is colored black with a picture of a worried person on its side. The counselee takes black straws representing a particular worry or fear in his life. As he identifies them, he places them into the black pail. The third, green pail represents “praying with thanksgiving (v. 6).” The counselee takes green straws and places them into the pail as he prays for the issues he identified in the previous pail. The counselee is to then think on things that are “true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, praiseworthy” (v. 8). The final red pail has eight straws to represent each one of these foci, each straw being labeled with the first letter of each of them—T, N, J, P, L, G, V, and P. The pail exercise was a creative and useful way for the reading disabled person to implement these biblical principles.

Another student used a kinesthetic method by having a student use the ingredients to make paste. She instructed the counselee to combine the ingredients with his hands. As the paste began to form, it created quite a mess on his hands. She equated this mess with the effects of anxiety in the counselee’s life. She then used a rocking chair to illustrate the peaceful life, which comes by handling anxiety according to the Bible passage (Phil 4:6-7). She taught the counselee could imagine himself rocking peacefully in his chair on the back of a sprawling porch, while watching the sun set along the horizon. These illustrations were excellent, yet incomplete, so another student suggested having a bucket of water between the paste and the rocking chair. The person would

cleanse his hands, which could illustrate the right praying that leads to peace instead of worry. After the group discussion, the process became (1) anxiety is illustrated with the paste, (2) praying is illustrated by washing the paste from the hands, using the bucket, then (3) sitting in the rocking chair to demonstrate the peace, which surpasses our understanding.

Another student suggested having the counselee make a collage showing the difference between worry and faith in God. He taught the counselee can print out images from the internet or use pictures from magazines. The counselee needs to think in three panels, moving logically from left to right. The first panel has pictures describing worry/anxiety. The second panel contains pictures of what to do in the midst of worry, which is to focus on God through prayer. The third panel shows pictures illustrating the peace that comes from right praying. The actual class instructional material offered some suggestions this project details in chapter three, but the students' homework assignments garnered the majority of the class time. The students taught their methods to the class that acted as the counselee, which provided a very lively and profitable class.

Lesson 12 Review

The lesson 12 objective was the same as lesson 11—to provide the biblical counselor with alternative learning methods to be used in biblically counseling those with reading disabilities. The classroom handout included seven ways to use alternative methods with those who struggle to read. The last two lessons were heavily geared towards peer learning, which was a very effective learning method. The students took the principles suggested in the handouts and came up with several of their own, creative teaching methods.

The focus of this final lesson was one of the methods suggested in the handout—using music to reinforce biblical principles to the counselee who struggles to read. The students had homework in which they were to compile songs for helping counselees in specific areas.⁵ They were to find thirty songs (ten each), which would help someone with depression, anger, and worry. They were to use a combination of music styles including hymns and current praise songs. Most students were faithful to the task and reporting their findings took most of the class time.

After having shared their homework assignments with the entire class, the class concluded by having the students complete the post-series survey at the end of lesson twelve. The class was allotted twenty minutes to complete the survey, which was sufficient for this important task. The results of the surveys⁶ revealed the teaching of counseling material to the select group of adults made a statistically significant difference resulting in the increase of their counseling knowledge ($t_{(8)} = 8.66, p < .0001$).⁷

The pre- and post-series surveys were divided into three sections. Within each of these sections were several questions designed to reveal the counselors' knowledge of broad topics related to the project's purpose.⁸ Section 1 revealed the counselors' understanding of biblical principles related to reading issues. Section 1 revealed the counselors' understanding of various reading issues and their implications to biblical counseling. Section 3 revealed the counselors' understanding of how to apply these

⁵See appendix 8 for a list of songs for counseling use.

⁶See appendix 9 for the general survey scores.

⁷See Appendix 10 for t-test statistical data.

⁸See appendices 11, 12, and 13 for pre and post-series individual results and comparative results.

principles in the counseling room. The data showed, that as a whole, the counselors grew most in the topic of section 2 by improving in their understanding of various reading issues and their implications to biblical counseling. Conversely, section 1 showed the counselors grew the least in their understanding of biblical principles related to reading issues.

The most improvement attained was in the area directly related to the purpose of this project. Indeed, the counselors grew in their understanding of reading issues and how they can improve in counseling those whose reading issues hinder the counseling process. Moreover, the three highest increases in individual questions pertained to reading issues. Question 26 showed how well the counselor knew how to ask questions of the counselee to determine the specific reading issue, which is hindering the counseling process. The strong growth in section 3 by all of the counsees was encouraging because diagnosing specific reading issues was a major goal of the material. Question number 22 generated the second highest increase and it sought to discover how well the counselor understood spiritually based reading problems. I was extremely pleased with this growth because it was my belief when most people think of reading problems, they only consider physically based problems. Question number 27 revealed the absolute highest improvement and it sought to know how well the counselors knew about the resources, which are available to those with physical reading disabilities. Again, I was pleased that growth occurred here, which I believe was a direct result of the technology based resources list that I generated and gave to them.

I was surprised to discover the students grew the least in the material covered in section 1 of the survey. The section sought to discover how well the students knew the

Bible's teaching about specific passages pertaining to reading issues. The reason for the low increase is that our church is strong in Bible teaching. The lowest increase of knowledge of any question was number 1, "I understand well how 2 Timothy 3:15-17 relates to my responsibility to be well equipped to counsel those with reading problems." I suspect the reason the students gave themselves high scores on the pre-test for this question is this passage is our theme verse for the church, and I preached extensively on it in February of this year.

Conclusion to the Project Development and Implementation

The next chapter will reveal that the twelve weeks of instruction proved profitable by attaining its goal of increasing the RABCC's knowledge of counseling those whose reading problems hinder the counseling process. Not only was this lofty goal achieved but the class instruction, discussion, and homework assignments provided a stimulating atmosphere for learning and spiritual growth. The students reflected well the biblical counseling adage that a good counselor is first a good counselee. Throughout the classes, the students pondered some important biblical truths that motivated their own spiritual journey.

I was very satisfied with the students level of participation for each class through purposeful and lively discussion. The students were also engaged through asking thoughtful questions of the instructor and one another. Furthermore, the students faithfully completed the weekly homework assignments, through which they exemplified great creativity and ability. The verbal feedback and survey results solidified in my mind the class series was necessary and beneficial. Most importantly, through all of this—I

believe God was glorified because the students grew in their biblical knowledge and application.

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT EVALUATION

Introduction

Several factors catalyzed this project into formation and implementation, but one rises to the surface. As a busy biblical counselor, I experienced first-hand the need to be better equipped to handle the challenges associated with biblically counseling those with different reading issues—from the successful businessman who could not comprehend written words to the visually impaired elderly woman who struggled to read normal text size. The project was initiated to help biblical counselors compensate for these kinds of difficulties.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

The purpose of this project was to educate the counselors of the RABCC in Randolph, New York, to be more effective counselors by overcoming difficulties in counseling those who have various reading issues. I will evaluate the effectiveness of this purpose by examining the two infinitive clauses of this purpose statement. First, the purpose was “to educate” the RABCC counselors.¹ A question which demonstrates whether or not this part of the purpose was successfully completed is, “Did the

¹This project understands and uses the word *educate* in accordance with the Webster's Dictionary meaning, “to train by formal instruction and supervised practice especially in a skill, trade, or profession.” *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, “Educate,” accessed March 9, 2016, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/educate>.

dissemination of information actually occur?” The answer is, “Yes.” The twelve weeks of classes lasted throughout the summer Sunday School quarter at Randolph First Baptist Church. There was a single interruption between weeks 5 and 6 in order to hear from a missionary couple who used our Sunday School hour to report to the church. Aside from that, the counselors were faithfully educated and this portion of the purpose was successfully accomplished when the final class was completed.

The second element of the purpose statement was the content of the education, which was specifically designed for the RABCC counselors “to be more effective counselors by overcoming difficulties in counseling those who have various reading issues.” Indeed, all of the classroom material was formulated and instructed with information that will help the counselors to be more effective counselors in the future. I developed the material with this purpose in view, not deviating from it whatsoever. Therefore, this portion of the purpose statement was met. The next section will evaluate the individual goals, stemming directly from the desire to fulfill the overall project purpose cited in this section.

Evaluation of the Project’s Goals

The first goal of this project was to assess the RABCC counselors’ knowledge of different reading issues and their implications for biblical counseling prior to being exposed to the instruction. The assessment was conducted by providing the RABCC staff of nine biblical counselors with a pre-series survey. Similar to the previous project purpose evaluation, this goal consisted of two parts. First, all nine counselors had to complete the entire survey and submit it, which they did. I gave the pre-series survey to the students four weeks before the class began along with the specific instruction to make

sure the survey was completed prior to the beginning of the first class. Two weeks later I followed up this instruction with a group text reminder that the survey was due upon entering the first class. I was pleased that everyone completed and submitted it in time for the beginning of the first class. Therefore, the first part of this goal was accomplished.

The second part of the first goal was to analyze the surveys upon the completion of the class series, yielding a clearer picture of what the counselors knew, prior to the beginning of the first class, about reading difficulties and its implications for biblical counseling. Upon evaluating these two criteria, this first goal was successfully met because all of the RABCC counselors completed the survey and the data was analyzed upon the series completion.

The second goal of this project was to develop a twelve-week curriculum, which was to be used to increase the RABCC counselors' knowledge regarding reading issues and their implications for biblical counseling. The fundamental aspect of this goal was "to develop a twelve-week curriculum." The first section of chapter 4 showed how this was accomplished with many considerations, including the need to provide the class with a variety of teaching methodologies. Another aspect of this goal was the use of the curriculum in the twelve-week class series. The developed material was the only material used in the classroom throughout the entire series. Therefore, this goal was successfully attained when I completed development of the twelve-week curriculum and then implemented it into the entire class series.

I measured this goal through two certified biblical counselors who utilized a rubric to evaluate the biblical soundness and practicality of the material. The goal was to

be considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation indicators were at or above the sufficient levels on the rubric. Based on this criterion, the goal was successfully accomplished because none of the responses by either certified biblical counselor fell below the sufficient level. In fact, the two certified biblical counselors answered “excellent” on every question except for one counselor who gave a “sufficient” for only one question in lesson 1.² Therefore, the rubrics verified the biblical soundness of the developed material, validating my ability to exegete and apply the Scriptures in a manner that was accurate to the given text. Furthermore, I was pleased to see that high marks proved that the material was very practical because practicality was a major component to the entire project.

The third goal of this project was to increase knowledge by educating the nine RABCC counselors through the twelve-week curriculum developed through goal number 2. The education should have increased the RABCC counselors’ knowledge of how to overcome the difficulties in counseling those who have reading issues. This goal was to be measured by a post-series survey upon the completion of the twelve-week training course.³ The goal was considered successfully met when the t-tests for dependent samples revealed a positive, statistically significant difference between the pre and post-series scores. The conclusions of the pre and post-series surveys were accomplished through a comparison to each other in order to yield the necessary information to determine whether or not there was an increase of the counselors’ knowledge. The end of

²The completed rubrics can be made available upon request.

³See appendix 2.

chapter four disclosed that the survey analyses proved there was a strong increase in learning in all three areas of the counselors' knowledge.

Strengths of the Project

The first strength of the project was the biblical and theological rationale for helping those whose reading problems hinder the counseling process. I believe a strong biblical case was made that everyone is required to grow spiritually by using the Bible—whether by reading and/or hearing it. Biblically-rooted spiritual maturity occurs best within the context of the local church as strong believers build up weak believers for the purpose of advancing in their spiritual maturity (Rom 15:1-6). I also believe I motivated the biblical counselor to understand that there will be hard work required on his part to help those with reading problems (Col 1:24-29). Hard work will provide an opportunity for the counselor to sacrificially love the person who requires extra time and effort. I also made a biblical reasoning that, although someone might struggle to read, he is still required to learn from the Bible in order to glean the help he needs for the problem for which he came to counseling (Heb 4:12).

Two sources of evidence support my notion that the biblical and theological rationale was a strength of the project. The first evidence is provided through the results of the rubrics through which two certified biblical counselors evaluated the biblical, theological, and practical reliability of the material that I developed for the class series. The previous section of this chapter highlighted the results of the rubrics, which confirm that this was a significant strength of the project.

The second evidence source is that there was little disagreement among the students as to the interpretation or application of the material. Although this evidence

from omission is much more circumstantial than the empirical evidence of the rubrics, I believe it does hold some weight. The class consisted of a pastor of thirty years and several biblically astute laymen and laywomen. The class instruction relied heavily upon group discussion that allowed for opinions to develop, so there was plenty of opportunity for people to disagree with or ask to clarify the biblical exegesis. Instead of disagreement, the students absorbed the biblical data with a spirit of growing in knowledge and ability.

The project's being well organized in thought and being presented in a logical manner were other strengths. I always kept a basic three-point outline in my thinking as I developed the project. First, I needed to biblically prove the need for counselors to be trained in how to help those who struggle with reading issues. Second, I desired to teach counselors how to diagnose and treat those with spiritually based reading issues. Third, I wanted to teach counselors how to understand and be able to compensate for those with an actual reading disability. All of the material that was developed and delivered fulfilled these needs. I communicated this basic outline at the outset of most classes. I believe, because I was faithful to this general outline, that the students always knew how each week related to the overall purpose. They could easily follow where the class material had been, where it was on any given week, and where the material was headed.

Another strength of the material was that it went well beyond the realm of being strictly informational since there was a heavy emphasis on helping the counselors apply the material to their counseling ministry. In fact, as a general rule, biblical counseling is the application of biblical truth. The counselors must always seek to help the counselee apply what he learns from the Bible. A major means that helped the

counselors grasp this truth was through the weekly homework assignments they completed. Along with this method of learning came a great measure of creativity among the students. Given the nature of reading problems, the counselors will have to be creative in their dispensing of biblical truth by way of instruction and dispensing of homework.

The fact that the project broke new ground in identifying that some reading problems are unrelated to an actual physical impairment is another strength. The project term for these were, “spiritually based reading problems.” I devised three of them for the project: apathy, laziness, and unwillingness. I really desired for the counselor to become savvy enough to understand when someone is presenting a reading problem as one issue when it is really another. By taking the time to explore each one of these spiritually based reading problems, I believe I increased the counselors’ ability to tell the difference between different kinds of reading problems. Moreover, not only is the issue of spiritually based reading problems new territory for the biblical counselor, but so is the entire project topic. In other words, the problem of reading issues in biblical counseling is a fresh, much needed topic for study because it appears to have been missed until now. Therefore, this material can certainly benefit other counselors who have been previously unable to help those whose reading problems hinder the counseling process. In doing so, I believe I have opened up an opportunity for further study by the biblical counseling movement, thereby defining this as a strength of the project.

Weaknesses of the Project

One weakness of this project was its limitation of breadth of possible topics and material. The expanse of physical disabilities is wide. Certainly, there must be some

people with other physical disabilities such as cerebral palsy, down syndrome, autism dysgraphia (the inability to write), or those who suffered a traumatic brain injury of some kind, who could benefit from biblical counseling. A difficulty with this project was narrowing the field of potential limitations that a biblical counselor might come to see in his counselee, thus causing the spatial limitations of a project of this nature to manifest itself into an actual weakness.

The project was also weak in its inability to determine if the counselors' increase of knowledge actually translates into helping a counselee whose reading problems hinder the counseling process. Admittedly, the project purpose was limited to the actual instruction of information, but the project did not have a method to determine whether or not the increase of knowledge transitioned into successful implementation within the actual counseling room. After being exposed to all of the classroom instruction, one might ask, "Does all of this information actually benefit the counselee for his long-term spiritual help?" Like the previous weakness, this weakness is brought on by the limitations of the scope of the project. However, this weakness could be resolved by an ongoing evaluation with the RABCC staff as they meet with counsees who demonstrate a reading problem. Of course, this would have to occur beyond the boundaries of this specific project.

The selection of those who evaluated the biblical and theological reliability of the material was developed for the class series instruction was another weakness of this project. The two men were not only certified biblical counselors, but they were both relatively close friends of mine. I asked the men to be completely honest as they evaluated the material, but the generous scoring and comments indicated to me that there

may have been some bias due to our relationship. I would like to believe that the men honestly and objectively evaluated the material; however, one might levy a charge against me of possible cronyism. I stated earlier that the rubric results proved the biblical and theological material was a strength, which I believe still holds true even in the light of this concern.

What I Would Do Differently

The class series contained homework the students completed from one week to the next. The assignments were relegated to the last half of the class series and pertained to the creative ways to help someone learn from the Bible, even though he struggles to read. One thing I would do differently would be to give assignments throughout the entire class series, including the lessons pertaining to the biblical exegesis. Through this exercise, I would enable my students to have some prior understanding of the given text for each week's lesson. I would use an inductive approach to the weekly texts instead of just reading through the class notes and provide some study questions to guide their interpretation of the text as they studied the passage each week. I am certain this approach would have generated more discussion for the first few weeks of the class.

Something else that I would do differently is to choose one biblical counselor, whom I do not know well, to complete the evaluation rubric. As I stated in the weakness section, there could have been a measure of bias in the responses of the two certified biblical counselors that I used to complete the evaluation rubrics. Another consideration here is that, not only were the two men my friends, but we all attended the same seminary. All three of us are of the same theological persuasion. Perhaps this explains why the men wholeheartedly agreed with my biblical and theological exegesis.

Therefore, not only would asking someone else eliminate the potential for any bias answers, but it could give a perspective from someone who represents a different educational pedigree.

Aside from the entrance and exit surveys, I would include a shorter, general evaluation that would include questions about the strengths and weaknesses of the classroom format and instruction. The Christian Education Team of First Baptist Church in Randolph, New York, created an evaluation sheet for all of the adult Sunday School classes, which are to be filled out by the students during the last class of each Sunday School quarter. I did not have the students complete this form because they were completing the post-series survey. However, in hindsight, I understand these two evaluation tools have different purposes. I would include this document, allowing me to benefit from some general insights about ways to improve my teaching methods. A survey such as this would reveal some other areas that need improvement and add some other things to this list of things I would do differently in the future.

Theological Reflections

First of all, I am convinced that formal biblical counselors should be biblical theologians who are continually growing. However, they are not merely theologians who spend time in their ivory towers, pondering the complexities of a God who is full of mystery and wonder. Rather, they systematize thoughts about God and His word for the strict purpose of putting those thoughts into personal and counseling practice. This project convinced me more than ever that biblical counseling is theology in practice. I am sincerely amazed at the practicality of God's word and this project greatly reinforced this to me.

This project dealt with some very important, sinful tendencies of the human heart—tendencies that will keep someone in a pit of despair if they remain unrepentant about them. God, using His Word must bring about this repentance. Laziness, apathy, and rebellion are very serious manifestations of a doomed theological framework. Once the counselee corrects this errant theology with a healthy, biblical theology, he will begin to get the help for which he came to counseling. The series of classes helped the counselor to bring a sound, biblical theology to bear upon some troubling sins, which keep a counselee from receiving help for his problems. Again, I am so convinced of the symbiotic nature of theology and biblical counseling, I tailored the project to reflect this conviction.

The project also demonstrated that theology will help someone whose reading problem has nothing to do with his own sinful choices. Here, I learned that theology does not only convict someone of sin, but it provides real help and hope for those who are struggling with physical disabilities. The project class series proved God is desirous for everyone to benefit from a sound theological perspective, providing help for one's problems and enabling him to glorify God in the face of some significant physical limitations.

Personal Reflections

My own affections for God have greatly increased through this project. As I exegeted the texts for the biblical rationale, God convicted me of a very serious issue in my own life—rebellion. Although I am not rebellious about reading, I was humbled by the seriousness to which God takes rebellion in general. It occurred to me that each time I sin, I am rebelling against Him and I am guilty of the heart issue of a counselee who is

rebellious towards reading. I would ask my rebellious counselee to increase in his love for God in order to bring about change in his own life, therefore, I must be willing to do the same thing. I desire to increase in my love for Him and will continue to pray that He will extend grace to me as I do.

My love for the Bible has also increased through the process of developing and implementing the project. I really enjoyed having the class respond to the biblical texts we examined during the first half of the class series. Basic Bible passages came to life and intersected with the specific problems with which we dealt from week to week. I can honestly testify all of my formal biblical and theological training has been a blessing, but nothing has increased my love for the Bible as much as my role as a biblical counselor. Since this project has been about biblical counseling, it has also enhanced my love for the practicality of God's word.

The project has helped me to be a stronger leader in my pastoral position. Upon praying about what track to take in the Doctor of Ministry program, I was torn between the Biblical Counseling and Leadership programs. I chose the Biblical Counseling program and have been pleasantly surprised this project has trained me for effective leadership in my ministry. As I developed the project, I was forced to think through a rationale, purpose, goals, and context, which has already paid significant dividends in my church leadership roles. For example, our church has started three new initiatives since I formulated this project—a Sunday School teacher training seminar, a pastoral internship search, and a cancer care ministry. For all of these ministries, I took the leadership team through the same process I used to develop this project. The leadership of these ministries worked through a rationale, purpose, goals, and context for

each of these ministries. Under my leadership, these ministries have been well thought through and the leadership knows why these ministries are necessary and how our church will accomplish them. Moving forward, I will use this process in my leadership capacities for the foreseeable future.

The project enabled me to organize my thoughts and then be able to articulate them in a manner to be easily understood by others. This was especially revealing during the beginning phase of the project development. The Moodle interaction during the first Contextualized Writing Seminar was a very healthy and necessary exercise for me. I had an idea of what I wanted to accomplish with this project, but I was finding that others were not understanding it as I did. The feedback from the other students and administrators was extremely helpful in formulating my thoughts and being able to communicate those thoughts. Now that the project is behind me, I believe that I have been able to collect and communicate my thoughts in a more concise way, and I will continue to do so in the future.

Conclusion

My hope is simple. I hope that the material from this project serves those who desire to help people with life's problems, especially in the presence of reading issues. I want each person to be able to glean truth from God's word because it is able to deal with the issues of the soul like nothing else can (Heb 4:12). The church today needs counselors who are well-trained in using the Bible to help people through their problems. I trust this training material will enable some to do so with confidence and an ability, which did not exist previously.

APPENDIX 1

BIBLICAL COUNSELING SURVEY

The purpose of this survey was threefold. First, this survey assessed the counselors' current knowledge biblical principles related to reading issues. Second, this survey assessed the counselors' current knowledge of various reading issues and their implications for biblical counseling. Third, this survey assessed the counselors' current practice of helping those whose reading issues hinder the counseling process. The analysis follows the survey and provides a clear need for the project.

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify your current understanding of various reading issues and their implications for biblical counseling. This research is being conducted by Ken Schultz for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will answer questions before the project and you will answer the same questions at the conclusion of the project. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. Participation is strictly voluntary and you agree to participate in the complete project. By completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

Directions: Answer the following multiple-choice questions by placing a check next to the appropriate answer.

Part 1

1. What is your current counselor status with the RABCC?

- A. Lead Counselor
- B. Counselor in Training

2. How many hours of formal counseling training have you received?

- A. 0-15
- B. 15-30
- C. 30-45
- D. 45-60
- E. 60-75
- F. Over 75

3. How many hours of formal counseling training have you received that addressed counseling those whose reading issues hinder the process?

- A. 0-5
- B. 6-10
- C. 11-15
- D. Over 15

Proceed to Next Page

Part 2

Directions: Give your opinion using the following scale: SD = strongly disagree, D = disagree, DS = disagree somewhat, AS = agree somewhat, A = agree, SA = strongly agree; please circle the appropriate answer.

Section 1: Current understanding of biblical principles related to reading issues.

1. I understand well how 2 Timothy 3:15-17 relates to my responsibility to be well equipped to counsel those with reading problems.

SD D DS AS A SA

2. I understand well what the Bible teaches about how to administer grace to those with reading problems.

SD D DS AS A SA

3. I know what verses I would use to encourage someone who is physically unable to read.

SD D DS AS A SA

4. I understand well how the principles from Romans 15:1-6 relate to helping those with reading problems.

SD D DS AS A SA

5. I understand well how Hebrews 4:12 teaches that the Bible will expose the genuine reading problem.

SD D DS AS A SA

6. I understand well how Colossians 1:24-29 instructs me to counsel everyone, regardless of physical disabilities.

SD D DS AS A SA

7. I know specific Bible passages that relate to my mandate to impart biblical truth to others.

SD D DS AS A SA

Proceed to Next Page

8. I know what specific Bible passages I would use when laziness is a problem.
- SD D DS AS A SA
9. I know which specific Bible passages I would use when the counselee has not developed the habit of reading.
- SD D DS AS A SA
10. I know which specific Bible passages I would use to counsel someone who is apathetic towards reading.
- SD D DS AS A SA
11. I know which specific Bible passages I would use to counsel someone who is lazy about reading.
- SD D DS AS A SA
12. I know which specific Bible passages I would use to counsel someone who is rebellious towards reading.
- SD D DS AS A SA
13. I know which specific Bible verses I would use to encourage someone who has a physical disability other than reading.
- SD D DS AS A SA
14. I know six people in the Bible who had physical disabilities.
- SD D DS AS A SA

Section 2: Understanding Various Reading Issues and Their Implications for Biblical Counseling.

15. I know the current educational attainment statistics of Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, and Allegany Counties.
- SD D DS AS A SA
16. I know the current economic status of Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, and Allegany Counties.
- SD D DS AS A SA

Proceed to Next Page

17. I understand how the educational and economic climate of the surrounding area impacts biblical counseling.

SD D DS AS A SA

18. I have a comprehensive knowledge about how reading problems affect biblical counseling.

SD D DS AS A SA

19. I know the difference between a physical reading disability and non-physical reading problems.

SD D DS AS A SA

20. I understand what constitutes dyslexia.

SD D DS AS A SA

21. Apart from dyslexia, I can name the different kinds of physical reading disabilities.

SD D DS AS A SA

22. I understand various reading problems that are unrelated to physical disabilities.

SD D DS AS A SA

Section 3: Applied Counseling

23. I can confidently counsel adults (over 16) with *low* reading ability.

SD D DS AS A SA

24. I can adequately counsel adults (over 16) with *no* reading ability.

SD D DS AS A SA

25. I can confidently adjust counseling with children for age-appropriate reading levels.

SD D DS AS A SA

Proceed to Next Page

26. I know how to ask questions of the counselee to determine the specific reading issue that is hindering the counseling process.

SD D DS AS A SA

27. I know what resources are available for those with a physical reading disability.

SD D DS AS A SA

28. I know how to implement a wide range of diagrams, pictures, and illustrations in counseling.

SD D DS AS A SA

29. I incorporate a wide range of literature types into counseling (pamphlets, booklets, articles, etc.)

SD D DS AS A SA

APPENDIX 2

CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

The evaluation rubric on the following page was utilized by two certified biblical counselors who evaluated the biblical and practical soundness of the developed material. The curriculum was submitted to two certified biblical counselors prior to the training in order to verify the material's biblical soundness and practicality. The curriculum was not revised because ninety percent of the evaluation indicators were at or above the sufficient levels on the rubric for the first submission.

Counseling Curriculum Evaluation Tool					
Lesson One Evaluation					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The lesson is clearly relevant to the issue					
The material is biblical.					
The material is theologically consistent.					
The main idea of the lesson is clearly stated.					
The points of the lesson clearly support the main idea.					
The lesson contains points of practical application.					
The lesson is sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the material.					
Overall, the lesson is clear.					

APPENDIX 3
DIAGNOSING LAZINESS EXERCISE

1. Purpose of This Exercise.

The purpose of this exercise is to have the counselee keep track of how he spends his time in order to see if he has lazy tendencies, including laziness pertaining to Bible reading. This exercise is divided into two parts.

2. How to Use the First Part of This Exercise.

A. The counselee is to fill in the time chart for one week.

1) He must do so daily.

2) He will forget the little things if he puts off filling in the chart.

B. He must fill in as many details as possible of what he did during a given time slot, using additional space at the bottom of the sheet, if needed.

C. Upon returning the next week, the counselor helps the counselee to determine areas where time was spent well and where time was wasted.

D. The counselee should be able to see how much time he spent reading his Bible.

3. How to Use Part Two of This Exercise.

A. This portion provides a thorough analysis of the counselee's completed time chart.

B. The counselor begins by asking, "What did you learn from your time chart?" This will help the counselor gain a general understanding about whether or not the counselee came to some conclusions about his laziness on his own.

C. The counselee completes the Time Chart Analysis Survey.

1) Each question deals with a different area of life (ie. Relationship with God, spouse, job etc.).

- 2) Each question has five options ranging from “non-existent” to “very high.” These are based on the data provided by the completed time chart.
- 3) The counselee is to *circle* the choice that best reflects his time chart data. For example, if the chart indicates that he spent zero minutes reading his Bible, then he circles “non-existent.” If the time chart shows that he spent forty hours watching television, then he circles “very high.”
- 4) The counselee then *underlines* the option that he desires for each area of life. For example, for his non-existent Bible reading, he underlines “very high” because he desires to increase this. For his “very high” television viewing, he underlines “average” because he now desires to decrease this.
- 5) It is now up to the counselor to help the counselee change from being lazy in watching television to the discipline of reading his Bible.

Part 1: Time Chart

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
6 am							
7 am							
8 am							
9 am							
10 am							
11 am							
12pm							
1 pm							
2 pm							
3 pm							
4 pm							
5 pm							
6 pm							
7 pm							
8 pm							
9 pm							
10 pm							
11 pm							
12 am							
1 am							
2 am							
3 am							
4 am							
5 am							

PART 2: Time Chart Analysis Survey

1. Relationship With God

non-existent | extremely low | average | somewhat important | very high

2. Relationship With Spouse (if married), boyfriend/girlfriend:

non-existent | extremely low | average | somewhat important | very high

3. Relationship With Children (if a parent); brothers/sisters; dorm-mates

non-existent | extremely low | average | somewhat important | very high

4. Finances

non-existent | extremely low | average | somewhat important | very high

5. Health, Leisure, and Rest

non-existent | extremely low | average | somewhat important | very high

6. Job

non-existent | extremely low | average | somewhat important | very high

7. Ministry

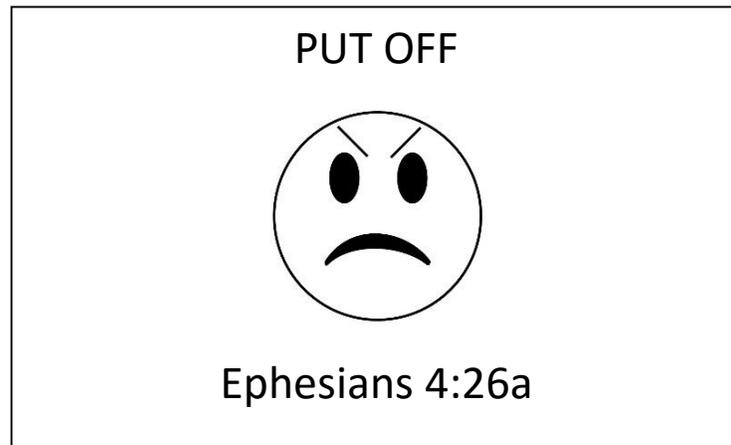
non-existent | extremely low | average | somewhat important | very high

8. School

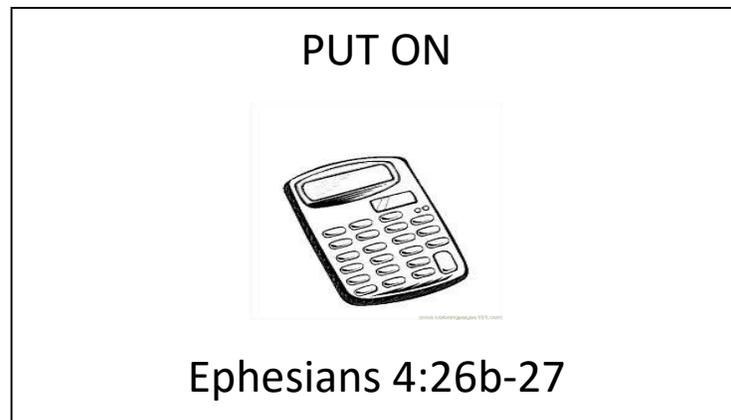
non-existent | extremely low | average | somewhat important | very high

APPENDIX 4
INDEX CARD LEARNING METHOD

1. Index card front side to illustrate “putting off” anger.



2. Index card reverse side to illustrate “putting on” problem solving.



APPENDIX 5
APATHY EXERCISE

1. The Purpose of This Exercise.

The biblical counselor will need to help the counselee bring about a conviction that he cannot remain apathetic about Bible reading.

2. How to Use This Exercise.

- A. The shaded inner circle represents someone's life (next page).
- B. The inner circle remains empty at the beginning of the exercise.
- C. The outer boxes consist of a variety of issues and concepts representing things that can be a part of someone's life.
- D. The counselee must carefully analyze the boxed issues and consider which ones are biblically *mandated* to be a part of my life. To identify this, the counselee can ask himself, "Am I sinning if omit this?"
- E. The counselee should determine at least one Bible verse that makes a given issue a mandate.
- F. The counselee draws an arrow from the box to the inner circle, upon determining which issues are mandated for him.

3. How to Analyze the Results of This Exercise.

- A. The key is to have the counselee realize that Bible reading is mandated for him (Josh 1:8; Psalm 119:18; 2 Tim 2:15; 3:16-17; Rom 15:4). The counselee should put this one into the circle.
- B. Chances are that the counselee did not move "playing golf" into the circle. However, he plays golf frequently, yet he does not read the Bible.
- C. Hopefully, the counselee sees that he needs to put reading the Bible into the realm of things that are important into his life, because the Bible has determined that for him. He can no longer remain apathetic about reading.
- D. Upon this realization, the counselor can now help him to develop a Bible reading schedule.



I cannot be apathetic about the things the Bible teaches are essential. Therefore, neglecting the things inside the circle is sinful, if they are biblically required.

Being apathetic about those things which are outside the circle is not sinful. These are matters of passion, preference, and availability.

If Spiritual Growth and Bible Reading are in the circle, then the counselee cannot be apathetic about them!

APPENDIX 6
LIST OF TECHNOLOGY-BASED
LEARNING TOOLS

1. Audio Books

Audio books are available on nearly every audio platform including CD, tablets, phones, digital listening devices and computer. Audio books are available for immediate download from many on-line sellers, including Christian Book Distributers, Kindle, Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Audible.com, Bookshare.com, Playaway.com, etc.

2. Local Libraries

Every library acts as a distribution point for the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. These libraries have many audio books for loan or online download from their website using the Overdrive or NetLibrary program.

3. Kurzweiledu.com

This comprehensive, subscription based teaching resource is available for educators, employers, and personal use. This computer based learning tool provides literacy support to help people to become independent readers.

4. Learningally.com

Learning Ally is an excellent resource that provides a comprehensive approach to the life of the reading disabled. Along with providing many audio books, it educates the reader to be able to become successful individuals.

5. Text-to-Speech (TTS) Computer Software

Natural Readers is a free Microsoft program that converts computer text into spoken words. The listener has the capability to change the voices and speed of reading. Other TTS software includes Ultra Hal, Read4Me, and FeyRecorder. Most of these are Mac compatible and can convert text files into audio files (MP3, WMA) that can be transferred onto mobile devices.

6. Reading Pen

A wide assortment of electronic pens exist that will convert text to spoken words. The reader scans the text with the pen and can hear the words through earbuds. Some pens require an extra computer software while others stand alone. The costs for these pens range from \$99 to \$300 depending on other options are included, such as a Thesaurus or Dictionary.

APPENDIX 7

DYSLEXIA PARAGRAPH

One gay, John and Bob went from work. "What would you like
to copy?, Bob asked John. "I don't know, John replied,
"What would you like to go?" It might be a
movie on TV, especially if we don't. "Wow,"
said John, "Poor war! Let's check
out the new film on the shelves. He started
reading." "Look," he said, "after lunch
read the paper!" "Great!" Bob said, "Let's
start with the news section."

Trying to read this passage, you will experience the kind of difficulty a dyslexic reader faces when deciphering normal typeface (Almeida).

from p. 98, in: Capossela, T.L. (1998). The Harcourt Brace Guide to Peer Tutoring. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace & Company.

APPENDIX 8
TOPICAL SONG LIST

(H) following the title denotes a Hymn.

Affliction/Trials

Casting Crowns—"I will Praise You in This Storm"

Twila Paris—"God is In Control"

Laura Story—"Blessings"

Addiction

Casting Crowns—"My Own Worst Enemy"

Don Moen—"God Will Make A Way"

James Rowe—"Love Lifted Me" (H)

Anger

Geoff Bullock—"The Power of Your Love"

Steven Curtis Chapman—"Be Still and Know"

Jeremy H. Rankin—"Tell It To Jesus" (H)

Anxiety, worry, fear

Jonny Diaz—"Breathe"

Casting Crowns—"Fear"

David Crowder—"Only You"

Meredith Andrews—"Not For A Moment"

Sovereign Grace—"Now Why This Fear"

Fernando Ortega—"I Will Praise Him Still"

Bitterness

Adelaide A. Pollard—"Have Thine Own Way, Lord" (H)

Katherine von Schlegel—"Be Still My Soul" (H)

Changing (General spiritual growth)

Sara Groves—"Painting Pictures of Egypt"

James Nicholson—"Whiter Than Snow" (H)

Judson W. Van DeVenter—"I Surrender All" (H)

Comfort/Death

Mrs. C. D. Martin—"His Eye Is on the Sparrow" (H)

John Moore—"Burdens Are Lifted At Calvary" (H)

Mark Schultz—"In the Valley"

Depression

Casting Crowns—"Jesus, Hold Me Now"

Joseph H. Gilmore—"He Leadeth Me" (H)

Elisha A. Hoffman—"Leaning on the Everlasting Arms" (H)

Ruth Caye Jones—"In Times Like These"

Helen H. Lemmel—"Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus" (H)

Mandisa—"You're An Overcomer"

Forgiveness

Mercy Me—"Greater"

Phillips, Craig, and Dean—"Because I'm Forgiven"

Matthew West—"Forgiveness"

Hope

Lauren Daigle—"O Lord"

Natalie Grant—"In Better Hands Now"

Tamela Mann—"Take me to the King"

Shawn McDonald—"Rise"

Third Day—"There's A Light At the End of This Tunnel"

Marriage Issues

Addison Road—“Hope Now”
Casting Crowns—“Broken Together”
Mike’s Chair—“Worth Dying For”
John Moore—“Burdens Are Lifted At Calvary” (H)

Lust

Casting Crowns—“Slow Fade”
Al Green—“Yield Not Into Temptation”
Promise Keepers—“Purify My Heart”
Edwin Orr—“Cleanse Me” (H)

Obedience

Eugene Bartlett—“Victory in Jesus” (H)
Palmer Hartsough—“I Am Resolved” (H)
John H. Sammis—“Trust and Obey” (H)
Matthew West—“Motions”

Peace

Chris Rice—“Beauty Form The Pain”
Horatio Spafford—“It Is Well With My Soul” (H)
Phil Wickham—“Safe”

Pride

Larnelle Harris—“Were it Not for Grace”
Dara Maclean—“Suitcases”
Jaci Valasquez—“On My Knees”

Salvation

Fanny Crosby—“Blessed Assurance” (H)
Elvina M. Hall—“Jesus Paid It All” (H)
Mercy Me—“Flawless”
John Newton—“Amazing Grace” (H)

Salvation (cont.)

Big Daddy Weave—"I Am Redeemed" (H)

Self-Pity

Casting Crowns—"Jesus, Friend of Sinners" (H)

Annie S. Hawks—"I Need Thee Every Hour" (H)

Trust

Thomas Chisholm—"Great Is Thy Faithfulness" (H)

Augustus M. Toplady—"Rock of Ages" (H)

Matthew West—"Courageous"

APPENDIX 9
T-TEST STATISTICAL DATA

Table A1. *t*-test statistical data

t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means		
	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	93.11111111	158.1111111
Variance	544.1111111	321.6111111
Observations	9	9
Pearson Correlation	0.423385995	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	8	
t Stat	-8.622074922	
P(T<=t) one-tail	1.2687E-05	
t Critical one-tail	1.859548033	
P(T<=t) two-tail	2.5374E-05	
t Critical two-tail	2.306004133	

APPENDIX 10
SURVEY SCORES

Table A2. survey scores

Person	Combined Pre-Series Scores	Combined Post-Series Scores	Difference
1	93	150	57
2	92	157	65
3	64	180	116
4	81	140	59
5	123	153	20
6	121	175	54
7	98	163	65
8	110	178	68
9	56	127	71
Ave.	93.11	158.11	63.88

APPENDIX 11

PRE-TEST INDIVIDUAL RESULTS

Table A3. pre-test individual results

Pre-test Individual Results													
		Person											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		Ave.	
Section 1: Current understanding of biblical principles related to biblical counseling													
Question Number	1	5	5	5	3	6	6	5	5	6		5.11	
	2	2	5	2	2	6	5	4	5	6		4.11	
	3	1	4	1	1	4	4	1	3	1		2.22	
	4	4	5	2	2	6	5	4	5	4		4.11	
	5	4	5	2	2	4	5	4	5	4		3.89	
	6	4	5	1	3	6	5	4	5	6		4.33	
	7	2	4	2	3	4	6	4	5	6		4	
	8	2	5	2	4	4	6	1	5	1		3.33	
	9	2	2	2	3	4	6	1	2	1		2.56	
	10	2	2	2	3	3	6	1	4	1		2.67	
	11	2	2	2	3	3	5	1	4	1		2.56	
	12	2	2	2	3	3	5	1	4	1		2.56	
	13	2	3	2	3	3	6	1	4	1		2.78	
	14	2	5	2	3	5	4	2	4	1		3.11	
Section 2: Understanding of various reading issues and their implications for biblical counseling													
	15	4	2	2	1	2	4	1	1	1		2	
	16	5	4	2	3	2	4	3	3	1		3	
	17	3	2	2	3	5	5	2	4	1		3	
	18	2	4	2	3	5	3	4	3	1		3	
	19	4	2	4	2	5	3	4	4	1		3.22	
	20	4	2	3	4	5	3	4	2	1		3.11	
	21	2	1	2	1	3	2	4	1	1		1.89	
	22	2	2	3	2	5	2	4	3	1		2.67	

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Pre-test Individual Results												
				Person								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		Ave.
Section 3: Understanding of how to apply these principles in the counseling room												
	23	6	4	2	1	3	3	5	3	1		3.11
	24	5	3	1	1	3	3	5	1	1		2.56
	25	5	4	2	4	5	4	5	3	1		3.67
	26	2	1	1	1	4	2	4	4	1		2.22
	27	3	2	2	1	2	1	3	3	1		2
	28	2	2	4	3	4	3	5	4	1		3.11
	29	4	1	2	4	5	4	5	4	1		3.33
	30	4	2	1	4	4	3	2	4	1		2.78

APPENDIX 12

POST-TEST INDIVIDUAL RESULTS

Table A4. post-test individual results

Post-test Individual Results													
		Person											
Question Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9				Ave
Section 1: Current understanding of biblical principles related to biblical counseling													
1	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6			5.89
2	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6			5.89
3	5	6	6	4	5	6	5	6	3				5.11
4	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	4				5.67
5	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5				5.78
6	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6				5.78
7	5	5	6	5	5	6	5	6	6				5.44
8	5	6	6	5	5	6	5	6	3				5.22
9	5	5	6	5	5	6	5	6	4				5.22
10	5	5	6	4	5	6	5	6	6				5.33
11	5	5	6	5	5	6	5	6	5				5.33
12	5	5	6	5	5	6	5	6	5				5.33
13	5	5	6	6	5	5	5	6	6				5.44
14	5	6	6	6	4	6	5	6	2				5.11
Section 2: Understanding of various reading issues and their implications for biblical counseling													
15	5	6	6	2	4	6	5	6	2				4.67
16	5	6	6	4	5	6	5	6	5				5.33
17	5	6	6	5	5	6	5	6	4				5.33
18	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	4				5.67
19	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5				5.78
20	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	3				5.44
21	5	5	6	5	4	6	5	6	3				5
22	5	5	6	5	6	6	6	5	4				5.33

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	Post-test Individual Results																				
					Person																
	Question Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9									Ave		

Section 3: Understanding of how to apply these principles in the counseling room														
	23	5	5	6	5	4	5	5	5	4				4.89
	24	5	4	6	3	4	5	6	6	4				4.78
	25	5	5	6	4	5	5	6	6	4				5.11
	26	5	5	6	3	4	5	5	6	6				5
	27	5	5	6	5	5	6	5	6	4				5.22
	28	5	5	6	4	5	6	6	6	4				5.22
	29	5	5	6	4	5	6	6	6	4				5.22
	30	5	6	6	4	5	6	5	6	4				5.22

APPENDIX 13
INDIVIDUAL QUESTION
COMPARATIVE RESULTS

Table A5. individual question comparative results

Comparative Individual Results						
		Pre Series	Average	Post Series	Average	Difference
Section 1	1		5.11		5.89	0.77
	2		4.11		5.89	1.77
	3		2.22		5.11	2.89
Question Number	4		4.11		5.67	1.55
	5		3.89		5.78	1.89
	6		4.33		5.78	1.44
	7		4		5.44	1.44
	8		3.33		5.22	1.22
	9		2.56		5.22	2.67
	10		2.67		5.33	2.67
	11		2.56		5.33	2.78
	12		2.56		5.33	2.78
	13		2.78		5.44	2.67
	14		3.11		5.11	2
Section 2	15		2		4.67	2.66
	16		3		5.33	2.33
	17		3		5.33	2.33
	18		3		5.67	2.66
	19		3.22		5.78	2.55
	20		3.11		5.44	2.33
	21		1.89		5	3.12
	22		2.67		5.33	2.67
	23		3.11		4.89	1.77
Section 3	24		2.56		4.78	2.22
	25		3.67		5.11	1.45
	26		2.22		5	2.78
	27		2		5.22	3.22
	28		3.11		5.22	2.11
	29		3.33		5.22	1.89
	30		2.78		5.22	2.45

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ABSTRACT

EDUCATING THE COUNSELORS OF THE RANDOLPH AREA BIBLICAL COUNSELING CENTER, RANDOLPH, NEW YORK, TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE COUNSELORS TO THOSE WITH READING ISSUES

Kenneth John Schultz, D.Min.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Stuart W. Scott

This project educates biblical counselors to be more effective counselors by overcoming difficulties in counseling those who have various reading issues.

Chapter 1 introduces the project by describing the purpose, goals, rationale, definitions, limitations, delimitations, and research methodology for the project. This chapter examines the ministry context, history, and community demographic for the Randolph Area Biblical Counseling Center.

Chapter 2 provides the biblical and theological rationale for counseling those whose reading problems hinder the process.

Chapter 3 presents the theoretical and practical issues related to counseling those whose reading problems hinder the process.

Chapter 4 explains how the project was implemented, including training provided to leaders, research instruments for measuring success, and a description of the activities undertaken during the fifteen-week project period.

Chapter 5 contains an overall evaluation and analysis of the project along with theological and personal reflections.

VITA

Kenneth John Schultz

EDUCATIONAL

Diploma, Pembroke High School, Corfu, New York, 1988
A.S., Genesee Community College, Batavia, New York, 1991
B.S., Baptist Bible College, Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania, 2005
M.Div., Baptist Bible Seminary, Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania, 2009

MINISTERIAL

Pastor of Youth, Grace Baptist Church, Batavia, New York, 2002-2004
Intern Pastor, Heritage Baptist Church, Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania, 2008-
2009
Lead Pastor, First Baptist Church, Randolph, New York, 2009-
Executive Director, Randolph Area Biblical Counseling Center, Randolph,
New York, 2012-

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Association of Certified Biblical Counselors