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EQUIPPING MEMBERS FOR BIBLICAL COUNSELING
MINISTRY AT ROCK HILL BAPTIST CHURCH
IN GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

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APPROVAL SHEET

EQUIPPING MEMBERS FOR BIBLICAL COUNSELING
MINISTRY AT ROCK HILL BAPTIST CHURCH
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I dedicate this project to my wife, Shirlene Mobley Davis, M.D., for consistent support of my work, for tolerating my estrangement during my study times, and for her patience during my health challenges that prolonged the process of completing this work.

I also dedicate this project to the members of Rock Hill Baptist Church #1, whose prayerful support and participation in the training and implementation of this biblical counseling ministry made this project possible.

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PREFACE

By the grace of God, whose Spirit and Word are power and light to me, the dream of seeing this project through has been realized. This project marks a milestone along a path that has brought me from a preliminary awareness of biblical counseling as a discipline of ministry to where it has become my core endeavor. The process included some false starts, set-backs, and detours. However, the person that God has used biblical counseling to help is now able to admit complicity in the delays of the journey.

God's Word has remained the source of my direction as exemplified in the text of my scriptural motto: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor 10:31). The blessing of sharing through biblical counseling with others what I have benefitted from has been a gratifying and God-honoring experience. I thank God for the people who have helped make me a better servant.

First, God's Word was central to the philosophies and belief system of those who shaped my early life. I thank God for my parents, Reverend John Lee Davis and Ezeta Tisdale Davis, who, though not well educated, inspired and urged me to pursue theological education. They were simple, hard-working people who strictly adhered to the tenets of Scripture that emphasize daily Bible reading, regular prayers, and faithful church attendance. I am grateful to God for the Reverend Dr. Harvey Raymond Smith, who was both a dear friend to my parents and my mentor in ministry. His example of personal ministry to families and individuals modeled biblical counseling and discipleship for me long before I gained knowledge of the formal concepts.

Second, God's Spirit protected and led me during the years and challenges of balancing ministry and seminary. God revealed to me the seduction of acceptance and security of playing the dangerous game of the minister who serves as an entertainer for

personal gain. The Holy Spirit led me into the path of godly and supportive ministers, including Dr. Lincoln Bingham, Rev. Thomas Baker, Rev. Kevin Nelson, and Dr. John Pray. These men listened, consoled, mentored, and provided ministry opportunities to assist me in spiritual and practical ways. My pastor and good friend, Dr. Howard Foster, has offered personal support and encouragement at every level of this project. I am also grateful to Rev. W. James Choice, pastor of Rock Hill Baptist Church. He shared the vision of the benefit of this project and allowed me to work with his congregation.

Third, I will always be grateful to my doctoral supervisor, Dr. Stuart W. Scott, Associate Professor of Biblical Counseling, at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. I was privileged to have Dr. Scott as my instructor for three of my doctoral seminars. As my professor and faculty supervisor, he spent many hours academically nurturing me and mentoring me in the knowledge and skill of biblical counseling. He inspired my zeal for biblical counseling. He also urged me to work hard at becoming a writer. God allowed me to undergo surgery of the heart under the masterful hand of Dr. Scott. He cared enough to confront me about the pride and laziness that stymied the development of my gifts. Only a loving God could provide so richly and completely.

Finally, God has blessed me with a godly wife and good friend. My loving wife, Shirlene Mobley Davis, M.D., has sacrificed comforts, tolerated my many absences from home for work and school, and serves with me in ministry.

Don Davis

Greenville, South Carolina

December 2018

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this project was to develop and implement a biblical counseling ministry at Rock Hill Baptist Church, in Greenville, South Carolina. The congregation has been in continuous existence for more than 130 years and endeavors to take action at this point in their history to remain a viable and effective gospel-promoting and disciple-making assembly of believers. The congregation resolved to employ the biblical principles and techniques of biblical counseling as a means to achieve this end.

Context

Rock Hill Baptist Church (RHBC) was operating without biblical counseling support for its 120-member congregation. The church recently called a bi-vocational pastor whose schedule restrained him from supporting this type of ministry at a level adequate to the needs of the congregation. Furthermore, the church did not have members trained in biblical counseling. Based on observations that revealed pressing needs within the congregation, the pastor and his leadership team recognized the need for a biblical counseling ministry.

Biblical counseling inimitably addresses the spiritual needs of believers in Jesus Christ. As members of a local church, Christians adopt and inherit customs and practices as a unique group of people. Set apart by their shared beliefs, the Bible guides and maintains the moral protocols of Christians.¹ The Bible stipulates and prescribes peer to peer ethical admonitions to address and correct behaviors that mitigate the process of sanctification (1 Pet 2:9-11). The biblical counseling process augments the process of

¹ Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 161.

sanctification. Whether biblical counseling is carried out by the pastor of a congregation or some other trained and spirit-led individual, the recipient sister or brother is helped in spiritual and practical ways.

The pastor, the deacons, and other church leaders of RHBC sought solutions to help mitigate the problem of the lack of counseling skill within the congregation. The consensus of the deacons and other church leaders was that improving the competency of church members to conduct biblical counseling with each other would be an excellent means to support the spiritual health of the church. They investigated the use of outside consultants to train church leaders on many of the skills involved in biblical counseling. Another option under consideration was the engagement of an associate minister with an educational background in biblical counseling to provide leadership training to various ministries within the church. Both of these options were considered appropriate by the church leaders as they sought to be proactive in the task of supporting struggling members.

The pastor assessed a general malaise among members of the congregation presumed to have resulted from reactions from past disruptions in the church. These experiences (e.g., church splits, leadership infidelity, litigation against the church by a former pastor, etc.) resulted in varying degrees of disunity within the membership and left many with feelings of distrust toward subsequent leaders. Older church members frequently reminisced about past times when the congregation enjoyed greater harmony and more “openness.” One elderly member lamented, “If we don’t do something soon, we’re just going to have a few old people like me left. We have to be in touch with each other like the Bible teaches.” Regarding interrelationships within the church body, one member stated, “We are a loving church, we have just forgotten how to talk with one another.” In a casual survey, the general response to the question of whether a focus on biblical counseling in the congregation would be beneficial was unanimously favorable. These issues all relate, in some manner, to interpersonal communication between Christians within a church environment.

Members of RHBC frequently expressed spiritual concerns that would typically be topics for biblical counseling, but the concerns went unaddressed. Prayer requests were the most consistent expressions of ministry opportunities (i.e., concerns of despair, anguish, fear, grief, etc.). These requests were commonly shared spontaneously during the call to discipleship and prayer portion of the Sunday morning worship services. During this portion of the service, the presiding minister invited the congregation for an altar call and allowed individuals to express prayer requests, needs, or concerns within the church family. Responses from the congregation range from the tearful sharing of grief over losses of loved ones to announcements of concerns over members' illnesses, pending medical procedures, or other life challenges. There was no structure in place for follow-up on these matters, nor was there anyone assigned to offer support to these individuals. The custom of acknowledging and discussing each other's' problems without having direct plans of addressing them resulted in poor communications, lack of trust and accountability, diminished expressions of Christian love, and limitation of spiritual growth.

A second method of expressing personal concerns at RHBC was through the publication of a sick and shut-in list in the weekly church bulletin. The list provided names of church members and their relatives and friends who were experiencing adverse circumstances. The prayer list was rarely mentioned during worship services. It primarily served to provide formal acknowledgment of the names of sick and shut-in individuals to the members who are present and receive a copy of the bulletin. There was no structure in place to follow-up with the individuals who were mentioned in the sick and shut-in lists. Ministry to hurt people did not occur because of the lack of ministry structure and training on how to respond to the needs of people on the prayer list.

Lastly, personal concerns were randomly relayed about one person to another without awareness or intention of intervening on the person's behalf. A typical scenario involved a member hospitalized with a debilitating, spiritually distressing illness. Another church member visited him or her and reported the sick person's condition to others in

the church. Such reporting was common after a Sunday worship service when someone inquired about the sick person's absence or well-being. The well-meaning third party may have already been aware of the hospitalized person's condition or have concerns about them from previous interactions. Generally, however, the spiritual need of the hospitalized individual went unmet, and she or he was unaware that their condition had been discussed. In cases like this, the hospitalized person received no direct benefit from either party's wisdom, empathy, or care.

These examples of unmet spiritual need and missed opportunities for ministry piqued the concern of church leaders. They reviewed a variety of plans that would improve the way they supported the spiritual needs members. Most importantly, the deacons and other church leaders deliberately prayed about the actions they would take in responding to matters of practical and spiritual concern of the church body.

Rationale

The Word of God addresses the conditions noted in the context of this project. Whether the issues at hand are missed opportunities for ministry for supporting the sanctification of fellow believers, a lack of structure for peer-to-peer ministry, or disunity from distrust and ineffective communications, the Word of God is the remedy. The Christian trained in basic biblical counseling skills will take the initiative to present themselves as available resources to their fellow members. Proper application of God's instruction enables Christian church members to effectively engage with one another after having first engaged with God. The work of biblical counseling also helps to enable discipling and the building of cohesiveness in a church body. Introducing the concepts of biblical counseling to RHBC provided a core group of trained individuals equipped to effectively use God's Word in spiritually supporting other church members, fostering Christ-likeness and glorifying God.

Spiritually mature Christians with training in biblical counseling are great assets to fellow church members. Biblical counseling training enables believers to guide

others beyond a shallow understanding of the Word to an ability to assess and support the real needs of others with careful application of the Word. In many cases, spiritual distress is evidence that matters of church discipline are not being addressed. In other situations, church members experiencing grief and spiritual pain are only provided temporary consolation. Sadly, unchecked manifestations of bewilderment and uncertainty often turn into disenchantment with the church. Too often, the suffering church member's church attendance ends when the disenchanted brother or sister feels isolated, helpless, or spiritually frustrated.² The guided intervention of a trained fellow church member can serve individuals directly. Trained biblical counselors can augment the services of the pastor or other designated ministry support persons.

The counseling ministry satisfied a number of practical and spiritual needs at RHBC. Biblical counseling involves the efforts of one Christian humbly and compassionately coming alongside another Christian by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the wisdom of the Holy Word, and prayer.³ Its goals include guiding others to realize the need for a vital relationship with Jesus that glorifies Him, assisting them to apply God's truth to their hearts and their situations in true worship of God, and encompassing the elements of biblical change toward sanctification in and through the local church (Eph 4:16).⁴ Having a basic understanding of the tenets of biblical counseling is fundamental to developing an appreciation of the extent to which training in and application of biblical counseling techniques can help meet the various spiritual challenges faced by church members.

² Rob Green and Steve Viars, "The Biblical Counseling Ministry of the Local Church," in *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling: Changing Lives with God's Changeless Truth*, ed. James MacDonald, Bob Kellemen, and Steve Viars (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2013), 236.

³ Robert W. Kellemen, *Scripture and Counseling: God's Word for Life in a Broken World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 400-401.

⁴ Stuart Scott, "Biblical Discipleship/Counseling" (class lecture, 80551—*Introduction to Biblical Counseling*, Summer 2013).

The biblical counseling training course stressed reliance on God's Word for everything involving the Christian life. It was designed to train believers to develop habits that would guide them into responding like the Bereans (diligently and tirelessly searching the Scriptures) in every matter of issue or concern (Acts 17:11). Whether the matter of discussion involved family disruption, marriage relations, grief, or despair, the biblical counseling class helped foster biblical approaches to dealing with them. The training material was designed to guide the learner through the obstacles of Christian life and provide basic skills in helping others do the same.

The training used four basic concepts as central themes to relate scriptural-based concepts for counseling and discipleship: love, know, speak, and do. It began with the counselor trainee learning about themselves in relation to Scripture with a focus on understanding the heart and the role it plays in being obedient to God's will. Sharing in discussions on this subject brought to light many of the ways selfish motives and selfish goals detract from God-centered worship and goals. Correspondingly, behaviors that obstructed the biblical goals of the church engaged by the trainees and other members were spotlighted in contrast to the truth. An entire training unit helped prepare participants to model Jesus in counseling and discipleship. Other training units dealt with relationship building, getting to know people, speaking the truth in love, and applying the change in everyday life. This biblical knowledge, through the work of the Holy Spirit, enabled the participants to become sensitized to the needs of their fellow members and helped them to begin to develop skills to confront problems and issues within the church as a Spirit-led, Bible-focused group of Christians.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip members of RHBC in Greenville, South Carolina, to engage in a biblical counseling ministry within the church body for greater unity and reliance on God's Word.

Goals

Four goals determined the completion of this project. Each goal progressively helped to achieve the goal of equipping.

1. The first goal of this project was to develop a twelve-week biblical counseling course.
2. The second goal was to assess the level of knowledge and awareness of biblical counseling among members of RHBC recruited to participate in the course.
3. The third goal was to implement the curriculum and equip biblical counselors in a small classroom setting.
4. The fourth goal was to develop a ministry plan for the routine practical application of biblical counseling in each participants' sphere of influence within the church body.

Definitive research methodology measured when the four goals were accomplished. A description of the research methodology and the instruments for measuring the success of the stated goals are provided next.

Research Methodology

This project was designed to increase church members' knowledge of biblical counseling and apprise participants of their responsibility to support other Christians in the process of sanctification by making themselves prepared and available to counsel each other as opportunity and needs arise. As stated, the success of this project was determined by four goals. In the first four weeks of the project, counseling material was developed for the counseling class. The ministry project team evaluated the counseling material by means of a rubric in order to ensure the subject matter was sufficiently covered, and multiple teaching methods were employed, along with being biblically faithful and contextually usable. This team consisted of men and women who were engaged in the teaching of the Bible and faithful members of an evangelical church.

The team employed a survey that gauged the quality of the curriculum in providing a baseline of understanding of the biblical bases, functions, and goals of biblical counseling. The survey was measured by tallying the numerical scores of the responses and determining whether the average score met the level of sufficiency of at

least 90 percent. The development of the course was deemed successful, and the project proceeded.

Recruitment for the counseling class, “An Introduction to Biblical Counseling,” took place in weeks 5 through 7. Relative sermons, verbal announcements, and written announcements were provided to church service attendees. The ministry project team evaluated the recruiting efforts by determining whether the number of signed commitment sheets reached twelve or higher.

The ministry project team evaluated the effectiveness of the twelve-week biblical counseling class. This counseling class was designed to equip participants with spiritual and practical disciplines to effectively engage in biblical counseling. At the beginning and conclusion of the twelve-week class, a survey was given to record responses to questions designed to measure knowledge of the basic tenets of biblical counseling. A critical aspect of the project measured whether there was a positive change in the knowledge of what the Bible teaches about biblical counseling (see appendix 3). A *t*-test for dependent samples measured any statistically significant difference the counseling class made within the group.⁵

The achievement of four goals resulted in the accomplishment of this project. The first goal of this project was to develop a twelve-week biblical counseling course. The course was designed to enhance the effectiveness of believers in counseling other believers through the instruction of relevant biblical and practical disciplines. The review phase of the project determined how well the content of the course provided the essential biblical knowledge and practical skills to support the project by presenting information that was clear, pertinent to the congregation’s needs, and relevant to the subject of biblical counseling. This goal was measured by the ministry project team who used a

⁵ All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by the Southern Baptist Theological Research Ethics Committee prior to the use in the ministry project.

rubric to evaluate the scope and sequence, biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, and contextual usability of the biblical counseling model (see appendix 1). This goal was deemed successful when 90 percent of the rubric indicators are marked sufficient or above.

The second goal of this project was to recruit at least twelve church members who desired to participate in the twelve-week, introductory biblical counseling course. Recruitment took place in four ways. First, oral announcements were made by the church clerk during the morning worship services for three weeks prior to the beginning of the class. Second, a general announcement was made through the church bulletin three weeks before class begins. Third, a flyer describing the course with details on the location of the course, dates, and times was created and made available to the members of the church. Fourth, I invited church members to participate in the class. This goal was deemed successful when twelve people signed commitment statements affirming their willingness to participate in the course and make themselves available to church members for counseling by mutual consent (see appendix 2).

The third goal of this project was to conduct the twelve-week biblical counseling class based on the results of the course review process. The class was taught on Sunday evenings for twelve consecutive weeks at RHBC. This goal was measured by the use of a pre- and post-class questionnaire (see appendix 3). Class members were asked to complete a pre-class questionnaire that tested their knowledge and use of the biblical and practical disciplines that were covered in class. The same questionnaire was given at the end of the last class session to determine if knowledge and skill usage had increased. Success for this goal was deemed accomplished when the *t*-test for dependent samples statistically demonstrated a statistically significant positive difference between the pre- and post-survey scores.

The fourth goal was to develop a ministry plan for the routine practical application of biblical counseling in each participant's sphere of influence within the

church body. The project was authorized with the support of the previous pastor whose pastoral experience and vision held high regard for family ministry. The newly trained course participants were provided a public award of course completion certificates and the public charge of the duty to serve their fellow congregants.

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

Specific terms used in this project have various meanings depending on the experience, academic, and religious background of the readers. The following terms are defined to explain how they are used throughout this paper and to enhance a greater appreciation of the project focus:

Biblical counseling. Biblical counseling involves the efforts of one Christian humbly and compassionately coming alongside another Christian and lending words of encouragement, admonition, and help. The goals of *biblical counseling* include (1) guiding others to realize the need for a vital relationship with Jesus that glorifies Him; (2) assisting them to apply God’s truth to their hearts and situations in true worship of God; and (3) encompassing all the elements of biblical change toward sanctification in and through the local church, as referenced in Ephesians 4:16.

Discipling/discipleship. Discipling/Discipleship refers to the process of passing on the truths of God’s Word that one has learned and finds applicable to other believers, as referenced in 2 Timothy 2:2.⁶ Biblical counseling is not a distinct entity but is a part of discipleship that has progressed to a level of specific application of biblical principles to more specific problems in the life of the believer.

Project support team. A project support team is a group of people including a Bible educator, an instructor-training professional, and a Bible college professor who assisted in the tasks of the development and evaluation of the biblical counseling course,

⁶ John MacArthur and Wayne Mack, eds., “Frequently Asked Questions about Biblical Counseling,” in *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically*, ed. John MacArthur (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 250.

as well as teaching and directing the ministry project.

The primary limitation for this project was the minimum twelve-week term allotted for completion of the biblical counseling class. This twelve-week term was exclusive of the time required for curriculum development, pre- and post-assessment, and the development of a ministry plan. The biblical counseling class used during the ministry project was delimited to adult, self-professing Christian members of RHBC who expressed a commitment to be available to other members of RHBC for the purpose of counseling by mutual agreement of each party. Priority for participation was given to deacons and other ministry leaders whose guidance and frequency of personal involvement with other church members ensure the most significant impact of the training for the church body-at-large.

Conclusion

RHBC has developed an active cadre of members equipped for ministry through biblical counseling. The members of the at-large congregation will, in time, attain the aforementioned benefits and attributes. Chief among these attributes that the pastor and membership desire would be a higher level of unity in the church body and greater reliance on Scripture for support by fellow members. Consequently, the process of sanctification for so many in the congregation would be better facilitated by the appropriate application of the encouraging and strengthening power of God's Word.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL JUSTIFICATION FOR A BIBLICAL COUNSELING MINISTRY

The church is a body of believers called out by God from the world to live as his people under the authority of Jesus Christ (Eph 1:22-23). Mark E. Dever exhorts, “The church should be regarded as important to Christians because of its importance to Christ. Christ founded the church (Matt 16:18).”¹ The local church is the gathering place for believers to participate in discipleship and fellowship, and to pray, learn biblical doctrine, and observe the ordinances (Acts 2:42). Each of these activities implies biblical counseling in some capacity. God’s two-fold purpose for the church is to bring each member to spiritual maturity (Eph 4:13) and spread the love of Christ through the gospel message to unbelievers around the world (Matt 28:18-20).

The Bible informs believers about God’s purposes. It also describes the duties and responsibilities of individuals who make up the church. In the Scriptures, individuals are called and gifted to “encourage one another and build up one another” (1 Thess 5:11). Equipping believers for biblical counseling ministry is an effective means of ensuring peer to peer support of believers. Properly trained biblical counselors fulfill God’s command to disciple other believers through godly conduct and appropriately sharing knowledge of the Word of God.

Scripture gives the church the duty to teach biblical doctrine. The Book of Acts and the Epistles are the primary areas of the Bible which emphasize the roles of believers in teaching and helping each other grow. A focused scriptural exposition enlightens the

¹ Mark E. Dever, “The Church,” in *A Theology for the Church*, ed. Daniel L. Akin, Bruce Riley Ashford, and Kenneth Keathley, rev. ed. (Nashville: B & H, 2014), 603.

local church on its responsibility to advance this interpersonal ministry. Only the Body of Christ can equip believers for spiritual growth and maturity. This chapter provides a biblical foundation and theological support for biblical counseling ministry.

Second Timothy 3:16-17

In his epistles to Timothy, the apostle Paul provided the foundations of biblical counseling. His words instruct on church organization, church doctrine, and the life of Christians in congregations. His profound advocacy of exhorting, maintaining, and living the Word of Truth adds substance to Jesus' assurance that "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt 16:18). Paul's primary message to Timothy is adherence to sound doctrine (1 Tim 4:16). Sound biblical doctrine serves to preserve the church. Philip Towner acknowledges, "The application of Scripture's principles to our lives by gifted teachers in the congregation enables us to withstand Satan's attacks and to make progress in the life that is pleasing to God."² By preparing men and women to be biblical counselors, the church enables them to be "fellow workers" with the ministry team (3 John 1:8). Focused knowledge of Scripture will equip them to be "gifted teachers" who support spiritual maturity.

In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Paul espouses the sufficiency of Scripture in the work of interpersonal ministry. Applied to biblical counseling, the passage denotes that the biblical counselor necessarily obtains in Scripture: (1) knowledge of the Word to teach church doctrine (2 Tim 2:15); (2) spiritual integrity to reprove others (1 Tim 3:2); (3) a source of power to correct others and to avert dissension (Heb 4:12); and (4) direction to train others in righteousness. God's Word in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 informs of the Scripture's ability to make the biblical counselor complete and effective in the work God assigns. This verse is the textual pillar of biblical counseling theology.

² Philip H. Towner, *1-2 Timothy & Titus*, IVP New Testament Commentary, vol. 14 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 201.

Knowledge of the Word

Many believers feel inadequate for the work of interpersonal ministry and, like Timothy, need the confidence that awareness of the adequacy of Scripture provides. Jay Adams exclaims, “What a tragedy for any Christian to be labeled as spiritually unprepared for a task when the means of instruction [the Scriptures] are readily at hand!”³ While his opponents preached worthless Jewish myths and human commandments (Titus 1:14) that came from demons (1 Tim 4:1), Timothy’s different message endured and edified because its source was Almighty God.⁴

In 2 Timothy 3:15, Paul reveals that salvation is the central purpose of the “sacred writings.”⁵ Knight states that τὰ δυνάμενά, “which are able,” affirms that the ἱερά γράμματα, “the strong,” have a certain innate ability to “make wise unto salvation,” to “teach,” or instruct,” about “salvation.”⁶ In other words, as Stott writes, “The Bible is essentially a handbook of salvation.” More particularly, the Bible instructs for salvation “through faith in Christ Jesus.”⁷ Jesus said, “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me (John 5:39).” Kelly writes, “The reason why the O.T. [Old Testament] books are so precious is that they can give you the wisdom which leads to salvation.”⁸ Thomas Lea and Hayne Griffin further explain that the aim of the sacred writings is to relate God’s saving purpose in Christ. The

³ Jay E. Adams, *The Christian Counselor’s Commentary* (Hackettstown, NJ: Timeless Texts, 1994), 8:91.

⁴ William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 565.

⁵ Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1957), 162.

⁶ George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 443-44.

⁷ John R. W. Stott, *Guard the Truth: The Message of 1 Timothy & Titus*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 102-3.

⁸ J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles: I Timothy, II Timothy, Titus*, Harper’s New Testament Commentaries (London: A. & C. Black, 1963), 201-2.

Scriptures lead to salvation but only as they point to Christ.⁹ Through Jesus Christ, the Holy Scriptures have the immense and unique power to rescue souls for eternity.

Paul's words in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 assure believers that the Word of God furnishes "the man of God" for every work of ministry. Hendriksen declares, "The man of God is the believer. *Every* believer viewed as belonging to God, and as invested with the threefold office of prophet, priest, and king, is here given this title."¹⁰ Fee assures, "By continually nurturing his own life in the Scriptures" the man of God will be fully qualified and equipped "for every good work."¹¹ An effective counselor's theology will reflect on his approach to ministry and his lifestyle.

Spiritual Integrity

The source of a Christian leader's theology is critical, as Donald Guthrie acknowledges. Timothy knew well the integrity not only of the apostle Paul but also of his grandmother and others who helped him arrive at an understanding of Christian truth.¹² John Stott adds, "The second reason why he [Timothy] must abide in what he has learned from Paul is its harmony with these very Scriptures."¹³ Paul's advocacy and model of a biblical lifestyle honored the authority and purpose of Scripture.

Source of Power

Paul identifies the source of the power and authority of Scripture in 2 Timothy

⁹ Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, New American Commentary, vol. 34 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman), 234.

¹⁰ William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1957), 303.

¹¹ Gordon D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, Understanding the Bible New Testament (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989), 230.

¹² Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: InterVarsity, 1983), 162.

¹³ John R. W. Stott, *Guard the Gospel: The Message of 2 Timothy* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1973), 102.

3:16, saying, “All Scripture is inspired by God.” Mounce cites the centrality of this passage in the church’s history as the pillar of its doctrine on inspiration of Scripture.¹⁴ Hendrickson notes that because “all Scripture” is “God-breathed,” it is thereby “useful or beneficial or profitable and serves as a very practical, indispensable instrument or tool for the teacher.”¹⁵ God’s Word is essential to every facet of the Christian’s existence.

Training in Righteousness

Paul identifies aspects of the power of the “breathed out” Word that are pertinent to Timothy’s ministry of building others up (i.e., training others in righteousness). As God’s spokesperson, Paul licenses believers to use Scripture in teaching, reproof, “to convict error,” as “the standard of truth,” “the pattern of truth,” “training in righteousness,” and for “correcting bad behavior.”¹⁶ Each of these facets of Scripture’s sufficiency serves to equip believers to support the sanctification of others. Philip Towner declares, “As the bedrock of Christian instruction, Scripture’s prime function within the community is in relation to teaching (Rom 15:4; 1 Cor 9:10; 10:11).”¹⁷ This teaching function is alluded to in Romans 1:17: “The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith,” or from one believer to another, as Christians share the Word of truth.

When biblical counselors engage with fellow members for their sanctification, they are training in the righteousness of Christlikeness. Towner discusses the relevancy and sufficiency for living the Christian life with a “one-another” focus:

Verse 17 closes the passage with a statement of purpose that reaches not only to *the man of God* who must carry out the tasks enumerated in verse 16 but to all believers. Constant study of God’s Word (see on 1 Tim 4:6-16) equips one to do all that God requires because it contains the knowledge of God’s will. Paul says in

¹⁴ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 565.

¹⁵ Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles*, 303.

¹⁶ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 570.

¹⁷ Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 590.

Ephesians 2:10 that we have been saved “to do good works”— particularly in service to others and in our relationships with others. This “other-oriented” description of Christian living (thoroughly equipped for every good work) is linked inseparably here with nourishment from the Scriptures.¹⁸

The Scriptures can equip every Christian, for every “other-oriented” work.

Paul’s concern regarding the church at Ephesus moved him to declare the sufficiency of God’s Word for its protection and preservation. The same spiritual conditions exist in the church today that caused Paul to command vigilance regarding false teachers (Col 2:8) and the spiritual growth of the body (Heb 5:11). Paul assured that the Word would suffice for Timothy in Ephesus as adequately as it did for Jesus in the wilderness (Matt 4:1-11). Consequently, the church must equip its members to teach and counsel God’s Word. Scripture is all-sufficient and serves to bolster all believers in churches around the world. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Paul stated that the purpose of God’s breathed-out Word was to equip the man of God for every good work. God said that His Word would achieve the purpose for which he sent it (Isa 55:11).

Ephesians 4:7-16

An exposition of Ephesians 4:7-16 will promote biblical clarity regarding gifts Jesus gave through the Holy Spirit. His gifts enable many believers to counsel others biblically, and consequently, states Andrew Lincoln, help the church “to be able to demonstrate its unity, to proclaim the truth in love, and to attain completeness in Christ.”¹⁹ He has given gifts to every member of his body, the church (4:7-10). In giving apostles and prophets, he has provided foundational support for the church’s authority and doctrine. The purpose of Christ’s gifts is so the church may mature into the fullness of adulthood and not be swayed by false teachings (vv. 13-16). Biblical counselors are vanguards against dissension in the body. This passage shows how Jesus uses the Holy Spirit in

¹⁸ Towner, *1-2 Timothy & Titus*, 202-3. Related Scriptures are Gal 5:6, 22-23, 6:9.

¹⁹ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 42 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 269.

gifting men and women for the teaching ministry of biblical counseling.

Unity in the Church

The church that empowers its gifted members for biblical counseling ministry is better prepared to maintain cohesiveness. In the verses preceding verse 7, Paul transitions from using plural “one” (vv. 5-6) to signify “unity” to using singular “one” to refer to the individuals who make up that unity. In verse 7, Paul reveals the manner of Christ’s giving of gifts to individuals to minister to one another, not just to “clergy” as many believe in the church. Giving is the key concept in the passage. Each believer alternately receives and gives. In verses 8 and 9, believers are the receivers, where Christ is the exalted giver of the gifts to “each one of us.”²⁰ Each member who is cognizant of their gifts supports unity. O’Brien notes, “This greater emphasis on the distinctive service of individual believers is ultimately for unity and “the effective functioning of the whole.”²¹ God has always used individuals to support the whole body.

The Old Testament supports Paul’s statement about Christ’s giving of persons for ministry. The phrase, διὸ λέγει, “therefore it says,” is associated with Moses’ giving of the Law, Pentecost (the Feast of Weeks), and the covenant at Sinai.²² Paul uses the term in verses 8-10 to preface a crucial theological principle about God’s gifts. O’Brien notes,

Knowing that Psalm 68:18 was itself referring to earlier Scripture (Num 8:18), and that the Lord’s receiving gifts, that is chosen individuals, from among the people was for the purpose of giving them back to his people for ministry, Paul cites the Psalm

²⁰ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 242.

²¹ Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 287. Please note that Eerdmans Publishing has recalled this publication based on allegations of plagiarism. See <https://www.eerdmans.com/Pages/Default.aspx?ContentID=59043&Title=Commentary-Statement>. The use of the exegetical observations in this document is not dependent on plagiarized sections.

²² Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 243-44.

using the verb “gave” in an explanatory way, and places the emphasis on the persons given back (“gifts” vv.8, 11) and on the ministries they are to fulfill (vv. 11-16).²³

God gave his son as a gift to mankind (John 4:10). Hoehner explains, “Satan, sin, and death have been defeated by Christ’s redemption. Consequently, those who were held in their bondage have been freed and have obtained the gifts of the Spirit from the victorious Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”²⁴ All believers who teach and reinforce God’s Word in congregations are gifts to their fellow believers.

Implicit in this passage is the continuity of giving that includes authority and gifts that extend from God to Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, to the believer. Believers are assured of Christ’s authority from God (Eph 1:20-23). Consequently, the exalted position of Christ as the “giver of gifts” extends to and through all believers. O’Brien notes, “An emphasis on ‘word’ ministries corresponds with Romans 12:6-8 and the ranking of 1 Corinthians 12:28, while the connection between the ‘special’ ministries and others enhances our understanding of the relationship between gifted members and gifted leaders.”²⁵ O’Brien further, comments that among the gifts given, the gifts of men for teaching ministry is deemed so important “for building the body of Christ that provision is made for its continuity for succeeding generations.”²⁶ The gifts of teachers to help build the body of Christ are gifts that support continual growth.

The “building” aspect of verses 12-13, suggests that it is the Messiah Jesus who (referring to Matt 16:18) builds or reestablishes the renewed community of the people of God. O’Brien explains that “the exalted Messiah gives ministries of the Word to equip God’s people of service so as to build his body.”²⁷ Individual biblical counselors

²³ O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 292-93.

²⁴ Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 530.

²⁵ O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 303.

²⁶ O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 301.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 304-5.

learn to disciple and teach others how to grow through the study of God’s Word. Subsequently, the entire church body is strengthened and grows in Christlikeness.

Paul illustrates the need for believers to support growth in the church in verse 14. The imagery of little children being ravaged by a windy storm depicts the plight of spiritually immature Christians in some congregations. He implies that Christians lacking Christ-like maturity are often preyed upon by false teachers and suffer the consequences of individualism. Lincoln demonstrates from verse 14a how individualism is a sign of childishness, while unity is a sign of maturity.²⁸ Jesus provides gifted teachers with the ability to discern falsehood. They foster knowledge and spiritual awareness in congregations. Confronting evil subversion with God’s truth protects members of congregations. The typical work of counseling on issues like confronting sin, pride, selfishness, and greed help fellow believers “break strongholds” and grow (2 Cor 10:4).

Truth in Love

In verse 15, Paul imputes the philosophy that is crucial to imparting the wisdom of God’s Word in counseling, “speaking the truth in love.” O’Brien writes,

Speaking the truth provides a pointed contrast with the scheming of the false teachers and the dangerous winds of doctrine that were swirling around throughout proconsular Asia. Accordingly, the apostle is not exhorting his readers to truthfulness in general or speaking honestly with one another, however appropriate or important this may be. Rather, he wants all of them to be members of a “confessing” church, with the content of their testimony to be ‘the word of truth,’ the gospel of their salvation (1:13). This truth, which is guaranteed by God and is depicted as part of his armour, is the belt which believers are to buckle around their waist as they resist the onslaughts of the evil one (6:14).²⁹

“Speaking truth in love” is a fundamental aspect of biblical counseling training. When embraced as a practice by a church body, it can help establish, maintain, and repair relationships. Noting Paul’s use of ἐν ἀγάπῃ to presumably temper truth, Hoehner adds,

²⁸ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 257.

²⁹ O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 311.

Furthermore, with this in mind, believers are not to use truth in a retaliatory manner against the deceivers, but rather are to show and speak the truth with love. This manner of life is far more powerful than a life of deceit because it has no fear of hidden motives or facts that will be revealed. It is a transparency that is wedded to love, love with truth that enables individual believers to grow harmoniously with other members of the body with the resulting growth of the whole body.³⁰

The power of truth with love can resolve muted hostilities and unite divided churches. Snodgrass summarizes, “Living the truth in love is both the means of growth and the result of growth. As we live in the truth and love encountered in Christ and express these qualities, we become more closely attached to Christ and more like him.”³¹ Biblical counselors facilitate spreading truth and love in their work and behavior (Rom 12:10).

Completeness in the Church

In verse 16, Paul continues his emphasis on love and the necessity for corporate growth rather than interdependence and explains the ultimate purpose of Jesus’ gifts to men.³² Through gifts, believers help one another toward the goal of sanctification (i.e., the fullness of God). Hoehner explains that Christ facilitates the inner unity of individuals so that “they grow by being carefully fitted and held together, rather than growing individually apart from one another.”³³ “In the building up of itself the whole body is involved,” Hoehner instructs, “ἐν ἀγάπῃ denotes the sphere in which the body’s activity of growth is to occur.”³⁴ Christ’s work in the lives of individuals serves to bring all believers together.³⁵

The local church is the biblical counseling context for the body’s growth and

³⁰ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 565.

³¹ Klyne Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 207.

³² Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 262.

³³ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 570.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 578.

³⁵ O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 287.

building of itself in love (Eph 4:16). The manner of the growth, Hoehner concludes, “is modified by the measure and standard of each individual believer or “every supporting connection (ἀφῆς τῆς ἐπιχορηγίας).”³⁶ The apostle Paul identifies the levels of functionality Christ uses in the work of building each component of the body of Christ. The completed process will yield a bride reflective of the perfection that is in Christ himself.³⁷ Biblical counseling can affect every contact between members. Each contact is critical and potentially contributes to the growth of the body.

As this exegesis has contended and revealed, it has always been God’s plan to bring his church to maturity. It is accomplished through gifts of the Holy Spirit to men whom Christ, in turn, gave to the church to promote its unity, exemplify love, and attain completeness in Christ.³⁸ There is no biblical counseling apart from the gift of the Holy Spirit. He is active in and through the lives of believers, “those who are called according to His purpose” (Rom 8:28).

Galatians 5:25-6:6

Paul’s aim in writing the letter to Galatia was to counter the influence of opposing doctrines on the members of the churches of Asia Minor.³⁹ He asserted the concept of justification by faith in opposition to rival Judaizing teachers. He called the Galatians back to the liberty of the gospel. He cautioned and encouraged them to walk worthy of their calling by devoting themselves to the glory of God and the benefit of their brethren. Lastly, he asserted his own determination to be faithful and concluded with a

³⁶ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 573-74.

³⁷ O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 308.

³⁸ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 269.

³⁹ Thomas A. Rand, “A Call to Koinōnia: A Rhetorical Analysis of Galatians 5:25-6:10,” *Proceedings* 15 (1995): 87.

benediction.⁴⁰ The book of Galatians includes timeless instruction on Christian behavior.

Biblical counselors should model and advocate the roles of Christians outlined in Galatians 5:25-6:6. J. L. Boyce asserts, “A new creation born in the transforming power of the cross of Jesus Christ” takes shape and “flourishes in the mutual love of the community of believers.”⁴¹ Galatians 5:25-6:6 addresses the changed life of believers in community. It reveals how deeply Paul was convinced, as Longenecker writes, that “the believer’s active expression of his or her faith” must be inextricably engaged with “the Spirit’s ethical direction and enablement.”⁴² The apostle Paul challenges the Galatian Christians regarding their manner of living in community by building on the foundation of an argument begun in 5:16 over why believers should “live by the spirit.”⁴³ In this passage, he exhorts all Christians to live by the spirit, while fulfilling their individual and corporate responsibilities regarding the Christian who has sinned, the Christian who is burdened, and the Christian who counsels and teaches.

Living by the Spirit

Biblical counselors and all Christians are constrained by the Spirit to participate actively in the life of the community of believers (Rom 8:11-16). Hans Betz alludes to the lack of choice connoted with Paul’s provocation with the intentional use of the word “if” (εἰ) in 5:25.⁴⁴ Dunn adds that with “if,” Paul also appears to be reminding his readers of

⁴⁰ William Hendriksen, *Exposition of Galatians [and] Exposition of Ephesians*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 22-25.

⁴¹ J. L. Boyce, “The Poetry of the Spirit: Willing and Doing in Galatians 5 and 6,” *Word & World* 20, no. 3 (2000): 297-98.

⁴² Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 41 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 266.

⁴³ Ben Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Galatians*, Socio-Rhetorical Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 413.

⁴⁴ Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 293.

their initial experience of the Spirit (3:2-3).⁴⁵ Thomas Schreiner teaches that it is the Spirit that initially makes the believer's salvation possible and sustains the believer:

Believers live by virtue of the Holy Spirit, and hence they must also march in step with and obey that same Spirit. The word "live" (ζῶμεν) refers to eschatological life that now belongs to believers. If the Galatians have such a life by means of the Holy Spirit, they are summoned to keep in line with the Spirit, to keep in step with the Spirit. Life in the Spirit is not on automatic pilot, for the battle against the flesh continues (5:17), so that believers must to continue to walk by the Spirit (5:16) and be led by the Spirit (5:18).⁴⁶

There is no real choice for believers than to be wholly committed to the aid and guidance that the Spirit provides. Biblical counselors serve, as they are guided by the Spirit, to help fellow believers continue to "keep in step" with the Spirit.

George further expounds on the logic of verse 5:25:

In Hellenistic philosophical circles, [the verb] "keep in step with" (στοιχῶμεν)] was used to mean "follow someone's philosophical principles." It suggests, therefore, the basic idea of discipleship: conformity to Christ under the leadership of the Spirit. Therefore, just as we put to death the old existence of the flesh in mortification, so too we move forward in the life of faith by keeping in step with the Spirit in our attitudes, conduct, and lifestyle.⁴⁷

Rand notes that by "keeping stride with the Spirit," the Spirit enables the believer's drastic transformation from the individualism and self-centeredness of the flesh to the attitude of "willing and doing in community."⁴⁸ This verse admonishes believers to strive toward Christlikeness with the aid of the Holy Spirit.

In verse 26, Paul teaches what Christians ought not to do as he utters a prohibition against behaviors that militate against unity in the church. These behaviors, boasting, conceit, and provoking anger, exalt the individual over the community and

⁴⁵ James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, Black's New Testament Commentaries (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 317.

⁴⁶ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary Series (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 356-57.

⁴⁷ Timothy George, *Galatians*, New American Commentary, vol. 30 (Nashville: B & H, 1994), 406.

⁴⁸ Rand, "A Call to Koinōnia," 88.

undermines unity.⁴⁹ Dunn acknowledges the danger of these behaviors in the body:

Once again Paul exhibits a shrewd insight into human psychology, as confirmed repeatedly in the spiritual awakenings in the history of Christianity: those who claim to have been specially graced by the Spirit often assume an importance and authority well beyond even their Spirit-enhanced abilities, encouraging a spirit of competitiveness in charismatic manifestations and provoking schism within the larger community.⁵⁰

Paul's cautioning of the potential for disruption in the Christian community is beneficial to the church. Bruce implies, "Anyone acquainted with church life at the local level knows that the tendencies against which Paul utters this warning: spiritual pride, mutual provocation, and envy, can arise among the most ordinary Christians."⁵¹ Believers are individually responsible for helping each other avoid these spiritual hazards.

Responsibility to the Christian Who Has Sinned

Paul, in verse 6:1, addresses the issue of how to treat fellow Christians caught in sin. The Mosaic law called for various levels of public rebuke and chastisement when fellow Jews were caught in sinful acts (Lev 24:23). Contrary to such harsh corporate treatment, Paul advocated love and nurturing with the aim of reinstating the member into the community. He addressed his audience as "brethren," which reminded them of their implicit mutual obligation in the membership of a spiritual family.⁵² Schreiner translates verse 1 as "those who are tripped up in sin should be gently restored by fellow believers."⁵³ Biblical counselors are trained to approach fellow believers ensnared by sin with an attitude of grace and acceptance.

⁴⁹ Betz, *Galatians*, 295.

⁵⁰ Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 318.

⁵¹ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 258.

⁵² Ronald Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 284.

⁵³ Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 318.

The instruction given in verse 1 requires that the believer withhold judgment. It supports Dunn's observation that Jesus "did not assume the possibility of sinless perfection in this life, but acknowledged the inevitability of sinful behavior occurring among them [believers]." ⁵⁴ Fung adds, "Instead of becoming arrogant and irritating to one another; believers should exercise concern and love for others so that their goal is to build one another up." ⁵⁵ Correspondingly, Longenecker notes that Paul warns, "Those who attempt to restore an erring fellow believer that they are not to be self-righteous in their attitudes but are to recognize their own vulnerability to those same moral failings that they seek to correct." ⁵⁶ Noting the ethical appeal of the command, Witherington surmises, "Gentiles correcting gentiles in regards to sins that they were both vulnerable to in view of their shared pagan past left no room for any attitude of moral superiority on the part of the correctors." ⁵⁷

Responsibility to the Christian Who Is Burdened

In verse 2, Paul commands Christians to accept the role of burden bearers.

George aptly describes functions of biblical counselors as he describes burden bearers:

The immediate context conveys the idea of the spiritually mature bearing with and helping to restore those who have fallen into sin. An important part of bearing one another's burdens is to offer spiritual guidance and friendship to one another, holding each other accountable to the high call of God in our lives. ⁵⁸

The order to assist others is enhanced by the term "the law of Christ." Betz asserts that it "is used here polemically." ⁵⁹ It also connotes a sense of duty. Schreiner writes,

⁵⁴ Ibid., 318-19.

⁵⁵ Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 285.

⁵⁶ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 274.

⁵⁷ Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 422.

⁵⁸ George, *Galatians*, 417.

⁵⁹ Betz, *Galatians*, 301.

The law, according to Paul must be interpreted christocentrically, so that it comes to its intended completion and goal in Christ. The “law of Christ” is equivalent to the law of love (5:13-14), so that when believers carry the burdens of others, they behave as Christ did and fulfill his law. In this sense, Christ’s life becomes the paradigm, exemplification, and explanation of love.⁶⁰

Bruce asserts, “‘The law of Christ’ is for Paul the whole tradition of Jesus’ ethical teaching, confirmed by his character and conduct and reproduced within his people by the power of the Spirit.”⁶¹ Referring to the “law of Christ” supports Paul’s assertion that the exercise of acts of love and support among Christians is not a choice. Such behavior, typical of biblical counselors, is an integral part of living as a believer (Gal 5:25).

In verses 3 and 4, Paul again calls on believers to examine their behaviors. Bruce suggests that the one who fails to heed the “warning against pride” of verse 3, will be inhibited from “fulfilling the law of Christ.”⁶² Schreiner notes, “Those who help others in their spiritual struggles must be conscious of their own sins, and thereby they will not fall prey to the deception that they are part of the spiritual elite.”⁶³ George adds, “True self-examination is not merely taking one’s spiritual pulse on a regular basis but rather submitting one’s thoughts, attitudes, and actions to the will of God and the mind of Christ revealed in Holy Scripture.”⁶⁴ Self-discipline in response to self-examination is achieved by abiding by God’s Word and submitting to His Spirit.

Paul follows his directive for self-discipline with a dictate that everyone “will bear his own load” (v. 5). Schreiner explains that Paul is saying, “Even though we are to help one another as believers and bear each other’s burdens, we are to carry our own loads ultimately. In other words, we are each responsible for our own behavior.”⁶⁵ Dunn

⁶⁰ Schreiner, *Galatians*, 360.

⁶¹ Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 261.

⁶² Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 261-62.

⁶³ Schreiner, *Galatians*, 361-62.

⁶⁴ George, *Galatians*, 417.

⁶⁵ Schreiner, *Galatians*, 362.

declares, “The mature spiritual community . . . is one who is able to distinguish those loads which individuals must bear for themselves and those burdens where help is needed.”⁶⁶ The fulfilling of individual responsibility is God’s basic plan for achieving spiritual maturity.

The Responsibility to the Christian Who Teaches

Finally, in verse 6, Paul assigns roles to both parties in teacher-learner or counselor-counselee relationships. The phrases comprise a hortatory command: “Let him share [ἐν πᾶσιν ἀγαθοῖς (“in all good things”)] with his instructor.” He urges believers to support the men and women whom God has placed among them as teachers of the Word. Longenecker explains that the terms used in verse 6 designate a class of persons rather than a particular individual.⁶⁷ Therefore, a corporate responsibility exists to equip and support teachers of the Bible.

In the context of the communal environment of the early church, it is reasonable to presume that those being taught would be meeting the needs of those who would have studied, prepared, traveled, made themselves available, and performed any number of other sacrifices to share God’s Word. Paul’s directive is relevant regardless of whether the teacher is a traveling apostle or evangelist, or whether the one teaching is a fellow believer serving as a biblical counselor in the local assembly. He exhorts all believers to share in support of fellow believers who invest in their spiritual growth (1 Tim 5:17-18). An added measure of urging is intended here for believers to share in all the good things with those who teach and counsel God’s Word (Gal 6:10).

In the passage, 5:25-6:6, Paul provides a theology of conducting one-another ministry. It includes a list of principles that begins with defining how believers who claim

⁶⁶ Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 326.

⁶⁷ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 278-79.

to be spiritual should and should not conduct themselves (5:25-26). Next, it states a protocol for responding to known sinful activities of believers (v.1). It assigns the spiritually mature members the role of nurturers in helping fellow Christians through struggles (v. 2). Paul calls the assumption of moral superiority self-deception (v. 3). He advocates self-examination to develop self-discipline (v. 4). Self-responsibility must be an accepted requisite for participation in the community of saints (v. 5). Paul places the primary responsibility for affirming one-another ministry relationships on the individual who receives the help (v. 6). These guiding principles and roles of Christians are as critical for conducting one-another ministry in churches in the twenty-first century as they were for supporting churches in the first century.

Romans 15:1-6

Paul's letter to the church at Rome was written to edify believers with an understanding of the gospel. In it, he exposes the realm of sinfulness and enlightens about justification through faith. He shows the vital need for identification with Jesus Christ. Paul contrasts the reign of grace with the purpose of the law. The letter reveals how to achieve the victory of sanctification by walking in the Spirit. The letter instructs in promoting loving relationships in local church life. Paul further edifies by explaining the integral relationship of Jew and Gentile regarding the gospel. Finally, Paul sought to inspire practical Christian living as a natural consequence of faith in the gospel.

The context of Romans 15:1-6 is in an area of Scripture where Paul is prescribing conduct for Christians that restores unity in the church (14:1-15:13). He first instructed "that Christians should not despise or condemn others (14:1-12)" and then that they should not "hinder the conduct of other Christians (14:13-23). Now with immediate reference to enabling sanctification among the saints in Romans 15:1-13, Paul insists that they glorify God by living in harmony with each other. An exposition of Romans 15:1-6 demonstrates that biblical counseling facilitates sanctification of members, is grounded in Scripture and promotes unity in the congregation.

Biblical Counseling Focuses on Sanctification

In verses 1-3, Paul exhorts select believers to follow Jesus' example of sacrifice and service to help bring fellow believers to Christ-likeness (2 Cor 3:18). The character, spiritual maturity, and Scripture knowledge of biblical counselors place them in the category of believers referred to as the "strong" in verse 1. Paul considered οἱ δυνατοὶ Christians who were strong and capable with respect to the knowledge and faith in Jesus Christ.⁶⁸ Conversely, τῶν ἀδυνάτων were believers who were "incapable" of realizing that their faith in Christ had freed them from religious constraints."⁶⁹ Biblical counselors help other believers who are scripturally uninformed or morally deficient in some areas. Haldane explains how being "strong" is not about intellectual prowess:

To know the mind of God, as revealed in the Scriptures, is to be strong; to be ignorant of it is to be weak. Many of those who possess the greatest talents, and are most distinguished for mental acquirements, even among Christians, may be weak in respect to the things of God. And many who are of feeble intellect may be strong in the knowledge of Divine things.⁷⁰

Biblical counselors can also help others become strong when they are knowledgeable of divine things, live according to the truths of the Word, and are able to teach other believers (Rom 15:14).

Becoming strong requires interaction between the spiritually mature and those who are immature in the faith. In verse 2, Paul uses "each of us" to expand his address to all mature believers willing to aid in the sanctification of fellow believers. Paul's use of the term "neighbor" (v. 2) shows that he bases his plea to the "strong" on the love command Jesus declared in John 13:34-35.⁷¹ Schreiner writes, "The reference to

⁶⁸ Frank J. Matera, *Romans*, Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 320.

⁶⁹ Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 864.

⁷⁰ Robert Haldane, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1988), 616.

⁷¹ Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 867.

neighbor echoes Leviticus 19:18 and harks back to Romans 13:8-10, where love is the banner of Christian living.”⁷² To “please his neighbor” in this context, however, is different from the condemned act of seeking to please people rather than God (Col 3:22; 1 Thess 2:4; and Eph 6:6). Rather “each of us,” Christians, please God as we purpose to “please” or serve fellow believers. The “good” in verse 2 relates to the edification of the weak believer.⁷³ Paul’s plea shows the critical role biblical counselors play when they interact in the church.

In verse 3, Paul confronts selfish attitudes that hinder individual growth and stunt cohesiveness. Jesus put the will of God first (Ps 69:9). Douglas Moo asserts that Paul urges resistance to self-centeredness and conformance to the model of sacrificial love and obedience of Jesus Christ.⁷⁴ John Stott points out a critical aspect of human nature that makes the exhortation in verse 3 crucial. He suggests that because “strong people are of course tempted to wield their strength to discard or crush the weak, Paul urges strong believers to βασιτάζειν (bear with or carry them).”⁷⁵ Bearing the burdens of others is being like Jesus and also a sign of spiritual maturity. He bore the infirmities of mankind (Isa 53.4). Jesus exclaimed that he “did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). His was the supreme example of service and allegiance. F. F. Bruce notes, “Christ did not assert his rights; He put the interests of others before his own (cf. Phil 2:5-8).”⁷⁶ Moo notes the need for spiritually mature

⁷² Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 746.

⁷³ Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 498.

⁷⁴ Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 868-69.

⁷⁵ John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Romans: God’s Good News for the World*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England: InterVarsity, 2001), 369.

⁷⁶ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 6, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 240.

believers to follow Christ's example in preferring other's interests to their own and of loving service to others as a means of bringing unity to the church.⁷⁷ Biblical counselors model Jesus' example. Regardless of the method of the intervention, the goal is the movement toward Christlikeness that serves to bless others and the cohesive affection, worship, and witness that honors God.⁷⁸

Biblical Counseling Is Grounded in Scripture

In verse 4, Paul explains that the Scriptures are the source biblical counselors rely on in their assurance of a foundation of truth, hope, and guidance to fellow believers. The veracity of the Scriptures is the foundation of biblical counseling. Stott notes five doctrinal truths from the Scriptures: contemporary intention, inclusive value, Christological focus, practical purpose, and its divine message. Each of these foundational principles is an essential component of biblical counseling that reminds believers that "God continues to speak through what he has spoken."⁷⁹ Instruction from these doctrines from the Scriptures also provides maintenance and strengthening of hope.

Paul emphasized the importance of perseverance and encouragement from God's Word that results in hope. Morris affirms, "Hope is especially needed by Christians when facing suffering."⁸⁰ Accordingly, Paul is informing the "strong" (primarily Gentiles) that the Scriptures apprise them who were "without hope" (Eph 2:12) that God has provided for them through His Son and that by strengthening their "hope," the Scriptures help them become more secure about their place in God. Custer alludes to the tension between the temporal aspect of persevering and the experience of encouragement:

⁷⁷ Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 864.

⁷⁸ Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, 254.

⁷⁹ Stott, *The Message of Romans*, 370-71.

⁸⁰ Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 500.

The Psalmist prayed, “Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou has caused me to hope” (Ps 119:49). The verity of God’s Word carried over into the New Testament with examples given in Rom 4:24; 1 Cor 9:10; 10:11, and 2 Tim 3:16, are directives that clarify for Christians their common source of governance and continuing guide as New Covenant citizens.⁸¹

The “strong” model the acts of praying, searching the Scriptures, and waiting for the Lord that engender hope in believers.

The Scriptures assure believers of divine guidance. Bruce writes, “The Scriptures . . . provide ample evidence of God’s fidelity, especially when they are read in the light of Christ’s fulfillment of them.”⁸² The evidence of God’s Word as a “lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Ps 119:105) is reiterated many times over for the edification of the believer. The confident believer is able to help others attain confidence in God.

Biblical Counseling Supports Unity

Biblical counselors facilitate harmony in the church (1 Cor 1:10). Their activities bring people together through conversation and interactions in and outside of the church. James Dunn asserts that verse 5 is an intercessional prayer and explains that the verse “suggests that Paul wrote with the assumption that his letter would be read to congregations gathered for worship.”⁸³ In his prayer for the congregation, Paul invokes the power of the Holy Spirit to cause the church to have unity of desire and purpose that resembles the desire and purpose of Jesus. John Murray calls the prayer “an implied exhortation . . . exhortation to men and prayer to God.” First, Paul points back to verse 4 and uses the titles, “God of perseverance and encouragement,” declaring that God is their author and source. Second, Paul reveals his desire that the Roman church may regain

⁸¹ Stewart Custer, *The Righteousness of God: A Commentary on Romans* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 2007), 378.

⁸² Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, 240.

⁸³ James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 38b (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1988), 840.

their former level of unity.⁸⁴ Accordingly, he prays that they would be of the same mind with one another as displayed in their “mutual esteem and forbearance.” Paul’s prayer implies that the desired unity would happen “according to Christ’s example,” which also implies the will of Christ.⁸⁵

In verse 6, Paul exhorts believers regarding the ultimate purpose for unity among them. The goal is to “glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph 4:1-3; 13; and Col 3:14). Moo explains, “Divisions in the church over nonessentials divert precious time and energy from the church’s basic mission.”⁸⁶ Paul insisted on dedication to the mission of the gospel. For Paul, no consideration could enforce the exhortation more strongly than to be reminded of the glory of God as the controlling purpose of all attitudes and actions.⁸⁷ Accordingly, believers should seek opportunities to exemplify Christ and glorify God in every encounter with other Christians.

The sincerity and compassion of biblical counselors promote Christian unity (Acts 20:31 and 1 Pet 1:22-23). Adams observes,

The counselor who, like Paul, counsels regularly with deep concern for his counselees (Acts 20:31; “with tears”), will be concerned about teachings that would distort the viewpoint of those he counsels and lead them into dangerous paths. Truth is not merely an academic matter; it is eminently practical. Good counselors, like Paul, therefore, concern themselves with correct teaching.⁸⁸

Teaching and counseling are affective functions that are naturally intertwined.

The primary objective of teaching as biblical counseling is to communicate biblical truth with the goal of discipling and aiding fellow believers. Stott explains that

⁸⁴ John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 200.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 201.

⁸⁶ Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 872.

⁸⁷ Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 201.

⁸⁸ Jay E. Adams, *The Christian Counselor’s Commentary*, vol. 8 (Hackettstown, NJ: Timeless Texts, 1994), 4-5.

the edification that enhances the sanctification of fellow believers means “helping to educate and so strengthen their conscience.”⁸⁹ Education also enhances sensitivity about the needs of others. Moo further informs that building up the weak for their edification “ultimately serves as an advantage to the Christian community as a whole, as its unity and praise are enhanced.”⁹⁰ Biblical counselors promote the teachings of God, and the result is the spread of duplication of behaviors that reflect the love and care of Jesus.

God-pleasing harmony occurs when fellow Christians persevere with and encourage each other. Morris surmises, “When the church gives itself over to glorifying God there is a deep and satisfying unity”⁹¹ As biblical counselors fulfill this scriptural mandate, they facilitate sanctification of members of a congregation, and promote unity in the church.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an exposition of four scriptural texts that serve as biblical and theological justification for biblical counseling ministry. Second Timothy 3:16-17 teaches that all Scripture comes from God and comprises all the necessary weaponry or equipment to sustain the “man of God.” Paul included this statement in his letter to Timothy when urging him to stand against the evil work of false teachers and deceivers in the church by using the “two-edged sword” of God’s Word. Ephesians 4:7-16 is Paul’s discussion of the gifts Jesus gave to the church. The blueprint of the church is depicted in this passage. It teaches that individuals are to apply their gifts with love in the work of forming a cohesive, spiritually mature church. Galatians 5:25-6:6 teaches that “living by the Spirit” requires humility and a willingness to come to the aid of fellow believers when they have been discovered to have sinned. In so doing, the “law of Christ” is fulfilled. In

⁸⁹ Stott, *The Message of Romans*, 369.

⁹⁰ Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 867.

⁹¹ Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 502.

Romans 15:1-6, Paul provides doctrine for exercising perseverance and encouragement with fellow believers. Paul tasks spiritually mature Christians with the responsibility of helping less mature Christians “grow up” so all can glorify God in unison. These four passages are from first-person accounts and experiences with first-century churches. They inform believers of responsibilities, challenges, methods, necessity, and rewards of interpersonal ministry in the local church.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL SUPPORT FOR BIBLICAL COUNSELING MINISTRY

The process of equipping believers for biblical counseling ministry enables them to complement the work of their pastors and helps them support the mission of the church. It provides caring individuals who have knowledge of the Word of God and skills in helping other Christians go through life's challenges and grow in Christlikeness. All mankind suffers from the problems sin causes in their lives (Rom 3:23). The Word of God is a formidable weapon against sin. The Word of God has the capability to perform with intricate, surgical precision and can penetrate to the source of spiritual suffering (Jer 17:9-10; Heb 4:12). Further, the Word of God is the entirely sufficient resource for helping other believers with the issues of sin (2 Tim 3:16-17). Finally, the Word of God is at work in believers and has the power to guide believers in their walk with Jesus (1 Thess 2:12-13; Ps 119:105). Being equipped for biblical counseling ministry enables church members to confidently engage fellow believers with the Word of God as they help solve problems.

Robert W. Kellemen defines biblical counseling as

Christ-centered, church-based, comprehensive, compassionate, and culturally informed biblical counseling depends upon the Holy Spirit to relate God's Word to suffering and sin by speaking and living God's truth in love to equip people to love God and one another (Matt 22:35-40). It cultivates conformity to Christ and communion with Christ and the body of Christ, leading to a community of one-another disciple-makers (Matt 28:18-20).¹

The above definition of biblical counseling states the essential role of the Holy Spirit in

¹ Robert W. Kellemen, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church: The 4E Ministry Training Strategy* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2011), 36.

conveying the power of God’s Word to the hearts of believers. The power of God’s Word can conquer the sin that brings division and strife into the lives of believers. When believers are connected or re-connected with the Truth, they are enabled to live harmoniously in the community of the saints. Christ-centered, church-based, comprehensive, compassionate, and culturally-informed biblical counseling is universally beneficial to bodies of believers who desire to maintain unity and growth in Christlikeness.

Kellemen’s definition of biblical counseling is a practical instrument for use in discussing theoretical and practical aspects of biblical counseling ministry. The definition includes four principles inherent to the practice of biblical counseling. The first principle is honoring the biblical mandate to love God and one another.² The second principle is communicating in a spirit of love.³ The third principle is maintaining relationships that facilitate accountability.⁴ The fourth principle is being active in discipleship.⁵ The current chapter addresses the ways these four principles used in biblical counseling bolster the ability of believers to support fellow believers. The chapter also addresses the role of biblical counseling in the mission of the church and the need for biblical counseling training in the local church.

Biblical Counseling and the Mission of the Church

The accomplishment of the mission of the church depends on the active

² Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2002), 117–19.

³ Jay E. Adams, *Competent to Counsel: Introduction to Nouthetic Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 216.

⁴ Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands*, 270.

⁵ Randy Patten, “Launching a Counseling Ministry in a ‘Smaller Church,’” in *Biblical Counseling and the Church: God’s Care through God’s People*, ed. Robert W. Kellemen and Kevin Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 243.

engagement of individual believers in the context of a community of Christians (Matt 28:18-20; Eph 2:19-22). Biblical counseling has its necessity in the church, it draws its resources from the church, and it is optimally functional in the church. Discussing the importance of community for Christians, Kellemen refers to Paul letting “the troubled and confused Colossian Christians” know that they were not alone, but “‘together as God’s chosen people’ (Col 3:12) and ‘as members of one body’ (Col 3:15)—the church.”⁶ He adds, “Paul includes these words of one-another ministry in the context of growth in grace (Col 3:1-11) because sanctification is a Christ-centered community journey.”⁷ The Christ-centered community provides necessary support for individual believers.

Sin, whether through the work of the adversary or indwelling sin, has many ways of stifling the spiritual growth of individual believers. Adequately equipped believers who are led by the Spirit can help other believers with their sin struggles. Skilled biblical counselors can develop relationships that ultimately result in helping hurting people. Skilled biblical counselors know how to use Scripture to help correct Christian “misbeliefs.” Biblical counselors are publicly recognized in the church to make hurting and struggling members aware that help is available to them in their struggles with sin and to help them become capable of full engagement in the work of the church.

Churches struggle to thrive when the power of God’s Word does not circulate throughout the membership. Individuals with problems are in every church. They bring their problems into relationships with other sinners in the church. Unless remedied, individual problems evolve into more significant conflicts within relationships. Ultimately, problems in interpersonal relationships can result in various forms of disunity in the

⁶ Robert W. Kellemen, *Gospel-Centered Counseling: How Christ Changes Lives* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 33.

⁷ Ibid.

body. Jay Adams illustrates the phenomenon of disunity in churches:

Few things are sapping the strength out of the church of Jesus Christ more than the unreconciled state of so many believers. So many Christians have matters deeply embedded in their relationships, like iron wedges forced between themselves and other Christians. They can't walk together because they do not agree. When they should be marching side by side taking men captive for Jesus Christ, instead they are acting like an army that has been routed and scattered, and whose troops in their confusion have begun fighting among themselves. Nothing drains the church of Christ of her strength so much as these unresolved problems, these loose ends among believing Christians that have never been tied up.⁸

Adams addresses the spread of unresolved personal issues that, without intervention, foment into more substantial conflicts. Unchecked, the issues potentially consume energy that could otherwise support the growth and vitality of the church body. Adams and other proponents of biblical counseling acknowledge the benefit, to the church, of the efforts of competent lay counselors in helping other believers resolve problems. Lay people have the proximity to fellow members to maximize the penetration of the Word to levels in the church where individuals have problems. Peer-to-peer ministry of the Word augments the preaching and teaching of pastors by directing the power of the Word where needs exist.

Edward T. Welch writes that believers were meant to “walk side by side.” Side-by-side means sharing needs, seeking God’s guidance together, and studying God’s Word together. Together, believers help one another confront individual issues of sin that have the potential to create disunity in the body.⁹ Similarly, Kevin Carson and Paul Tautges write that the “private ministry of the Word includes the one-to-one, face-to-face ministry conversations that take the Word of God and apply it to a specific person’s life context. This ministry takes place everywhere in the church.”¹⁰ The engagement of fellow believers helps to carry the Word of God to the points of need and to places where the

⁸ Jay E. Adams, *The Christian Counselor’s Manual* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973), 362.

⁹ Edward T. Welch, *Side by Side: Walking with Others in Wisdom and Love* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 12.

¹⁰ Patten, “Launching a Counseling Ministry in a ‘Smaller Church,’” 82-83.

public ministry of the Word may not otherwise penetrate. Biblical counselors frankly teach others what they have learned from the Word about taking responsibility for wrongdoings, confessing sin, and forgiving others for sins against them. Most importantly, biblical counseling teaches about matters of the heart that reflect the love of God. The same love of God inspires believers to carry out the mission of the church.

The Love Principle in Biblical Counseling

Biblical counseling skill enhances the abilities of church members to fulfill their biblically-mandated function of loving another. Roger White espouses Jesus' view on the importance of the biblical mandate to love:

When a tutor of the law asked Jesus which one of the commandments was most important, Jesus responded that the commandments are all summed up in the directive to love God and neighbor (Matt 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-31). The greatest commandment is recognized as central to living Christianly.¹¹

Love enables believers to have compassion for one another and to express willingness to help others who endure the common struggles of sin and suffering. Welch explains, "Suffering and sin are the sum of human struggles. This means we need one another in our struggle with suffering and in our struggle with sin and temptation."¹² Welch's acute insight is supported biblically by Paul's instruction given in Colossians 3:12-16. Here, Paul acknowledges that by "putting on love" believers prepare themselves to help each other deal with indwelling sin and its consequences. The conscious act of putting love at the forefront of interpersonal relationships helps fulfill the biblical mandate to love.

Raymond W. McLaughlin describes conditions that often occur in churches where the biblical mandate to love is not manifested:

Lovelessness penetrates the church in varying degrees. Some churches are afflicted with it more than others. Few are immune to it. In the struggle for orthodoxy

¹¹ James Riley Estep, Karen Lynn Estep, and M. Roger White, *Mapping Out Curriculum in Your Church: Cartography for Christian Pilgrims* (Nashville: B & H, 2012), 169.

¹² Welch, *Side by Side*, 134.

Christians have developed clusters of little-middle class groups into which the initiated are readily welcomed, but the aliens are shunned. We have our own written protocol, caste systems, theological pigeonholes, and carefully defined jargon. Facility in the use of our own private vernacular is mandatory. All in all, we Christians have spun about ourselves tight little cocoons insulating us from the tragic needs of a confused society.¹³

Longevity of membership in churches seems to support the perpetuation of insular behaviors. McLaughlin's depiction of churches that lack love connotes coldness and estrangement in the very setting where members should experience warmth and togetherness. Biblical counseling ministries in communities McLaughlin describes could facilitate the openness and acceptance needed to resolve hostilities among church members.

The problem of the lack of love in churches is a phenomenon that requires the intervention of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of individuals. Because biblical counseling relies on the aid and direction of the Holy Spirit, biblical counseling can be the catalyst needed to bring about heart changes and teach believers how to demonstrate love. The Spirit is available to leaders for teaching and equipping members for the work of spreading love. Kellemen gives a synopsis of the process:

God calls leaders to prepare His people for works of service so the body of Christ might be edified and equipped with the result that Christians speak truth in love as the whole body joined and held together grows and builds itself up in love (the organized organism) (Eph 4:11-16).¹⁴

Love is a fundamental principle of biblical counseling. Adams proclaims, "Love is the ultimate answer to all the problems of living with which the Christian counselor deals. Love, therefore, is the goal."¹⁵ Having love as the goal of biblical counseling allows love to operate as a gauge of an individual's degree of Christlikeness.

¹³ Raymond W. McLaughlin, *Communication for the Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1968), 205.

¹⁴ Kellemen, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church*, 252.

¹⁵ Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual*, 141.

Paul David Tripp states, “First John teaches us (3:11-20; 4:7-21) that one of the most reliable indicators of our love for God is the quality of our love for our neighbor.”¹⁶ With the ability to express love, the biblical counselor becomes a person in a congregation to whom others are drawn. Love uniquely enables biblical counselors to open their hearts to others and to risk making themselves vulnerable. Correspondingly, the openness and vulnerability of the counselor allow counselees to, in turn, exercise the openness and vulnerability necessary to confess sins, repent, and to receive instruction from the Word. The bonds of Christian friendship that stem from the biblical counselor’s ability to love is a factor in counseling effectiveness that serves as a model of behavior for others in the congregation.

As biblical counselors follow the church leadership in modeling genuine love among members who have been disciplined and counseled in congregations, other members are likely to notice the results in the forming of positive relationships (Rom 12:9; 1 Pet 3:8). Eventually, many members will choose to emulate the practices of individuals who appear to benefit from supportive relationships with biblical counselors. Biblical counselors will typically take the lead in reaching out to the wounded and marginalized in the church. They will usually be the first to express love by being accepting of behaviors and appearances that others shun. As Welch describes, “Love is able to see past the clutter of a disorganized life.”¹⁷ The “spreading” of love can operate like the placing of hot charcoal briquettes among cold charcoal briquettes. Eventually, the cold briquettes catch the heat from the hot briquettes, and these also begin to glow with warmth. Accordingly, the “cold” church can become warm if the warmth of Spirit-led biblical counselors is allowed to permeate the membership.

¹⁶ Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands*, 201.

¹⁷ Welch, *Side by Side*, 90.

Love has the ability to restore intimacy and broken trust in relationships. Love is the activity to undertake while matters of conflict are being resolved.¹⁸ Love has the power to break down barriers to communication. Love has the power to quell anger. Finally, reiterating Adams' comment regarding biblical counseling, "Love is the goal."¹⁹ In 1 Corinthians 13:13, Paul teaches why the goal of biblical counseling is love when he records, "So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love." The biblical counseling principles of communication, accountability, and discipleship all stem from the principle of love.

The Communication Principle in Biblical Counseling

Communication skills used in biblical counseling support healthy Christian relationships. Ronald Sider, Philip Olson, and Heidi Unruh write, "Every Christian has a responsibility to "live peaceably with one and all" (Rom. 12:18), to restore those who are in error with a spirit of gentleness (Gal 6:1), to avoid foolish controversies (2 Tim 2:14), and to pray for one another (James 5:16)."²⁰ The statement details aspects of individual responsibility in Christian relationships. It includes elements of bonding and healing between individuals and dependency on exchanges of information (i.e., communication) between God and believers. These activities comprise the core of biblical counseling. Effective biblical counseling can only happen with effective interpersonal communication between God, believers, and counselors.

A primary objective of biblical counseling is improved communications in relationships with God and others. Stuart Scott explains why communication in

¹⁸ Stuart Scott, *The Exemplary Husband: A Biblical Perspective* (Bemidji, MN: Focus Publishing, 2002), 255.

¹⁹ Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual*, 210.

²⁰ Ronald J. Sider, Philip N. Olson, and Heidi Rolland Unruh, *Churches That Make a Difference: Reaching Your Community with Good News and Good Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 302.

relationships is so critical. His comments on the importance of communication in marriage relationships apply to all Christian relationships:

Good communication is important to God. It involves self-control and discipline—character qualities that the Christian must possess. Communication involves ruling our spirit, our tongue, and our body, and going against our feelings when they contradict what we know to be true. Communication involves the heart, which is of the greatest importance to God. He often addresses our communication to expose our heart, because our communication is controlled by our heart.²¹

Scott declares that “good communication is important to God.” Striving with all due diligence and energy to perform acts that are important and pleasing to God should be the primary agenda of every Christian. The known consequences of “the Fall” make controlling one’s spirit, tongue, body, and actions difficult, but the work is still critical to one’s mortal and eternal well-being. From Genesis 3:1-13, the evidence of spiritual destruction due to man’s choice to obey ungodly communication is clear. The ability to exercise self-discipline has always been dependent on choices of the individual to be obedient to God. Only the Spirit of God can control hearts toward obedience.²² Biblical counselors convey the message of God’s willingness to change hearts and thereby improve communication between God and man, and individual believers.

When Christians lack understanding of how to communicate wisely, disastrous results occur in church environments. Decrying the condition of communications in the modern church, McLaughlin asks rhetorically, “Why, regardless of the advanced education and improved communication media of all sorts are Christians and religious organizations still plagued with suspicion, distrust, and sometimes open conflict?”²³ The Bible cites numerous causes and instances of ungodly behaviors involving communication (Prov 15:5, 29:22; Mark 11:25-26; Acts 15:38; 2 Cor 10:12; 1 Pet 3:8-10). Jay Adams asserts,

²¹ Scott, *The Exemplary Husband*, 228-29.

²² Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands*, 70.

²³ McLaughlin, *Communication for the Church*, 21.

“Poor communication will lead to other problems stemming from misunderstandings, etc. On the other hand, when other problems continue unresolved, they almost always lead (in addition) to a break in communication.”²⁴ Biblical counseling focuses on solutions to communication problems in the body.

God provides guidance for the proper conduct of communication in the church.

McLaughlin charges,

One of the most serious problems confronting the church today is communication breakdown. Spiritual and social coldness, anxiety, excessive tensions, and dogmatism all have debilitating effects upon group life. These are human attitudes, but they are also church-destroying attitudes²⁵

McLaughlin accepts that the work of equipping the saints for service includes training them to be better communicators. He insists that Christians can learn skills to be better communicators, explaining,

Equipped with a broad understanding of communication techniques and filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, the Christian is willing and able to communicate to the world with tenderness and love. “The outward expression of Christian communication must be love. New Testament love is both verbally and nonverbally communicated. It is the outward expression of the inner spiritual power which makes an individual want to communicate.”²⁶

McLaughlin suggests that there is no justification for continued breakdowns in communication because God provides every ability, resource, and technology a believer requires to serve Him. The love of God is both the source and the ultimate objective of biblical communication.

Biblical counselors profoundly influence counselees and others by modeling love and good relational behaviors in the way they listen to others. Love can be expressed in each part of the communication process (i.e., the message, the messenger, and the listener). Mike Stingley explains how the counselor gains influence:

²⁴ Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual*, 250.

²⁵ McLaughlin, *Communication for the Church*, 170.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 200.

Disciplined listening begins with listening to God's Word. To understand man, one must begin with the knowledge of God. Therefore, before listening to a counselee, we have to be attentive to the revelation of God in His Word. The Christian counselor must begin his work and continue his ministry as an exegete of God's Word.²⁷

God should be a part of every believer's communication because His Word should be in their hearts (Deut 30:14), His praise should be on their lips (Ps 119:171), and their minds should set to pray to Him (1 Pet 4:7). The Holy Spirit provides the counselor discernment to listen and guide their speech to be a blessing to the counselee and everyone affected by the counselee's role in his or her communication. The counselor, as an agent of God's love, listens to the counselee's words and behaviors with the purpose of directing God's Word to the counselee's specific need.

Every communication experience is an opportunity to express the love of God (1 Cor 13:7). David Ausberger describes how intimacy, respect, caring, and concern for others is projected in the process of communicating:

The most visible experience of it comes to us through listening. When another hears us, it is an actual occasion of being honored, valued, and respected as a person in our own right, an agent whose actions deserve notice, attention, and response. Being heard is so close to being loved that for the average person they are almost indistinguishable. To say something you value deeply to another and to have him or her value it equally by listening to it carefully and appreciatively is the universal way of exchanging social interest or demonstrating affection.²⁸

The analogy of "being heard," with "being loved," is given validity when considering the time and money people expend to have someone listen to them. People may go to a therapist, sit on a bar stool, or engage in social media, etc., primarily to have someone "listen" to them. Biblical counselors (and relatedly, small groups) are useful because they listen, whereas communication in churches is too often superficial and ineffective.

Lack of listening may not be the only communication shortfall of the church. When the messages of the church are distorted or not well disseminated, congregants

²⁷ Mike Stingley, "Disciplined Listening," *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 1 (January 1977): 54.

²⁸ David W. Augsburger, *Caring Enough to Hear and Be Heard* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1982), 12.

often “miss-out” on opportunities for worship, fellowship, or service. Kellemen delivers a pointed indictment when he writes, “Too many churches think that they have communicated when they have posted a notice in the bulletin or made an announcement from the pulpit.”²⁹ Any degree of reliance on indirect communications diminishes the strength of relationships within a congregation or community to the extent that efforts are not made to maintain direct communications. In other cases, believers drift in and out of church every week, sometimes almost anonymously, hoping that someone will communicate with more than just a “friendly greeting” or gesture.

Communications can be manifested through behaviors but are more commonly expressed verbally. The spoken word is the typical medium biblical counselors use to serve others. Ironically, spoken words are also a familiar source of problems (i.e., words uttered in gossip, slander, lies, arguments, etc.) that result in the need for the intervention of a biblical counselor. The Word of God teaches about the power of the spoken word (e.g., death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits [Prov 18:21]). Among other writers, James’ admonition on the need for control of spoken words is most notable (Jas 3:1-12). God acknowledges the intent of the hearts of believers.

God’s Spirit is active in bringing about positive results in relationships through the communicative efforts of willing believers. He uses believers who choose to learn and apply their skills to encourage unity and to help others in the church. McLaughlin asserts that every believer who desires to communicate better, can do so:

Knowledge of the communication process and the will to communicate are the prerequisites. The Christian who wishes to do so may learn that process. We choose words to convey a meaning that our audience will find significant so that it will thus achieve some goal or effect. With words we warn, encourage, promise, persuade, command, commission, pardon and apologize, embrace, and reject.³⁰

An individual’s choice appears to be the dominant factor in the way their words are used.

²⁹ Kellemen, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church*, 138.

³⁰ McLaughlin, *Communication for the Church*, 211.

Their words verbalize the issues of their hearts (Matt 15:18). McLaughlin’s list of functions for which words are used helps explain why communications can be tedious. Care is required to avoid semantical pitfalls. Only the Holy Spirit can ensure that communications are godly and that they promote positive results.

The communication principle is a crucial pillar of biblical counseling. McLaughlin surmises, “Without the power of the Holy Spirit and the resulting demonstration of selfless love, Christians lack not only the ability to communicate but also any serious reason for existence.”³¹ Communication facilitates the awareness and spread of God’s love from believer to believer—bringing peace, joining hearts, and building trust.

The Accountability Principle in Biblical Counseling

Biblical counseling fosters accountability within the community of discipleship. The accountability principle of biblical counseling builds on the spiritual growth principles of love and communication by enhancing the cohesiveness of relationships in the church. The mandate for believers to love God and others infers a responsibility to maintain bonds of submission and candidness with God and others that is consistent and verifiable. Testaments of accountability have no relevance unless individuals allow themselves to, first, be answerable to God. To be accountable in the community, the believer should first focus on being honest and genuine with God.

Biblical counselors help honor the priority of God in Christian relationships by demonstrating accountability. Arthur W. Pink establishes that accountability is essential to Christians having right relationships:

The doctrine of man’s accountability and responsibility to God is set forth so plainly, so fully and so constantly throughout the Scriptures that he who runs may read it, and only those who deliberately close their eyes to it can fail to perceive its verity and force. The entire volume of God’s Word testifies to the fact that He

³¹ McLaughlin, *Communication for the Church*, 212.

requires from man right affections and right actions, and that He judges and treats Him according to these. “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom 14:12) that the rights of God may be enforced upon moral agents.³²

God, as Pink exhorted, metes out judgment and blessings based on the motives and behaviors of believers. Moreover, God makes his demand for accountability so plain in His Word that to deny awareness of it would be virtually blasphemous. Biblical counselors instruct the letter and spirit of God’s Word that believers are accountable first to God and then to each other (1 John 4:17).

Accountability in relationships is like a multi-purpose ointment that can be applied to any ailment or like a tool that can be used for a variety of applications. If biblical counselors were doctors or repair technicians, respectfully, accountability would be their choice instrument. Tripp illustrates the range of functions accountability serves:

He calls us to stand with people as they step out in faith, obedience, and courage. This is the ministry of accountability. It is not about lying in wait to catch them doing wrong. The purpose of accountability is to assist people to do what is right for the long run. It provides a presence that keeps them responsible, aware, determined, and alert until they are able to be on their own. It directs eyes that have just begun to see and strengthens weak knees and feeble arms. Accountability provides loving structure, guidance, encouragement, and warning to someone who is fully committed to the change God is working in his life.³³

The temptations believers face in life are those that are common to all people (1 Cor 10:13). Even in church settings, emotional and spiritual pain inflicted upon believers can create severe wounds. Biblical approaches to helping sufferers that demonstrate accountability can help sufferers regain willingness to trust others.

In 1 Corinthians 13:1-7, the apostle Paul addresses the source of power to restore intimacy and broken trust. To the extent that love is genuinely shared, trust abounds.

Kenneth Blanchard and Phil Hodges explain the primacy of love in trust relationships:

In life role relationships, trust is the stream on which vulnerability, caring, commitment, and grace flow between parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, friends and fellow citizens. Trust pours first from loving hearts

³² Arthur W. Pink, *Our Accountability to God* (Chicago: Moody, 1999), 364-65.

³³ Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands*, 269.

committed to serve and support one another, through promises kept, to encouragement and appreciation expressed, through support and acceptance, to repentance and apologies accepted, to reconciliation and restoration. Yet trust is a stream with a fragile ecological balance: once it is polluted, it will take time and effort to restore.³⁴

Love must exist before trust can be established. As the writer of Hebrews alludes (Heb 10:24-25), biblical counseling relationships are “safe-harbor relationships of support and accountability that cannot be overemphasized.”³⁵ Wayne Mack further instructs, “Only if the counselor proves to be trustworthy, can a helping relationship be established that will make the counseling process a mutually profitable experience.”³⁶ The context that Jesus established for relationships that leads to reconciliation and restoration is the church community.

Biblical counseling has many times been proven successful in helping suffering believers in church settings. Heath Lambert describes one such example of biblical counseling in a church God used to restore a suffering young man. The case addressed the importance of a nurturing, caring community working with a believer to help him overcome an addiction to pornography. In his example, Lambert tells the story of a biblical counselor who, with the support and consent of the church, temporarily moved into the home of a counselee. The counselee agreed he needed a high level of close relational proximity for accountability. Over time, the intervention was successful. The counselee accredited the presence of the counselor with helping him overcome a sinful habit. The habit had plagued him for years and had prevented him from fully exercising his gifts in the church.³⁷ The victory was won in the case of Lambert’s example because

³⁴ Kenneth H. Blanchard and Phil Hodges, *Lead like Jesus: Lessons for Everyone from the Greatest Leadership Role Model of All Time* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 25.

³⁵ Blanchard and Hodges, *Lead like Jesus*, 182.

³⁶ Wayne A. Mack, “Developing a Helping Relationship with Counselees,” in *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically*, ed. John MacArthur and Wayne A. Mack (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 113.

³⁷ Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling*

of an effort initiated by one biblical counselor supported by a loving and supportive church community (Heb 3:13; Gal 6:1).

Countless numbers of people await the intervention of a believer to help them attain spiritual wholeness. Blanchard and Hodges make a passionate plea for interventionists, as they suggest a means of restoring fellow believers in the context of providing spiritual leadership:

We encourage you to contact people and work out an accountability relationship with regular times of truth-telling. Being open to feedback from other people is not the only way to grow. Being willing to disclose vulnerabilities to other people is another. We're all vulnerable. We all fall short. Don't be afraid to share your vulnerability. Being vulnerable is one of the most powerful things you can do to build a team and to build relationships with people you're leading.³⁸

The approach to developing accountability that Blanchard and Hodges advocate, requires skill and dedication. Information about personal vulnerabilities must be carefully managed while building relationships.

The importance of correcting accountability problems to foster cooperation in relationships in organizations is crucial. Accordingly, leaders may act out of desperation to gain better levels of cooperation. James Kouzes and Barry Posner provide practical insight into the widespread need for accountability in organizations. For many organizations, growth and development of individuals are vital concerns. They assert,

Key in strengthening others is making certain that people recognize their interdependency through fostering accountability. The more we believe that everyone else is competent and taking responsibility for their own part of the job, the more trusting and the more cooperative we're going to be. It's also true that we'll be more confident in knowing that if we do our part, others will do theirs. Unless people take personal responsibility and unless they are held accountable for their own actions, we're not very inclined to want to work with them nor much inclined to cooperate in general. Individual accountability is a critical element of every collaborative effort.³⁹

Ministry (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 310-11.

³⁸ Blanchard and Hodges, *Lead like Jesus*, 182.

³⁹ James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge: How to Keep Getting Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 299.

Kouzes and Posner's frank assessment of individual attitudes in cooperating with others finds verity in the lack of participation and attendance in some congregations. The assessment emphasizes the need for assistance in recognizing interdependency and establishing trusting relationships. The "collaborative effort of the church" (Matt 28:19) requires love, communication, and trust among members in a manner that pleases God.

Theoretically, accountability is built into the organization and structure of the church (Eph 4:23; 1 Cor 3:11; Rom 12:4-5). The organization of the church is a place for people to come together in mutually supporting roles for the common goal of glorifying God. Charles Nichols describes the basic structure of the church and provides practical justification for the leader's role: "God expects leaders to take care of His flock. Leaders must lead whether it is in overseeing, equipping, or shepherding."⁴⁰ Leadership determines whether the benefits of peer-to-peer ministry is available in churches and whether or not individuals are equipped in churches to fill the critical need of building accountability among members in the body. Kouzes and Posner affirm, "Strengthening others requires that leaders provide a climate conducive to learning. With trust and openness comes a greater willingness to communicate about feelings and about problems."⁴¹ When accountability reaches levels in church relationships where open and honest communications can be established, then relational bonds will improve for people in the church.

It is possible for accountability in the church to improve. God has provided every resource necessary for the task. In conjunction with love and communication, the work of building accountability facilitates discipleship in the church community.

⁴⁰ Charles Nichols, "God's Blueprint for the Church," *Journal of Christian Education* 1, no. 2 (1981): 30.

⁴¹ Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 309.

The Discipleship Principle in Biblical Counseling

An active biblical counseling ministry improves relationships among church members and results in raising the level of discipleship within the church. James Means outlines, from a leadership perspective, how biblical counseling ministry relates to the mission of the church:

Churches must be evaluated by two achievements: fulfilling the mission of the church (task), generally recognized to be meaningful worship, the edification of believers, the evangelization of the lost, and the meeting of a variety of real needs, and fostering the cohesiveness of the church (relationships), defined by fellowship in unity (“one accord”) and agape (love) enjoined by Scripture.⁴²

Biblical counselors use the Scriptures to engage in the edification of believers, evangelization of the lost, and to foster the cohesiveness of the church with the goal of Christlikeness. Kellemen asserts that biblical counseling “cultivates conformity to Christ (the whole person becoming whole in Christ—our inner life increasingly reflecting the inner life of Christ) and communion with Christ and the body of Christ leading to a community of one-another disciple-makers (Matt 28:18-20).”⁴³ The direct, personal involvement of biblical counselors with counselees promotes the building of relationships. In-turn, the biblical counseling process inspires counselees to build relationships with other members of the community.

Relationships that evolve into discipleship are the hallmark of the church.

Speaking on the model of an “Ephesians 4 church,” David Powlison writes,

This vision of mutually constructive relationships is both promised and commanded by God. These are the things that the Maker of heaven and earth has promised to work in us and to work out through us. This means the transformation of the inner and outer workings of individuals and communities. This is our highest joy and God’s richest glory.⁴⁴

⁴² James E. Means, *Leadership in Christian Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), 10.

⁴³ Kellemen, *Gospel-Centered Counseling*, 49.

⁴⁴ David Powlison, *Speaking Truth in Love: Counsel in Community* (Winston-Salem, NC: Punch Press, 2005), 188.

A church is not a “true” church without the dynamics of relationship building and growth that honor Jesus. Kellemen states, “Christ’s training strategy for disciple-making involves pastors and teachers equipping every member to embody the truth in love through the personal ministry of the Word—biblical counseling.”⁴⁵ All churches have the potential to be havens of mutually constructive relationships, according to William Goode. He acknowledges,

The local church is the instrument Christ ordained to help believers grow into His likeness. It is the only organization--or better, organism—He promised to build, sustain, and use. Counseling is an essential part of the local church’s ministry as it disciples and helps believers mature in Christ’s image.⁴⁶

God brings people together in the local church for worship, education, service, and fellowship. As God’s instrument, the harmony of the local church is a result of how well his people work together to produce his intended results.

From a theoretical perspective, an organization requires relationship building that flows from its leadership. In the local church, the pastor should be the primary discipler. Avery Robert Dulles insists,

The pastors must be close to Christ in order to lead, but they must also be seen as disciples under the authority of the Chief Shepherd. To prevent an unhealthy alienation, the official leaders should foster the bond of love, trust and familiarity with the fellow disciples under their care. They must resemble the Good Shepherd, who calls his sheep by name and whose voice is recognized as that of a trusted leader.⁴⁷

As accountability is modeled in relationships by pastors, members learn to form bonds of love, trust, and familiarity. Daniel White discusses the phenomenon from a practical point of view:

⁴⁵ Kellemen, *Gospel-Centered Counseling*, 228.

⁴⁶ William W. Goode, “Biblical Counseling and the Local Church,” in MacArthur and Mack, *Counseling*, 223.

⁴⁷ Avery Robert Dulles, “Community of Disciples as a Model of Church,” *Philosophy & Theology* 1, no. 2 (1986): 112.

In organizations, the actions of each member both affect and are affected by the action of others. Therefore, it is worth regarding a coaching program as an intervention with the whole system, since a change in the leader's behavior will both affect and be affected by the behavior of many others.⁴⁸

White's coaching program axiom describes cascading and reciprocal personal interactions in an organization. It vividly illustrates behavioral dynamics in the local church where the "coaching program" is referred to as discipleship.

The personal interactions that occur in biblical counseling are discipleship in action. Kellemen asserts,

Because the God of the Bible is the eternal Community of intimate Oneness (John 1 and 17), biblical counselors discard aloofness in favor of "real and raw counseling." While techniques, skills, and tools of competent counseling are not ignored, soul-to-soul relating is emphasized (1 Thess 2:8). Biblical counseling practices collaborative counseling where the counselor, the counselee, and the Divine Counselor form a three-way relationship shaped by God's Word and led by God's Spirit.⁴⁹

The temporal relationships formed in the spiritually gratifying togetherness of counseling and discipling foreshadow the unity of God's "eternal Community of intimate Oneness." With biblical counseling, a deliberate effort is being made to form collaborative relationships between God, the counselee, and the counselor.

Biblical counseling inspires believers to attain higher levels of oneness and growth by feeding on God's Word. God's Word replaces worldly falsehoods and ignorance with knowledge about how to become more like Jesus, the "bread of life." Ron Allchin and Tim Allchin affirm,

Biblical counseling could aptly be defined by the phrase "teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom." Effective counselors wisely teach about the practical way life works, aiming to relate biblically to God and others. They warn about pitfalls using the vast wisdom in God's Word. They demonstrate relational skills and life experiences that minister God's Word effectively, continuing to grow themselves as they guide others in growth.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Daniel White, *Coaching Leaders: Guiding People Who Guide Others* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 270.

⁴⁹ Kellemen, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church*, 357.

⁵⁰ Ron Allchin and Tim Allchin, "Equipping Biblical Counselors for Your Church," in

As growth from biblical counseling continues, discipleship occurs. Kellemen explains,

Biblical counseling applies the principles of *progressive sanctification* to the daily lives of believers (2 Cor 3:16-18). It does so *through spiritual formation*, which cultivates *communion with Christ* and *conformity to Christ* through the practice of the biblical/historical individual and corporate spiritual disciplines. Transformative biblical counseling highlights *the inner life* through its emphasis on forming the character of Christ in us--*our inner life increasingly mirroring the inner life of Christ*. It focuses on the *body of Christ* by encouraging the corporate spiritual disciplines and by equipping believers in the individual spiritual disciplines.⁵¹

The result of biblical counseling is increased levels of discipleship. Making disciples (i.e., modeling Christ and teaching others to become more like him) is the fundamental task assigned to the church.

Robert Smith acknowledges the mutually supporting relationship of biblical counseling to discipleship:

Biblical counseling is simply an extension of discipling. There is no sharp distinction between the two. Discipling might be described as teaching basic Christian principles to a believer, whereas counseling is using those principles to deal with specific situations in a person's life. The most productive counseling grows out of the ministry of discipling a person after salvation, of teaching that individual the basic principles of living a Christian life. Biblical counselors who want to see lives change must be aggressive disciplers.⁵²

The consistent use of biblical principles in biblical counseling and discipling demonstrates the congruency of biblical counseling and discipling and the extent to which biblical counseling reinforces discipling efforts. Ron and Tim Allchin assert, "Effective biblical counselors address real issues in unhealthy spiritual lives, so those people can first become fruitful disciples and then disciple-makers to help others."⁵³ The principles of love, communication, and accountability merge in the process of discipleship. The success of the application of these principles depends on how well individual counselors

Kellemen and Carson, *Biblical Counseling and the Church*, 197-98.

⁵¹ Kellemen, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church*, 357.

⁵² Robert Smith, "Spiritual Discipline and the Biblical Counselor," in MacArthur and Mack *Counseling*, 93.

⁵³ Allchin and Allchin, "Equipping Biblical Counselors for Your Church," 200.

are trained and supported.

The Need for Biblical Counseling Training

Training is necessary to provide fundamental knowledge and techniques to lay people for success in their roles in peer-to-peer ministry. Biblical counseling training has Old Testament roots. Michael Lawson writes about how, in the Old Testament, “God permeated family life. Theological education connected truth and living.”⁵⁴ The commandments God gave Moses were directed to leaders of every household of God’s people, who would, in turn, teach their families God’s commandments (Deut 6:7-9). In the New Testament, God commands that his Word is taught to believers in the church and everywhere in the world (1 Tim 4:10-11; Matt 28:19-20). In the western hemisphere, culture and technology have distanced God’s people from each other and away from the intimacy of the oral teaching tradition. Biblical counseling training is a means of closing the distances between God’s people and creating intimacy through the relationships that develop during counseling interventions.

The need for biblical counseling is growing and in many cases being accomplished by people ill-prepared for the task. Having poorly trained biblical counselors can negate the positive effects of biblical counseling and be detrimental to members seeking support. Moreover, a poorly trained counselor could be personally devastated by encounters they experience for which they are unprepared. Allchin and Allchin assert, “Nothing is more frustrating than being asked to do a job for which you feel unprepared. Formal training will help your people connect the dots between pulpit preaching, practical theology, and common-to-man struggles.”⁵⁵ For the benefit of potential counselors and counselees, the church should commit to the best possible training available.

⁵⁴ Michael S. Lawson, “Old Testament Teachings on the Family,” in *A Theology for Family Ministries*, ed. Michael J. Anthony and Michelle D. Anthony (Nashville: B & H, 2011), 77.

⁵⁵ Allchin and Allchin, “Equipping Biblical Counselors for Your Church,” 200.

If a church has made an acknowledgment of problems existing in the lives of its members that the work of the ministry can resolve, it should consider expending effort and time to support a biblical counseling ministry. Brad Hambrick notes, “For those serving as formal lay counselors, their church should select the training program that best fits the church’s needs and theology.”⁵⁶ The question of many churches is how to accomplish the training task. Too often, an “easy remedy” is sought. Two common choices are (1) the exclusive use of a parachurch organization, and (2) a short-term, in-house, training of volunteer church members.

Ron Allchin and Tim Allchin encourage the use of parachurch organizations to provide or augment biblical counseling training: “Ministries like ABC, ACBC, BCC, CCEF, IABC, and IBCD, and other training organizations can help with your counselors with proven and consistent results.”⁵⁷ The available remedy of using an outside agency for biblical counseling is neither a guarantee of counseling excellence nor does it relieve the church leadership of its responsibility to “equip” its members for ministry.

The other common remedy is the launching of short-term, in-house training programs to equip volunteers. The in-house training option has the advantage of keeping training activities and the counseling under the authority of the church body. Consequently, newly trained counselors may require follow-on support, become overwhelmed by the gravity of counselee problems, or lack of skills needed to adapt to the changing needs of a congregation. These shortfalls may be overcome with a plan for continued training. Training in the local church can engender confidence in the trainees and help them envision “a sustainable future in the biblical counseling ministry” of the church.⁵⁸ With either

⁵⁶ Brad Hambrick, “The Competency of the Biblical Counselor,” in *Scripture and Counseling: God’s Word for Life in a Broken World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 291.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 206.

⁵⁸ Garrett Higbee, “Biblical Counseling and Soul Care in the Church,” in Kellemen and Carson, *Biblical Counseling and the Church*, 67-68.

choice of training options, churches must acknowledge the need for biblical counseling in their congregations and commit to supporting it as a ministry—for the long-term.

The mission of the church is too vital to the salvation of those outside the church and the sanctification of those in the church to minister to the needs of God’s people in a half-hearted fashion. God has given the church every resource needed to do excellent work for Him (Jas 1:17). Kellemen addresses the matter of intentional, comprehensive support of the gospel mission through counseling:

I tend to see churches today swinging the pendulum toward the extreme of spontaneity without structure, organism without organization, and experiences without equipping. Relative to biblical counseling, that would result in being a church *of* one-another ministry (which is vital), but never becoming a church *with* an envisioned, enlisted, equipped, and empowered biblical counseling ministry. We should oversee a ministry which provides the entire congregation with access to believers who are competent to counsel. It is never either/or.⁵⁹

An envisioned, enlisted, equipped, and empowered biblical counseling ministry may sound lofty and extreme. However, lofty and extreme places the matter so squarely within the realm of capability of God to accomplish through willing vessels.

Conclusion

Equipping believers in biblical counseling encourages and enables them to be more confident in the use of their counseling skills while raising the level of discipleship in the church. Equipping believers in biblical counseling helps foster the “private ministry of the Word” ministry idealized by Carson and Tautges:

[Biblical counseling] takes place everywhere in the church. It is one member of the body talking with another member of the body—informally and formally. It combines the experiences of life in a fallen world with our life in Christ as a child of God. We focus on loving Christ and each other. We strive to be wise. We work through issues of sin and suffering; we live life, together Here we have personal, prayerful, change-oriented, and Christ-focused conversations with one another as we speak the truth, provide accountability, and prayer with one another (Matt 7:5; Rom 15:4; 2 Cor 1:4; Eph 4:15, 29-32; 1 Thess 5:14; Heb 3:13, 10:24; 1 Pet 4:7-11).⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Kellemen, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church*, 252-53.

⁶⁰ Kevin Carson and Paul Tautges, “Uniting the Public Ministry of the Word and the Private

Carson and Tautges summarize the work of biblical counseling. They indicate the functions of love, communication, accountability, and discipleship that occur “everywhere in the church.” Biblical counseling in the local church is a dynamic process that demands the highest levels of preparedness and skill on the part of the practitioners while yielding to the anointing and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Biblical counseling affects everyone in the church.

Correspondingly, everyone in the church can, through prayer and resources, support the biblical counseling ministry. Charles Nichols, Director of Christian Education at Grace Bible College, asserts,

There is no place for spectators in the body of Christ. All must be involved for this fellowship to function properly. Under the headship of Christ, spiritual leaders directed by the Holy Spirit equip the saints for total involvement which results in a mature and unified church.⁶¹

Analyzing and discussing the principles of love, communication, accountability, and discipleship in biblical counseling has demonstrated the potential for biblical counseling to help build the body of Christ and to encourage fellow members towards Christlikeness.

Ministry of the Word,” in Kellemen and Carson, *Biblical Counseling and the Church*, 83.

⁶¹ Nichols, “God’s Blueprint for the Church,” 30-31.

CHAPTER 4

DETAILS AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

Introduction

The purpose of this project was to develop and implement a biblical counseling ministry at Rock Hill Baptist Church (RHBC), in Greenville, South Carolina. Chapter 2 provided the biblical foundation and theological support for the biblical counseling ministry. Chapter 3 addressed the role of biblical counseling in the mission of the church, ways biblical counseling bolsters the ability of believers to support fellow believers, and the need for biblical counseling training in the local church. The project challenged and enlightened the congregation at RHBC. This chapter describes and provides a detailed account of the activities and events of the project.

Development of the Curriculum

Four weeks were allotted for developing curriculum for the introductory biblical counseling class. Prior to developing the curriculum, I received permission for the class to be held in the lower level of the church building. Along with acquiring space for the class, an overhead projector and video screen were purchased and set up, and a whiteboard was purchased and installed to make the space suitable for classroom instruction. For the members of RHBC involved in the preparatory activities for conducting the course, these activities created an awareness of the details involved in preparing for current classroom instruction. This course was the first biblical counseling class conducted at RHBC. It was also the first class offered at the church that included instruction with formal study guides, PowerPoint presentations, and video presentations.

The material resources for the class were acquired during this four-week period. In week 1, resources were gathered and organized. Initially, local retailers did not have *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands Study Guide* by Paul David Tripp on hand.¹ This study guide was the critical resource for the biblical counseling training. However, with support from the Christian Counseling and Education Foundation, (CCEF), twelve copies of the study guides were located and purchased online along with a DVD that was developed as a teaching aid for the course.² Course certificates, folders, and student supplies were also ordered in week 1.

Class lectures were developed in week 2. The lecture topics were structured to follow the sequence of discussions in the *Instruments* study guide. I created PowerPoint presentations to be used during class lecture/discussion periods. Considerable effort went into internet searches for culturally sensitive clip art, photos, and music clips to help the participants feel comfortable with the material. The internet searches were successful in locating clip art photos for use in enhancing the PowerPoint presentations. Several clip art items and photos were located and deemed appropriate for reuse with themes that would be addressed in more than one lecture (e.g., the heart, love, etc.). The assumption behind the repeated use of various graphics was to help participants recall information from lectures and discussions they had previously seen. Moreover, it was crucial to select visual themes that were especially fitting to the culture and circumstances at RHBC.

Awareness of the culture of RHBC inspired me to incorporate music into the class time of the biblical training course. The RHBC congregation tends to include music in every facet of their worship time together. Music clips were selected for use in the PowerPoint slides as an appropriate means of making transitions from one subject to

¹ Paul David Tripp and Timothy S. Lane, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: How to Help Others Change, Study Guide* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2010).

² Paul Tripp and Timothy S. Lane, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands, Seminar DVD* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2014).

another, for creating a break in discussions on tedious subjects, and to just add an element of joy to the overall learning process.

I developed the student guides and teacher guide in week 3. The student guides included the *Instruments* study guide, supplemented with handouts I created.³ The handouts I created consisted of printed case studies, counseling scenarios, articles, and other materials related to the lecture/discussion topics. Other handouts were set aside to be passed out during class time. The tentative plan was for students to be given additional handouts, like cases for discussion, on the day of the related topic discussion. Notebook binders were provided with the study guides. The binders were intended for use by the students to maintain their class handouts and to make the handouts readily accessible during the twelve-week course. The teacher guide was developed using PowerPoint handouts (smaller versions of PowerPoint presentations with printed lines for note-taking). I made annotations alongside relevant slides as reminders to play a video clip, distribute handouts, etc. The process of developing the student guides and teacher guide inspired me to give praise to God because it meant that a long-held dream was coming to fruition.

During week 4, class materials were compiled, and instructors were matched with the portion of the course they offered to teach. Label inserts were made for the student binders and handouts for the first week's lesson articles were revised. Welcome gifts bags were stocked with pens, notepads, Scripture booklets, and Scripture verse bookmark. I compiled a course calendar that listed the dates of classes with corresponding topic and name of the instructor. The calendar was forwarded to the other instructors.

Curriculum Evaluation and Revision

The curriculum evaluation and revision were accomplished in week 5. The ministry project team evaluated the counseling material by means of a rubric to ensure the subject matter was sufficiently covered, that multiple teaching methods were employed,

³ Tripp and Lane, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands, Study Guide*.

and that the material was biblically faithful. This team consisted of men and women who were engaged in the field of education and teaching of the Bible and were faithful members of evangelical churches. The evaluation of the project determined how well the content of the course provided the essential biblical knowledge and practical skills to support the project. The evaluation also determined whether the course material adequately presented information that was clear, pertinent to the congregation's needs, and relevant to the subject of biblical counseling. The team used a rubric (see appendix 1) to evaluate the scope and sequence, biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, and contextual usability of the biblical counseling model. The curriculum evaluation rubric and curriculum materials were emailed to two of the evaluators and hand-delivered to the third evaluator. The ministry project team was given written instructions on how to use the evaluation rubric. Further clarifications were provided through telephone conversations. The ministry project team members were encouraged to return the completed rubrics in one week or to contact me for the completed rubrics to be personally picked up within one week.

In week 6, I received completed evaluation forms from the project team members. The team endorsed the curriculum by collectively marking the rubric indicators above the predetermined goal of 90 percent. The ministry project team concurred with renaming the training course. It was determined that "Introduction to Biblical Counseling" seemed too formal and academic for the members of RHBC. In response to the advice, the name of the course was changed to "One Another Ministry" and applied to course handouts, recruitment literature, and PowerPoint presentations.

Recruitment Efforts

During the three-week recruitment efforts for the biblical counseling course series, I preached three sermons and provided printed announcements for distribution to RHBC members. The purpose was to create interest and inform RHBC members of the biblical counseling training. The printed announcements were used for announcements from the pulpit and were provided as church bulletin inserts to attendees during each of

the morning services.

In week 7, I developed and preached the sermon “Ungodly Counsel.” The sermon text was Psalm 1. This message highlighted aspects of secular counseling that are contrary to biblical teaching and that ultimately create problems in the lives of its adherents. The message contrasted “ungodly” counsel with godly counsel, acknowledging that godly council has as its root the Word of God, as recorded in Scripture. Using 2 Timothy 3:16-17, the sermon cited the sufficiency, power, and authority of God’s Word for advice, direction, guidance, or counsel for anyone, at any time, in any place, and for any situation.

I made a verbal announcement and gave instruction to church members to contact me or a ministry project team member (also an RHBC member) regarding questions about the “One Another Ministry” training. A written announcement was distributed to church service attendees.

In week 8, the sermon “Where Is The Love?” was developed and preached. The message focus was on the commands of God for believers to first love Him, and to then focus on loving others. The core text for the sermon was Matthew 22:36-40. The sermon topic was supported by Scripture from Leviticus 19:18 and Galatians 5:13-14. The latter two passages were used to proclaim the imperative for Christians to love one another and to disclaim the notion for Christians that loving one another is a choice. The sermon was concluded with acknowledging the emphasis biblical counseling training places on the importance of love in peer-to-peer ministry.

A verbal announcement was made instructing interested individuals to contact me or a project team member (also a church member) regarding questions about the “One Another Ministry” training. An effort was made to emphasize the then impending start date. A written announcement was distributed to church service attendees.

In week 9, I developed and preached the sermon “Before We All Get to Heaven.” The background text of the message was Ephesians 4:11-13. The message

featured the significance of unity in the body of Christ as it is espoused in Scripture. It noted how Jesus provided gifted believers to build-up other believers so that, with a foundation of biblical doctrine, they might help equip others for ministry and mutual edification. The message concluded with an exhortation to the church on the value of a biblical counseling ministry that helps a church body learn to speak properly (i.e., speaking the truth in love [Eph 4:15]) and ultimately grow properly (Eph 4:16).

I made a verbal announcement and gave instruction to contact the project leader or a project team member regarding questions about being a part of the “One Another Ministry” training. I also emphasized the then impending start date. A written announcement was distributed to church service attendees.

Implementation of the Curriculum

Recruiting for the twelve-week biblical counselor training yielded fourteen participants, two more than the target of twelve people. None of the participants expressed having knowledge of biblical counseling before their exposure to the recruitment efforts for this course. Most participants stated an interest in learning about how they could use the Bible to help others with matters they assumed were reserved for “professionals.” Of the fourteen participants, three were the deacons who advocated for conducting the training. Their presence provided a level of legitimacy that is crucial to the success of culture changing activities as the course was viewed to be. Some of the participants admitted they were hesitant about signing up for the course because it was “a twelve-week class, with homework!” Others commented that it was “a daunting challenge,” and “a lot like going to school.” The introduction to biblical counseling course, “One Another Ministry,” began on week 10 of the project.

Training Week 1

On the first evening of training, considerable time was spent on the preliminary activities of class members adjusting to the transformation of the rarely used lower level

space in the church. Unanticipated reconfiguration of video and sound equipment also disrupted the desired flow of activities on the first evening, but these matters were shortly overcome, and after a time of devotion, instruction began in earnest. I provided an overview of the course and explained how the course was designed so that each topic would build on the understanding of issues discussed in previous lessons. Teaching was conducted on the topic, “Do We Really Need Help?”

I facilitated discussion to help participants become comfortable sharing their impressions regarding their awareness of their spiritual needs. Key Scripture references were Isaiah 55:10-13, Ephesians 4:11-16, Genesis 3:1-7, and Hebrews 3:12-13. These passages provided insight on the covenant relationship of believers with God, God’s provision of gifted people to help believers make positive changes, believers’ need for the Word of God in a fallen world, and the need of mutual support among believers in the struggle against the deceitfulness of sin.

Class participants engaged in a scenario designed to reveal whether church members tended to admit faults or make excuses. The activity involved participants making impromptu responses to questions read out loud from a written script. There were frequent outbursts of laughter. However, the exercise was effective in stimulating candid conversations about how church members tended to handle themselves in sensitive discussions. The consensus of the group was that the exercise revealed that most of the participants experienced a general tendency to appear pious and “in control” in the presence of other Christians rather than admitting shortcomings and failures. An appropriate closing comment was made by one participant: “I came into this [class] hoping to learn how I could help other people. I’m just now realizing tonight how much help I need for myself!” The unsolicited confession was a clear indication that the class was headed in the right direction.

Training Week 2

In week 11, teaching was conducted on the topic, “The Heart is the Target.”

The words of Jesus concerning the role of the heart in the conduct of individuals proved thought-provoking. The imagery produced by Jesus' words, as found in Luke 6:43-46, made some participants initially uncomfortable and provided more discussion than was anticipated. Paul David Tripp's discussion on "the principle of inescapable influence" (i.e., "whatever rules the heart will exercise inescapable influence over a person's life and behavior"⁴) helped participants talk about their anxious reactions from the earlier discussion from Luke 6:43-46. The consensus on the effect of the discussions was that the group realized that the truth of the matter regarding their discomfort lay dormant in Scripture until the Scripture was determined to hold the solution to their anxiety.

It became evident to the class participants that the believers they might eventually counsel would no doubt have similar reactions to discussions of heart issues. A discussion on idol worship from Ezekiel 14:1-5, Romans 1:25, and Matthew 6:19-24 helped further expose the powerful grip that sin places on the heart of the person who is estranged from God. Hebrews 4:12-13 was explored in-depth to explain the power of God's Word to expose the heart completely. Since verse 12 is commonly referenced in evangelical churches, I called on several people to "assist" me in dissecting the verse. The ensuing discussion was lively and facilitated a smooth transition to a discussion of verse 13. Several comments were made about how the profound implications for revealing the guarded secrets of human hearts in verse 13 could be so often overlooked.

The momentum of the class discussion led to an unplanned review of Jeremiah 17:9. Group members considered the source of the "desperate wickedness" of the human heart and concluded that innate sinfulness that people are born with is the source. From that source grew the yearning for various idols to worship because of how the flesh is drawn to lust after various idols. The result of the discussion was a consensus in response to the rhetorical question posed in Jeremiah 17:9—that men and women could never

⁴ Tripp and Lane, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands, Study Guide*, 16.

“know” the heart. The group also concluded that science could never be effective in changing the hearts of men and women. Acknowledging that since God only had the power to know and change hearts, biblical counselors need to first request of God the heart changes needed. Then counselors could consider themselves useful, as instruments of His grace to be of service to others.

Training Week 3

In week 12 of the project, teaching was conducted on “Understanding Your Heart Struggle.” The subject of idolatry continued in this week’s lesson from the previous lesson. The participants rallied around the expression that “whatever controls the heart controls the individual.” A series of photos were used within the PowerPoint presentation to depict the growing control of sinful desires that can stem from a casual thought to become extreme, harmful actions. Participants were charged as biblical counselors to “through love serve one another” (Gal 5:13).

Training Week 4

In week 13, teaching was conducted on the topic “Following the Wonderful Counselor.” The song, “I’ll Walk with God” was played during the devotional period. The focus of the week’s discussion was on representing Jesus. Knowing the mind of Jesus through the knowledge of his Word, knowing and following the ways of Jesus, and acquiring the character of Jesus are all essential pursuits for biblical counselors. Hebrews 4:14-16 provided the illustration of an all-powerful, all-knowing God in the form of a man as approachable to believers because he understands and is willing to accept believers for who and what they are, God’s redeemed creations. Participants were urged, as biblical counselors, to strive to emulate the qualities of Jesus to the fullest extent of their calling and their ability.

Training Weeks 5 and 6

In weeks 14 and 15, teaching was conducted on the topic “Love I and Love II:

Building Relationships in Which God’s Work Will Thrive.” The lesson format was lecture/discussion with a PowerPoint presentation and role-play exercises that helped to demonstrate effective techniques in engaging other Christians about spiritual problems. Participants were instructed on the role of suffering in personal ministry, accepting the general condition of all humankind as sufferers, and relating to one another in the example of Jesus, the ultimate sufferer. Participants questioned my strong emphasis on suffering. Accordingly, additional time was spent studying Hebrews 2:10-11 for clarity on the subject of suffering. The focus of both lessons was on understanding the critical quality of humility in personal ministry.

Training Weeks 7 and 8

During weeks 16 and 17, teaching was conducted on the topic “Know I and Know II: Getting to Know People; Discovering Where Change Is Needed.” These lessons focused on establishing the kind of relationships with people that allow biblical counselors to get close enough to them to be trusted and loved. The model for getting to know people was Jesus, as described in Hebrews 4:14-16. The class discussed useful concepts for getting to know others. Among them were data gathering, avoiding making assumptions, and asking right questions.

The class engaged in scenarios designed to practice observing and assessing the life situations of individuals seeking counseling. Another set of scenarios was used to provide practice in understanding individuals involved in a biblical counseling situation. Class members described the scenarios as sobering, somber, and draining. Additional time was used at the end of the second session to allow members to share their thoughts concerning the emotional challenge of getting to know others and engaging in prayer with each other.

Training Weeks 9 and 10

During weeks 18 and 19, teaching was conducted on the topic “Speak I and

Speak II: Speaking the Truth in Love.” The lesson topic created an impromptu mini-lesson on the concept of speaking the truth in love. Comments shared regarding the first lesson on speaking the truth in love were generally along the lines of, “This seems to be really hard to do,” and “I don’t know if I could do that.” Considerable time was spent with a line by line study of Hebrews 3:12-13 and Romans 8:1-17, causing the class time to go over a two-hour limit. The terms *rebuke* and *confrontation* were prominent subjects in these two lessons. The terms also prompted unscheduled discussion of Scripture to explicate the positive and helpful connotations of the words that today’s culture generally regard as negative (Prov 27:5-6). Second Corinthians 5:16-20 was studied to illuminate the concepts of rebuke and confrontation.

Comments and responses from the class on the benefit of the lessons on speaking the truth in love on the second week were surprisingly positive. The humble admission of lack of understanding on basic biblical concepts, by members of this class, revealed a severe lack of Bible knowledge in the congregation. The responses also revealed that the power of God’s Word was at work in this group. The responses affirmed the need for this biblical counseling course at RHBC. The course was already being effective at furthering the cause of unity and sanctification for which it was established.

Training Week 11

In week 20, teaching was conducted on the topic “Do I: Applying Change to Everyday Life.” The focus of the lesson was on clarifying responsibility. Since we were nearing the end of the twelve weeks, I made a deliberate effort to review, from lesson 1 through 10, all of the prerequisite aspects of biblical counseling discussed previously. We were finally at the “Do” stage in the “Love, Know, Speak, and Do” structure, and I felt it was essential to appreciate the preliminary work necessary to engage with a counselee. The use of the whiteboard made it easy to outline how the four aspects build on each

preceding function.⁵ After the review, we did a role play exercise with members of the group. The three class members portrayed a couple going to a counselor and demanding to be counseled by a counselor with whom they had never met. The purpose of the role play was to dramatize the point of the review that critical preliminary steps must be taken to engage appropriately in biblical counseling.

At the beginning of class, participants were asked to write a fictitious name of a person and a subject of concern regarding the individual. This exercise was used to allow me to select later a class member to share a brief description of the situation involving the individual chosen and to then tie the scenario in with the lecture. Several slides depicting various life situations (impoverished, substance abuse, relationship problems, etc.) were shown during the various discussions to aid in conceptualizing the particular life events being discussed. Tripp notes, “People need practical clarity to help them through the process of change.”⁶ His statement provided an anchor for the discussions on applying change to everyday life.

The critical discussion of lesson 11 was on the importance of having a proper perspective of our roles in counseling. We talked about the difference between concerns and responsibility. Concerns were acknowledged as matters beyond our ability. Although the concerns may profoundly affect us, they are not our responsibility. So, we leave the concerns in God’s care. For the things God has called us to do, we accept that we cannot pass these on to anyone else. Our task is to seek understanding from God (through prayer, and the study of the Word) and to be faithful in our resolve to obey God. The key

⁵ One particularly successful exercise was writing “DO Counseling” in very large letters and asking rhetorical questions about “doing counseling.” Some examples were “How are we going to do counseling with someone when we no awareness of how to speak to her or him? Then, “How can we speak about the intimate and personal matters of biblical counseling with someone when we don’t know the individual and the individual doesn’t know us? Finally, how can we know someone unless we love them as one of God’s creations whom he sent our way to serve? The approach was very effective in capturing the attention of the class and initiating conversation and responses.

⁶ Tripp and Lane, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands, Study Guide*, 134.

Scriptures discussed in lesson 20 were Luke 9:23-25 (Jesus' call for those who would follow him to take up their crosses) and 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 (recognizing that the love of Christ controls us; Christ died so that those who live no longer live for themselves, but for him).

Training Week 12

In week 21, teaching was conducted on the topic "Do II: Applying Change to Everyday Life." The focus of the lesson was on accountability. Several slides with pictures of people from various scenes of everyday life were shown. Class members were called upon to describe what they saw and to provide a background story to explain what might have happened in the individual's life prior to our seeing the picture of them. Finally, I asked, in cases where the individual's circumstances appeared to be favorable, "who gets the credit?" In the cases where the individual's circumstances appeared to be unfortunate, I asked the question, "who gets the blame?" The resulting discussion provided a background for the main discussion on biblical accountability.

The primary discussion was on how biblical counseling incorporates the benefits of biblical accountability in helping others solve problems. We discussed five ways it helps individuals. Accountability provides structure, guidance, assistance, encouragement, and warning. The discussion emphasis was on spiritual growth through a closer walk with Jesus. To stress the point that accountability was about helping others, and not condemning others, I offered a quote from Tripp: "Accountability is not about chasing a person who does not want to change or trying to do the work of the Holy Spirit. It is the willingness to provide ongoing help to the person who is fully committed to the 'put off/put on' process."⁷ The primary Scriptures for lesson 12 were Galatians 6:2 ("carry each other's burdens") and Hebrews 3:13 ("encourage one another daily").

⁷ Tripp and Lane, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands, Study Guide*, 184.

Closing activities took place at the end of the last class. Post-test surveys were distributed, completed, and collected. The group was provided a choice of Sunday service date from which to determine the optimum date for a “commissioning ceremony.” Commissioning ceremonies at RHBC are used to formally recognize church officers and appointees (e.g., deacons, Sunday school teachers, etc.) in their stated roles. Although the formality is similar to that of the “right hand of fellowship” (a practice wherein newly accepted members stand in the front of the worship hall and are greeted with handshakes from the membership in procession), it is meant to give credence to the individual’s role or office in the church. The class and course ended with the group celebrating the end of twelve weeks together with light snacks and refreshments.

Tallying Questionnaire Results

Based on the established criterion for determining its success, the goal of instructing biblical counselors in a small classroom setting by implementing the biblical training course at RHBC was achieved. As part of the process of signing up for the class, potential class members were asked to complete a pre-class questionnaire that tested their knowledge and use of the biblical and practical disciplines involved in biblical counseling. The same questionnaire was given at the end of the last class session to determine if knowledge and skill usage had increased. This goal was deemed successful when the *t*-test for dependent samples statistically demonstrated a significant positive difference between the pre- and post-survey scores. The *t*-test results for the participant survey scores ($t_{(12)} = 5.26, p < 0.0001$) indicate that participants significantly increased in their knowledge and skill usage of the biblical and practical disciplines of biblical counseling.

Conclusion

The purpose of this project was to begin equipping members for biblical counseling ministry at Rock Hill Baptist Church (RHBC), in Greenville, South Carolina.

Based on the positive comments from the thirteen surviving participants,⁸ the course was a rigorous, but rewarding, academic challenge. For others, it was a first-time opportunity to study Scripture with a clear focus on what God was revealing to them regarding spiritual matters they had never presented to God before. Several class members commented that being in the course for twelve weeks gave them the time and opportunity they needed to begin feeling comfortable about sharing their feelings and misgivings on the sufficiency of Scripture, while engaging with the instructor and their fellow class members on matters of personal sin. These reactions suggest successes of the project even beyond those of the stated project goals. The following chapter provides a full evaluation of this project.

⁸ Of the fourteen original participants, one individual had a schedule conflict with the class time after accepting a new job. Other absences were “made up” by scheduling to meet with me to receive and review the missed class material prior to the next class.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

The previous chapter described the parts of the project and highlighted the details of each phase. This final chapter assesses the entire project. First, an evaluation of the project's purpose is rendered. Second, the four goals of the project are assessed. Third, selected strengths and weaknesses of the project are discussed. Fourth, options for modifications to the project are offered. Fifth, theological and personal reflections are presented. Finally, the chapter concludes with a statement of hope regarding God's plan for the lasting effects outcome of this ministry project.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

The purpose of this project was to develop and implement a biblical counseling ministry at Rock Hill Baptist Church (RHBC), in Greenville, South Carolina. The congregation has existed for more than 140 years. It is notable that the congregation would act at this point in their history to become a more effective gospel-promoting and disciple-making assembly of believers. The church leadership resolved to employ the biblical principles and techniques of biblical counseling to achieve this end. The fact that the church would be willing to venture beyond their traditional confines is an ambitious undertaking.

Christian education activities like the biblical counseling training course are not a part of the history of RHBC. The church curtailed its Baptist Training Union and evening worship activities more than ten years ago. The church has primarily engaged in attending and hosting celebratory type worship services (i.e., church anniversaries, homecoming day events, etc.), attending and hosting annual revival meetings with other

congregations within their association, and supporting “fellowship” events with churches of similar background in the Greenville County community. Based on information from long-term members of RHBC and members of other churches, none of the churches within the RHBC circles of fellowship have been introduced to the concepts and practices of biblical counseling. Consequently, the subject of biblical counseling was a new and foreign concept when introduced to RHBC.

When the deacons and other leaders in the church were approached with the subject of biblical counseling, they responded to the concept of the idea of peer-to-peer ministry as if they had a single heart and mind. The church leaders resolved to support the training of committed disciplers, recognizing the benefit of their presence in promoting spiritual growth and unity among the membership. They realized the need for having a biblical counseling ministry was also an urgent matter. They determined that there were benefits to having members trained to assist the pastor and deacons in their work with the congregation and that it was practical and spiritually beneficial. All of these leaders sacrificed the time and engaged in the work of the biblical counseling training. Their involvement in the project was an attestation of their support of the ideal of trained lay people using Scripture to minister to the needs of fellow church members.

Evaluation of the Project’s Goals

Goal 1

The first goal of this project was to develop a twelve-week biblical counseling course. The course was designed to enhance the effectiveness of believers in counseling other believers through the instruction of relevant biblical and practical disciplines. The review phase of the project determined how well the content of the course provided the essential biblical knowledge and practical skills to support the project by presenting information that was clear, pertinent to the congregation’s needs, and relevant to the subject of biblical counseling. This goal was measured by the ministry project team who used a rubric to evaluate the scope and sequence, biblical faithfulness, teaching

methodology, and contextual usability of the biblical counseling model (see appendix 1). The results of the rubric reveal a composite score of 124 points out of a possible 132 points. This score translates to 93.9 percent. This goal was deemed successful. 90 percent of the rubric indicators are marked sufficient or above.

Goal 2

The second goal of this project was to recruit at least twelve church members to participate in the 12-week, introductory biblical counseling course. This goal was a challenge accepted based on hope. The church has 120 members. Asking for 12 people to commit to the biblical counseling class regimen was an act of faith in the Holy Spirit to draw the interest of the people he would have in this course. Based on the average attendance rates for Sunday school and Bible study participation, the probability of having more than 10 people register for the class was small.

It was necessary to set an aggressive recruitment goal because to set a lower goal would have demonstrated a lack of trust in the Holy Spirit's power to bring the project to fruition. In total, 14 people registered for the course. One person dropped out near the mid-point of the course due to a job change. Thirteen people completed the course. This goal was deemed successful when the 14 people signed commitment statements affirming their willingness to participate in the course and to make themselves available to church members for counseling (see appendix 2).

The recruitment efforts involved several people who expressed surprise and joy in seeing the level of quality that went into announcement flyers and bulletin inserts. Other members commented positively on what they learned from the sermons during the recruitment phase of the project. The recruitment phase of the project generated genuine excitement about a biblical training class, committing to 12 weeks of Sunday evening classes, and committing to be available to the congregation-at-large following the training. The work toward achieving this goal was a benefit to the people who sat through

the course and to those who learned about it. Overall, the result of the recruitment phase is a clear indication of its value.

Goal 3

The third goal of this project was to conduct the twelve-week biblical counseling class based on the results of the course review process. This goal was measured using a pre- and post-class questionnaire (see appendix 3). Class members were asked to complete a pre-class questionnaire that tested their knowledge and use of the biblical and practical disciplines that were covered in class. The results of the pre-test revealed anticipated variances in the knowledge levels of participants. Factors like education levels, involvement in Sunday school, etc., were good predictors of how well individuals scored on the pre-test. It revealed that several participants had a reasonable knowledge of the scope of personal issues biblical counseling can resolve. However, the pre-test included questions about personal issues commonly considered by people unfamiliar with biblical counseling to be strictly for referral only to practitioners of psychology. These questions were used as indicators of the lack of knowledge about biblical counseling that the course was designed to provide.

The stacked area chart (see appendix 4) shows that all the participants were deficient in their pre-test understanding of several salient points about the effectiveness of biblical counseling to help people in dealing with conditions commonly referred to practitioners of psychology. The low points on the Pre-Test Response Accuracy Detail graph depict the across the board low scores for questions 6, 8, 11, 14, 15, and 17.¹ These six questions were designed such that the appropriate responses would be counterintuitive

¹ Question 6: “Christian counseling and biblical counseling are the same.” Question 8: “Building a person’s self-esteem is a primary goal of biblical counseling.” Question 11: “Group counseling is an important part of biblical counseling.” Question 14: “I am comfortable counseling someone who says he is grieving over past loss in his life.” Question 15: “I am comfortable counseling someone who says he is without hope.” Question 17: “I am comfortable counseling someone who says she is addicted to pornography.”

for individuals who possessed little or no knowledge of biblical counseling. The question design created clear indicators of whether the individual's pre-test knowledge the subjects about biblical counseling in questions 6, 8, 11, 14, 15, and 17. The course was developed to focus portions of the instruction on the subjects covered in these six questions. Individuals who did not score well on the six questions were deemed most likely to acquire new knowledge and skills in the biblical counseling course.

Success for this goal was deemed accomplished when the *t*-test for dependent samples statistically demonstrated a significant positive difference between the pre- and post-survey scores. Based on the pre-established criterion of a positive, significant difference between the pre-test scores (see appendix 5) and the post-test scores (see appendix 6) of class participants, as determined by a *t*-test statistic, this goal was successfully completed. The mean score increased 34.8 points from the pre-test to the post-test (out of 132 possible points). The absolute value of the *t*-statistic was 5.11, and the *p*-value of 0.0001 is less than $p=.01$. Consequently, it can be concluded that the increase in the students' knowledge of biblical counseling is a result of the instruction received during the twelve-week course.

Goal 4

The fourth goal was to develop a ministry plan for the routine practical application of biblical counseling by the biblical counseling course participants in their respective spheres within the church body. Before the start of the class, each course participant completed and signed statements of commitment to use the knowledge and skills they learned in the course for the benefit of their fellow church members (see appendix 2). Class members were recognized by the church body with the public award of course completion certificates and the public charge of duty to serve the RHBC congregation. The initiation of the biblical counseling ministry was on Sunday, January 14, 2018. The completion of the class was only a part of the requirement for the successful accomplishment of this goal.

The plan to use a signed commitment form as the means of legitimizing and authorizing members to counsel is deficient for several reasons. First, it does not provide for establishing the structure for counseling assignments, providing backup support, etc., Second, it leaves an inexperienced person without an established support system for resolving problems with counselees, etc. Lastly, the plan lacks the structure of an organization with meeting times and places, defined lines of communication with counselees and church officials, etc. The plan virtually fails the church because it now has partially trained individuals, but no stable structure in-place for them to be accessible to the membership.

Strengths of the Project

The project exhibited two main strengths. First, there was genuine interest from an adequate number of participants to conduct the class. Their strong desire to participate in the training and to learn about biblical counseling helped overcome shortfalls in other areas of the project and spurred the instructor to prepare diligently and expertly present information in the classes. The interest and cooperation of the class participants enabled the instructor to keep the class focused on the subjects in the lessons while creating a relaxed learning atmosphere. A second strength was the material chosen as the basis for the introductory biblical counseling course.² The straight-forward “Love-Know-Speak-Do” format that Paul Tripp uses grasped the concentration of the class participants throughout the twelve weeks. A frequent question during class discussions was, “How does this Scripture relate to” love, know, speak, or do? The easy to remember love, know, speak, or do format also facilitated class reviews of previously discussed lessons. It was an easy to scheme to conceptualize. At any point in the lesson series, a learner could determine what was covered. Additionally, the format of the study guide

² Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2002).

facilitated the inclusion of additional materials specific to the RHBC community. This feature was essential to counter the general sentiment at RHBC that many of the published Bible study materials did not culturally relate them.

Weaknesses of the Project

The project had three weaknesses that detracted from the quality of the instruction and the ability of the newly trained members to continue the ministry for which they trained. Of the three weaknesses, the classroom accommodations are the most tangible item. The space for the biblical counseling training was in the lower level of the main church building. Considerable effort was made to acquire tables and chairs and to configure seating for clear lines of view with the instructor at the podium and the video screen. However, modifications had to be made to the seating arrangement to accommodate placement of extension cords for electric power, video and sound equipment cords, computers, and related equipment in the large room. The awkward setting of the classroom diminished the learning experience. The noise level of the class was another distracting feature of the accommodations. Only one-quarter of the space was required to seat the fourteen students. The concrete walls and tile floor of the remaining space created echoes. Still, the class members tolerated the arrangement and commented favorably on the efforts that had been made to create comfortable classroom space.

Another weakness was the project was the time slot made available for the class to meet at the church. The class met on Sunday evenings, at 5:00 p.m. RHBC had abandoned Sunday evening services years before this project was offered. Consequently, there were no other activities going on to support children if a parent of children wanted to participate in the class. While it may have been an advantage to have the entire parking lot, no “people distractions,” etc., the lack of support for children, due to the time the class was offered, may have been a factor. The common complaint from the class attendees was that the course time was always conflicting with a family event or a sports broadcast.

The third and last weakness to be discussed is the lack of a long-range plan and vision for the new biblical counseling ministry. After the classroom training was completed and the students were “commissioned,” the ministry suffered. The proposed leadership plan and organizational structure to maintain long-term activities of the biblical counseling ministry collapsed. Consequently, the ministry could not remain viable. Biblical counseling supporters and trainees voiced what they perceived to be an attitude of half-hearted support of the fledgling biblical counseling ministry.

What I Would Do Differently

It was a rewarding experience to conduct the biblical counseling training class at RHBC. I look forward to opportunities to conduct the training in the future. I would do several things to improve on the experience I shared with the fourteen participants over the three-month period.

First, I would restructure the course to be taught in shorter modules. I believe that shorter training modules of four- to six-week duration would result in less of a strain on the calendar commitments of all parties involved with the course. Several people approached me before and after the training to share that they had never gone to college or been involved in a classroom situation as extensive as the twelve-week biblical counseling course. Shorter modules might be viewed as a less-daunting obligation for people of similar academic history or with limited schedule flexibility. I also believe the shorter-term modules attract a more substantial number of participants simply because the impact of schedule changes or other concerns may not be as drastic.

The second change involves assigning responsibility for the classroom facility and equipment. I learned valuable lessons about having facility and equipment details settled in advance of an actual class start date to ensure the optimum learning experience for class participants. If I have the opportunity to conduct a biblical training course again, I will ask the host church to be responsible for facility and equipment arrangements. I plan to provide the church a detailed list of such things as a seating

diagram, the number of power outlets required for my personal computer and accessories, the size and locations of projection screens, and audio equipment. I believe that giving the host church responsibility for facility and equipment matters requirements will allow me to focus on the tasks of lesson preparation and presentation.

The last consideration for improving future biblical counseling training courses involves the approach to preparations for the continuation of the ministry. Before training a potential group of biblical counselors, I would seek to determine if the pastor and other leadership share a vision regarding the permanent role of a biblical counseling ministry. If a shared vision and support for the ministry are evident, I will plan for training of the leadership as the first step in the equipping process. The express commitment I would require includes concurrence: (1) on the need for the ministry, (2) on the choices of individuals who would be involved in the ministry, (3) on the way the ministry would be promoted, (4) on a program of continued training for the members of the biblical counseling team, and (5) on the ethical and professional protocols for conducting counseling. If the church leadership provides assurance of these commitments, I would prayerfully and wholeheartedly engage in carrying out a process similar to the activities conducted in this ministry project. If leadership did not demonstrate the commitment to biblical counseling ministry as stated above, I would resolve to forego training with the church until all parties involved in the spiritual leadership of the church agree on the training, implementation, and ongoing operation of the ministry.

This project was successful in achieving the goals of curriculum development, recruiting, training, and obtaining a commitment from participants to avail themselves for the continued support of the ministry. It was assumed that continued support for the biblical ministry existed at RHBC. It was also assumed that RHBC would establish a structure for the ministry and include follow-on training for the counselors as an integral part of a strategic ministry plan. A lesson learned from the project is that nothing as critical to the spiritual growth of the members of a church as a biblical counseling

ministry should be left to chance or based on assumption. God provides his Word, human talent, physical resources, and everything needed for the building of his church. Faithful stewardship of God's provisions is the responsibility of believers. With future opportunities to contribute to training members for biblical counseling ministry, I will attempt to secure commitments for follow-on planning and implementation support.

Theological Reflections

I am awed when I reflect on how God provided resources and support and how he moved the hearts of so many people to bring this project to fruition for the benefit of RHBC. Deacons and other church leaders shared experiences about the history of the congregation to explain the current culture. These stories shed light on how members came to have low regard for the express Word of God relative to the deference they render to the statements of preachers to whom they have submitted. There is evidence that the church was once progressive in their support of Christian educational activities. It appears that a change in vision and mission occurred at RHBC at some point in their recent history.

Since 2013, I have observed that RHBC does not demonstrate support of the diligent study of Scripture, adherence to Baptist church doctrine, or advocacy of church discipline. The objective of typical gatherings appears to be on entertainment and fellowship. The church calendar includes trips to amusement parks, "Trunk or Treat," and community outreach days that feature "bouncy houses" and fire trucks, but no activities like the traditional youth Bible clubs, evangelism outreach activities, or mission trips. This synopsis partially describes the environment in which the project took place. I believe that God was at work during this project and that this introduction of biblical counseling planted seeds of spiritual recovery that will grow throughout the church body.

I faced challenges in the accomplishment of this project that made me question the ability to see it through. Several times I was moved to pause in wonderment of the unexpected ways that God would bring about an abrupt positive change in conditions and,

just as importantly, my attitude. I often remembered the words of David from Psalm 27:13, recorded as “I would have fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.” A certain level of apprehension is common with the anticipation of the outcome of any new endeavor or new experience, as this project was for me. As I observed the many aspects of this project taking form, I realized that I was witnessing the unfolding of another one of God’s “mysteries” in my life. I did not know how God would do it, but I trusted that he would bring all of the disparate elements of the project together with the result of a positive ending. Even if matters had not gone as smoothly with the project as they have, I would still have cause to praise God the benefit of allowing me the privilege of learning from the experience.

Personal Reflections

God’s grace proved sufficient to sustain me through the completion of this project. In the two years and a half that it took for me to complete the project, I was confronted with heart problems, the death of a grandchild, typical church ministry issues, financial constraints, and discouragement. This project consumed many hours of work. Whether the hours were spent interacting with people in churches, libraries, and businesses, electronically or in person, I was encouraged by the Word and was blessed by the people God put in my path to encourage me.

God has allowed the experiences of this project to help me grow spiritually. I also grew academically, experientially, and in humility. I naturally grew academically through the work of research and study for the written parts of the project. The discipline of the project schedule and the seminary style guide, I believe, will be of lasting benefit to me as I seek to seek to write and teach after graduation. I cannot imagine developing the time management, research, and writing skills I gained without the structure provided by the requirements of this project.

I grew experientially from the volume of work and the variety of tasks required to see the project through. Two individuals who initially consented to be co-instructors for

the course later declined to teach. The first individual was not a member of RHBC. He cited his heavier than anticipated workload as a school administrator as his reason for not being available to teach. The second individual was a member of RHBC. She stated that she felt she did not have the background to be able to teach the subject matter at a college-level. However, she committed to participating in the training and was a tremendous asset as an engaged participant. Consequently, I had to adapt to the reality of the need to prepare and to teach all twelve class sessions of the course.

After just the first lesson, the obligation to teach turned into a passionate desire to teach each of the lessons. I received fulfillment from preparing each lesson. As each session concluded, I sensed great satisfaction at hearing questions about issues raised in class, and I realized how much I had always enjoyed teaching. Teaching each of the lessons allowed me to be regularly accessible to the group members. I was able to monitor their progress through the course closely. The one-on-one interactions with the class members were invaluable opportunities to model what I was teaching. I also learned from the concerns and situations class members shared with me and I was able to incorporate some of the issues into later lessons.

At the same time, the project was an incredibly humbling experience. I was blessed with health and personal life circumstances that forced me to seek God's intervention in my circumstances. My prior habit of relying on my physical endurance changed when heart issues left me with diminished stamina. For several months, constant back pain diminished my comprehension, and blurred vision from elevated blood pressure affected my reading ability. The most devastating challenges for me were expressions of doubt in my ability to perform the tasks necessary to complete the project from the people I counted on for support. My constant prayers were seemingly being ignored. I was blessed, however, to take to heart the truths of the Scriptures that I was studying. Although I am not able to pinpoint a specific day and hour of my spiritual restoration, I know that God provided the level of health restoration, physical stamina,

and confidence to finish the work of this project.

Conclusion

The successful completion of the goals and tasks involved with this project at RHBC has resulted in the formation of a motivated team of members trained in the knowledge of biblical counseling. During the training, these dedicated individuals listened intently to the repeated refrain of the “sufficiency of Scripture” from 2 Timothy 3:16. This ministry ultimately seeks the sanctification of believers. As these newly trained members exercise the application of God’s Word in their interactions with other members of the body, the result of their efforts will be more reliance on God’s Word and greater unity in the body (Eph 4:13). There is confidence in the Holy Spirit to use the efforts of the people involved in this project to promote the Word of God for the glory of God.

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. (Isa 55:10-11)

APPENDIX 1

COURSE EVALUATION RUBRIC

Introduction to Biblical Counseling Course Evaluation Tool					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The content of the course is clearly relevant to the issue of biblical counseling.					
The material is faithful to the Bible's teaching on biblical counseling.					
The material is theologically sound.					
The context of the scriptural references is relevant to the subject of biblical counseling.					
The thesis of the course is clearly stated.					
The points of the course clearly support the thesis.					
The lessons of the course are logically sequenced.					
The course contains points of practical application.					
The scope of the course is sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the material.					
The teaching methodology is appropriate to the material covered in the course.					
Overall, the course is clearly presented.					

APPENDIX 2
COMMITMENT DATA SHEET

Name _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number _____

E-Mail Address _____

Statement of Commitment

I will attend the twelve-week Introduction to Biblical Counseling Course at Rock Hill Baptist #1(RHBC). I understand that reading assignments, completion of homework assignments, and active class participation are required of me during these twelve weeks. Upon completing the course, I will be available to share what I learn with other members of RHBC as part of a biblical counseling and discipleship ministry.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX 3

INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL COUNSELING CLASS SURVEY

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to gauge the level of understanding about the subject and practice of biblical counseling of prospective class participants. This survey is being conducted on behalf of Don Davis as part of data collection for a ministry project. The data will be collected before and after participation in the class. This process will help determine the effectiveness of the Introduction to Biblical Counseling Course. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. You are taking part in this survey and course on a voluntary basis. Therefore, you are free to withdraw at any time. By completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

Choose a four-digit PIN to allow your survey to be tracked for pre-test and post-test evaluations. _____

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

Part 1

1. Do you consider yourself a Christian?
 A. Yes
 B. No
2. Have you repented of your sin and trusted in Jesus Christ for salvation?
 A. Yes
 B. No
3. Are you married?
 A. Yes
 B. No
4. Do you have any children age 18 or younger living in the home?
 A. Yes
 B. Yes
5. What is your age group years?
 A. 18-24
 B. 25-34
 C. 35-44
 D. 45-54
 E. 55-64
 F. 65 and over

Part 2

Directions: Circle your opinion to the statements based on the following scale

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
6. I consider myself qualified to counsel others.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
7. A counselor must have a college education.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
8. Biblical counseling cannot help a person who has been diagnosed with a mental problems.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
9. I am competent that I can share the gospel and lead a person to Christ.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
10. The pastor is the only person in the church in the church required to do counseling.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
11. Christian counseling and biblical counseling are the same.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
12. A person involved in counseling should not be concerned with homework.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
13. Building a person's self-esteem is a primary goal of biblical counseling.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
14. The Holy Spirit is not important if the Bible is used in counseling.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
15. A person should not be on any medications if they are going to be involved in biblical counseling.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
16. Group counseling is an important part of biblical counseling.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
17. Only a psychologist can help a person who is depressed.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
18. A person who is angry all of the time may be helped better with medication than with biblical counseling.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
19. I am comfortable counseling someone who says he is grieving over past loss in life.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
20. I am comfortable counseling someone who says he is without hope.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
21. The pastor is solely responsible for counseling in the church.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

- | | | | | | | |
|---|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 22. I am comfortable counseling someone who says she is addicted to pornography. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 23. Counseling a teen who hates her parents is possible only with help of a professional psychologist due to the age issue. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 24. Someone who says she is Bi-polar is most likely demon-possessed. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 25. I would best serve a fellow church member who expresses a desire to overcome past sins by sending him or her to the pastor. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 26. Biblical counseling can be effective with someone who says she is addicted to a substance. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 27. Someone who says they want to overcome past sins will need biblical counseling to deal with their past sins and psychology to deal with their past. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |

APPENDIX 4

PRE-TEST RESPONSE ACCURACY COMPARISON

Pre-Test Response Accuracy Detail

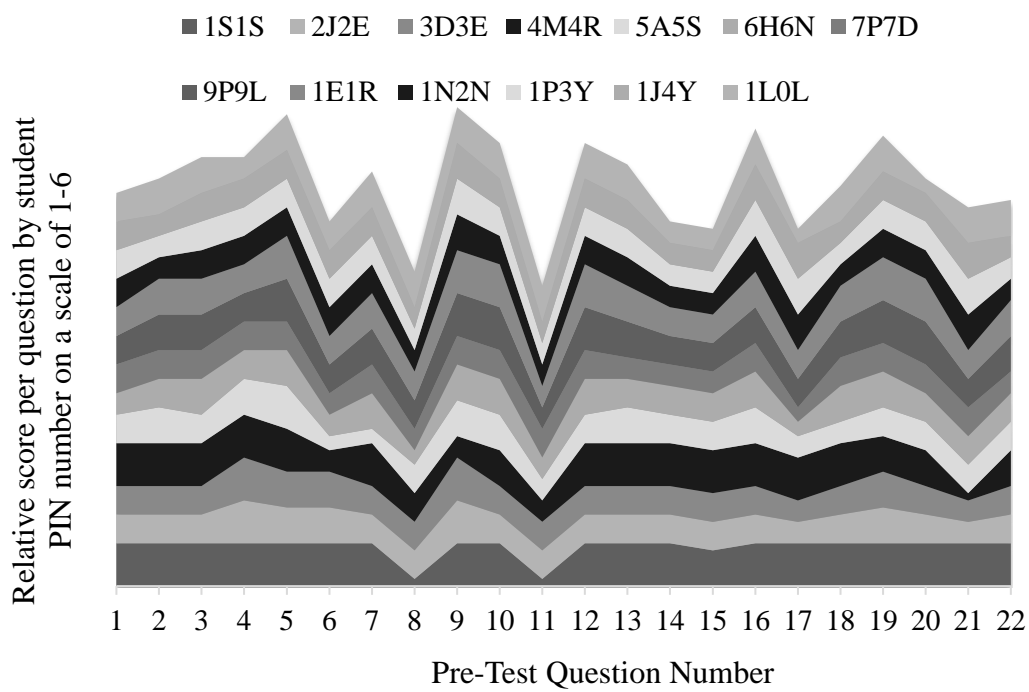


Figure A1. Pre-test response accuracy detail graph

APPENDIX 5

PRE-TEST COMPOSITE SCORES

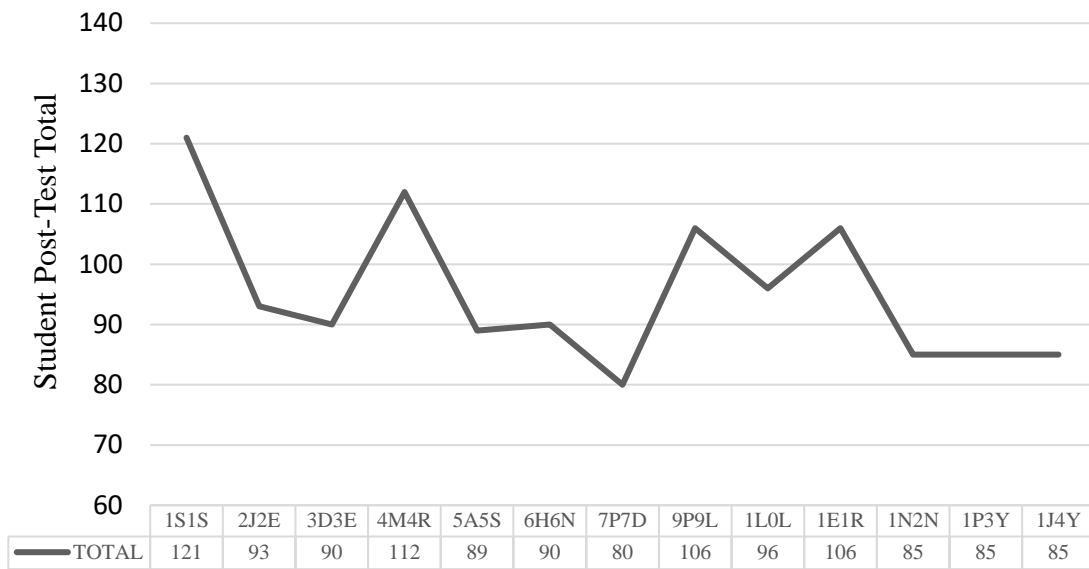


Figure A2. Pre-test score graph

APPENDIX 6

POST-TEST SCORES

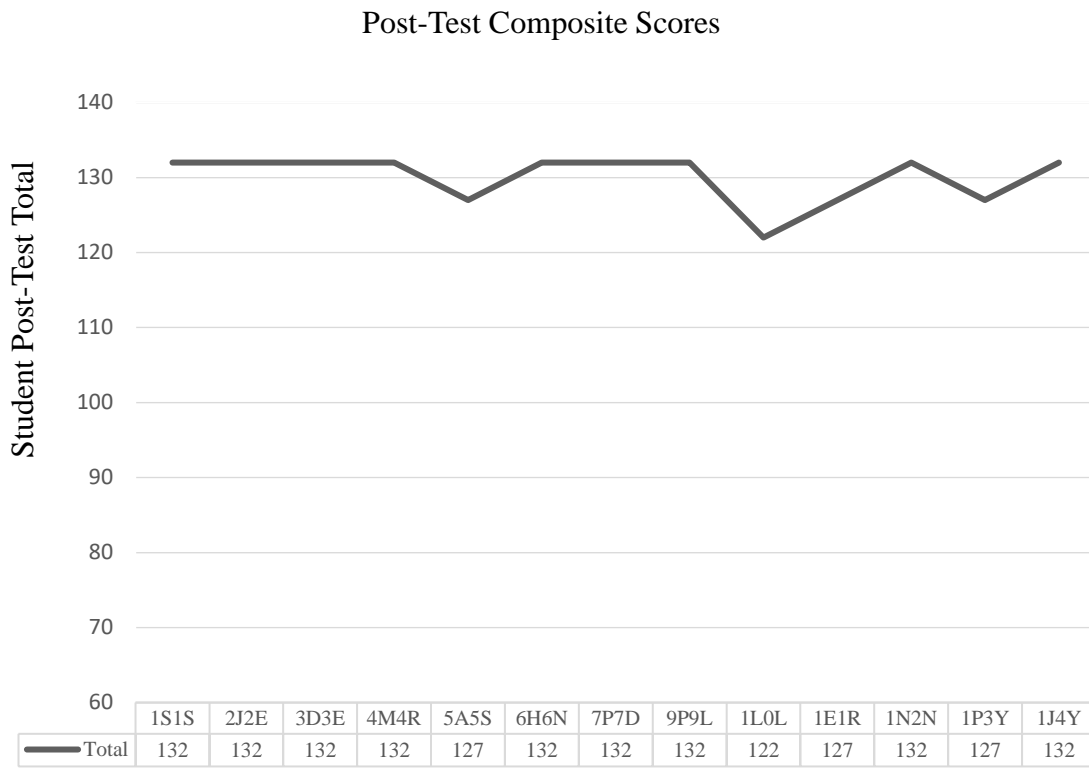


Figure A3. Post-test score graph

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ABSTRACT

EQUIPPING MEMBERS FOR BIBLICAL COUNSELING MINISTRY AT ROCK HILL BAPTIST CHURCH IN GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

Donald Harvey Davis, D.Min.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Stuart W. Scott

This project aimed to equip members of Rock Hill Baptist Church with knowledge and basic skills of biblical counseling. Chapter 1 describes the ministry context, the rationale for the project, and the project research methodology. Chapter 2 presents an exegesis of pertinent Scripture (2 Tim 3:16-17; Eph 4:7-16; Gal 5:25-6-6; and Rom 15:1-6) to support the thesis that the Bible instructs the act of communicating biblical truths for the sanctification of fellow believers. Chapter 3 is an essay on practical methodologies for enhancing biblical counseling skills for effective interpersonal ministry. Chapter 4 reports on the project implementation by detailing the curriculum development and the transmitting of the curriculum. Chapter 5 is an evaluation of the project based on designated goals. This project has enhanced the abilities of members to support one another in times of need and the process of sanctification.

VITA

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EDUCATIONAL

B.S., University of Maryland, 1981
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MINISTERIAL

Associate Pastor, Christian Baptist Church, Baltimore, Maryland, 1976-1979
Assistant Pastor, First Baptist Church, Baltimore, Maryland, 1988-1997
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Chaplain, Our Lady of Bellefonte Hospital, Ashland, Kentucky, 2012
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