

# **THE BASICS OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING**

A study of the Scriptures to help the Body of Christ to  
grow in all times and seasons of life.

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## SESSION 1 of 10

### I. When you hear the word “counseling,” what are some of your first thoughts?

- a. Psychology /Psychiatry
- b. Therapy
- c. Crazy – mentally sick
- d. Fear
- e. Worldly
- f. Wise/wisdom (James 3:17)
- g. Christ Jesus (Isa. 9:6; 28:29; Ps. 23; 32:8; 73:24; 119:24; Col. 1:28)
- h. Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:6; 16:13)
- i. \_\_\_\_\_

### II. What is Biblical counseling, and how is it different from other forms of counseling?

- a. Biblical counseling

Biblical counseling can be defined as a fluid event and process of a Spirit-empowered Christ follower providing face-to-face ministry of the Word to others.<sup>1</sup>

- b. Nouthetic counseling (Rom. 15:14)

Essentially it is the same as **Biblical** counseling, but the name was changed in order to make its understanding clearer. It embraces three

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<sup>1</sup> Association of Biblical Counselors

components based upon the word *nouthesia*, confrontation, concern, and change.

- i. Confrontation – one believer providing **counsel** to another believer. (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
  - ii. Concern – counseling is always for the **benefit** of the other believer. (1 Cor. 4:14, 15-21)
  - iii. Change – All counseling seeks change, but only Biblical/Nouthetic counseling seeks change in another believer’s life due to some **failure** of not honoring God. (Acts 20:31-32)
- c. Secular Counseling – works from a **humanistic** philosophy/worldview, and typically holds to an idea that mankind is self-empowered or abled to heal him/herself through different man-centered methodologies, and often including the use of medications. Typically, God or man’s sin has no role in secular counseling. (Col. 2:8-9)
  - d. Christian counseling – hard to define because there are various points along a **continuum**. What does that mean? (See point “f” below)
  - e. Meaning of the word “**Psychology**,” and who should be best at carrying out its practice – it is the study of the **soul**.
  - f. Difference between Biblical and Christian counseling

A counselor might consider their counseling to be Christian simply because they hold to Christian beliefs or belong to an **orthodox** Christian church. One might also believe their counseling to be Christian because they **pray** with their counselees, or because the use or quote Scripture during a session.

**Biblical** counseling has several elements that makes it different. One, the Scriptures are held in high regard and are **paramount** in the

helping/counseling process. Not only is the Word taught, but it is **applied** throughout each session or interaction.

Part of the process might be best understood as the giving and receiving of God's **truth**, along with encouraging sanctification, **bearing** with, or walking with another believer in their suffering.

For any counsel to be Biblical it must be (1) **rooted** in the Word of God [truth], (2) **exalt** Christ Jesus, (3) be **enabled** by the Holy Spirit, and (4) offered in love. (1 Jn. 4:7; Col. 1:28-29)

g. Organic and non-organic issues

i. Organic is best understood as **medical** issues

1. Bipolar disorder
2. Dementia
3. Alzheimer
4. Mentally handicapped (profound, severe, moderate, or mild intellectual disabilities)
5. Asperger's
6. Other neurological disorders

ii. Non-organic is understood as **counseling** issues

1. Relationship issues (divorce, domestic abuse)
2. Identity issues and most sexual sins
3. Drug and alcohol addictions (this one is debated)
4. Summed up in the 10 commandments

III. The purpose of Biblical counseling (Col. 1:28)

a. To make a **change**

b. To **glorify** God, which can't be done humanly without change

IV. The idea of Change from a Biblical perspective – (the **vertical** view)

- a. A need for **change** (Job 5:6-7; 14:1-2; Gen. 3:7, 16, 17-19)
  - i. The horizontal view – good **outwardly** (Matt. 5:20; 6:1-5; 15:1-20; Rom. 10:1-3)
  - ii. The vertical view – good **inwardly** (Lk. 18:9-14, 18-30; [Lk. 5:30-31], Rom. 10:4)
  - iii. Quote from Dr. Jay Adams

God has appointed Christian counselors as guides to a change that is directed toward godliness. Such change (1) Stems from an inward change of heart. (2) Is achieved by the Holy Spirit. (3) Is therefore entirely acceptable to God.<sup>2</sup>

- b. The **process** of change (2 Tim. 3:14-17)
  - i. Context of the passage and what Biblical counselors/ministers must **contend** with (2 Tim. 3:1-9)
  - ii. Paul’s message to Timothy – **Help** is rooted in the Scriptures
- c. The importance of the Scriptures
  - i. “The Scriptures are **able** (lit., ‘have the power’) to make people wise about salvation.”<sup>3</sup>

The Gospel must be **presented** (Rom. 10:13-15)  
Repent and believe (Mark 1:14-15)

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<sup>2</sup> Adams, Jay E.; Zondervan. How to Help People Change (Jay Adams Library) (pp. 8-9). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

- ii. “The Scriptures are useful for teaching, for conviction, for correction and for disciplined training in righteousness.”<sup>4</sup>

The Scriptures are to **edify** believers and guide one to change from **sinful** ways of living to **righteous** ways of living.

- d. The Biblical counselor is to promote change in a 4-steps process and in this order (2 Tim. 3:14-17)

- i. Teaching – instructions/warnings for how to **live**
- ii. Conviction – **acknowledging** truth that refutes adversaries
- iii. Correction – to **set right again**, to make straight
- iv. “Disciplined” training in righteousness – to **chasten** with the Word

1. Evangelization first (1<sup>st</sup> step of **sanctification**)

- a. Meeting people at their point of need – this doesn’t mean the Biblical counselor is to **overlook** a counselee’s life of sin, but to address them in both truth and love. (1 Jn. 3:18; Eph. 4:11-15)
- b. Quote from Dr. Tim Clinton

*“If you don’t see them”— meaning people—“if you don’t see them, if you can’t meet them at their point of need, I doubt that you’re going to have the opportunity to lead them to Him.”<sup>5</sup>*

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Biblical Soul Care, Dr. Tim Clinton

2. Edification both in public and private (2<sup>nd</sup> step of continued **sanctification**) [Acts 20:20]
3. The **goal** of our sanctification is to become more like Christ. (1 Jn. 2:6; Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 11:1; 2 Cor. 3:18)
4. Another quote from Dr. Jay Adams

*“The counselor’s task is to promote change in the form of sanctification or edification. The four steps constitute the biblical process for doing so. ... This process is gradual, often irregular, and requires not only putting off old, sinful ways, but adopting new, righteous ones according to biblical standards.”*<sup>6</sup>

5. Something to keep in mind as a Biblical counselor and as a Christian, both the believer and unbeliever are in a **constant** state of change. In general, we are either moving closer to God or farther away from Him. (1 Jn. 2:1-6, 7-10; Col. 3:1-17; James 4:7-10)
- e. The Scriptures can bring about a change of **character**
- i. Your **view** of the Scriptures matter – The question is, “**Has God fully revealed Himself as an all knowing, infallible Being in His Word?**”
  - ii. Depending on your view of the Scriptures you will do one of two things. You will either **submit** to the Scriptures whether you like what they say or not, or you will seek to have the Scriptures **submit** to your will and reasoning.

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<sup>6</sup> Adams, Jay E.; Zondervan. How to Help People Change (Jay Adams Library). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.p.14

f. Resting on the sufficiency of the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

i. Quote from John Murray

*“There is no situation in which we [as men of God] are placed, no demand that arises for which Scripture as the deposit of the manifold wisdom of God is not adequate and sufficient.”<sup>7</sup>*

ii. The sufficiency for the pastor/counselor/Christian stands firm on three points

1. The Scriptures are fully **capable/powerful** for every task, hence, “complete.” For this reason, the pastor/counselor/Christian needs to **know** the Word of God well. (Heb. 4:12; 2 Cor. 3:4-6; Matt. 24:35)
2. The Scriptures are able to fully “**equip**” the pastor/counselor/Christian for whatever scenario may come. (Lk. 12:8-12; Heb. 4:12)
3. The Scriptures are **proficient** in preparing the pastor/counselor/Christian in carrying out every good work to bring about a change of character/life. (Ps. 119:105; 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5)

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<sup>7</sup> Murray, Collected Writings (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1982), 3:261 Adams, Jay E.; Zondervan. How to Help People Change (Jay Adams Library) (p. 204). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.