

lesson 1: what makes biblical counseling unique?

Introduction

1. What is our authority?
2. What is our focus?
3. Who and what is our guide?
4. What is our goal?
5. What is our motive?
6. What is our sphere of responsibility?

A commitment to the inerrancy of the Scriptures

1. Scripture is both a human and divine book (2 Pet 1:20-21)
2. Scripture is the very Word of God (2 Tim 3:16a)
3. Scripture is our authority

A commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ

1. The gospel teaches us about our insufficiency (Eph 2:1-3)
2. The gospel teaches us about our need for grace (Eph 2:8-9)
3. The gospel teaches us about our solution (Eph 2:4-7; Matt 11:28-29; 1 Cor 15:3-4)
4. The gospel teaches us about our purpose (Eph 2:10)
5. The gospel is our focus

A commitment to the sufficiency of Christ and Scriptures

1. God's Word is permanent and eternal (Is 40:8)
2. God's Word is breathed out by God for our training and equipping (2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:3-4)

"Biblical/nouthetic counseling was founded in the confidence that God has spoken comprehensively about and to human beings. The Bible, His Word, teaches the Truth. Biblical truth and methods are to be pursued and promoted in counseling. An integrationist attempts to wed secular psychology to conservative Christianity. He believes the Scriptures are not comprehensively sufficient; the Bible is, in some essential way, deficient for understanding and changing people. He believes the Church, therefore, needs systematic input from the social sciences. Integrationists aim to import the intellectual contents and psycho-therapeutic practices of psychology into their counseling in a way they think is consistent with biblical faith." - David Powlison, *Journal of Biblical Counseling*

3. God's Word is truth (John 17:17)
4. God's Word is powerful (Jer 23:29; Heb 4:12)
5. God's Word is a source of grace that builds you up (Acts 20:32)
 - It strengthens in grief (Ps 119:28)
 - It sustains you (Ps 119:116)
 - It comforts in affliction (Ps 119:50, 92)
 - It is a comfort and consolation (Ps 119:52)
 - It gives hope (Ps 119:49; Rom 15:4)
 - It provides peace (Ps 119:165)
 - It produces a reverence for God (Ps 119:38)
 - It gives freedom (Ps 119:45; John 8:32)
6. God's Word testifies to its own sufficiency (Ps 19:7-11; Ps 1:1-4; 2 Pet 1:3; 2 Cor 3:5-6; 2 Tim 3:16-17)
 - Psalm 19:7-11
 - Psalm 1:1-4
 - 2 Peter 1:3
 - 2 Corinthians 3:5-6
 - 2 Timothy 3:16-17
7. God's Word is always effective in accomplishing God's purpose (Is 55:11)
 - The Scriptures bear witness of Jesus Christ (John 5:39)
 - It is used to bring a person to faith in Jesus Christ (Rom 10:17)

- It performs its work in you who believe (1 Thess 2:13)
- 8. God's Word is the standard for judgment (John 12:48; Heb 4:12)
- 9. God's Word is to dwell within you (Col 3:16)
- 10. God's Word is spiritual food (Deut 8:3; Matt 4:4)
- 11. So, why is the topic of "Sufficiency of Scripture" so important?

"If it isn't, then it's not that something else might be possible. It's that anything is possible!" – Alistair Begg

- When we go outside the walls of scripture we are vulnerable (1 Cor 1:18-25)
- When we go outside the walls of scripture we can get cheated (Col 2:8)
- When we go outside the walls of scripture other things have the appearance of wisdom (Col 2:20-23; Prov 14:12)
- When we go outside the walls of scripture we have nothing to offer others that is not from God (2 Cor 3:5-6). Love and wisdom come from God alone.
- When we go outside the walls of scripture it's easy to lose heart and revert (2 Cor 4:13-16; 1 Pet 4:13; Gal 6:10)

- 12. God's Word is our guide

ON THE SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE IN A THERAPEUTIC CULTURE

WHEREAS, Southern Baptists are committed to the authority, sufficiency, and relevance of the Bible (2 Tim. 3:15-17); and

WHEREAS, The Bible teaches that human beings are created in the image of God – made by Him, like Him, and for Him (Gen. 1:27-28) – and that because of sinful rebellion against the Creator, our entire being suffers from sin's corruption (Gen. 3:16-19); Ecc. 9:3; Rom. 1-3); and

WHEREAS, All aspects of our lives – including our spiritual, moral, and psychological conditions – are to be informed and governed by the application of and obedience to Holy Scripture (1 Cor. 10:31); and

WHEREAS, In this therapeutic culture, physicians and counselors often ignore human sin and its effects, neglect our most fundamental human and spiritual needs, and therefore, misunderstand our condition, mistreat our problems, and sometimes unintentionally do more harm than good; and

WHEREAS, An uncritical acceptance of the therapeutic culture too often has infected our pulpits, ministries, and counseling (Colossians 2:8); and

WHEREAS, Our churches often have neglected our God-ordained responsibility for the care and cure of souls, becoming practically ineffective, both marginalizing ourselves from the culture and being marginalized by the mental health establishment; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, June 11-12, 2002, affirm Christian counseling that relies upon the Word of God rather than theories that are rooted in a defective understanding of human nature (John 17:17); and be it further

RESOLVED, That we affirm that any method worthy of the name “Christian counseling” must address the root of our problems and reveal the crux of God’s solution – the redemptive work of Christ and the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, by which the depths of sin and the fullness of grace are made known (Heb. 4:12-16); and be it further

RESOLVED, That, while we affirm that there are real conditions that warrant legitimate medical treatment, we reject the assumptions of the therapeutic culture that offer a pharmacological solution for every human problem; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we call on all Southern Baptists and our churches to reclaim practical biblical wisdom, Christ-centered counseling, and the restorative ministry of the care and cure of souls.

A commitment to the change spoken of in the Scriptures

1. The gospel of Jesus Christ changes us (1 Cor 6:9-11)
2. The gospel of Jesus Christ promotes change (Rom 6:1-4; Ps 51:10)
3. The gospel of Jesus Christ calls us to change (Eph 4:22-24)
4. Biblical change is our goal

A commitment to the obedience of the Scriptures

1. Obedience is an essential mark of a believer (Luke 9:23-24)
2. We must expect it of ourselves and others who claim to follow Christ (1 John 1:6)
3. The best lived life is one built on obedience to God’s Word (Matt 7:24-27)
4. Obedience to God is our motive

A commitment to the kind of church described in the Scriptures

1. The church is built and established by the Word of God (Matt 16:18; 1 Tim 3:15)
2. The church is primarily concerned about a person’s relationship with God (Matt 18:15-17)

3. The church is precious and must be cared for and protected (Acts 20:28)
4. The church is our sphere of responsibility.

Conclusion

These six commitments, when lived out, will lead to a godly Christian being a fruitful "people-helper," regardless of age, education or formal training in counseling. (Rom 15:14; Col 1:28; 3:16)

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Commitment A
 - Come back next week
2. Commitment B
 - Purchase *Self-Confrontation Manual*
 - Pick up *Christ and Your Problems*
3. Commitment C
 - Assignments for commitment B
 - Purchase *How People Change* and study guide