

Biblical Counseling Training 101

Class 2 – *What is Biblical Counseling?*

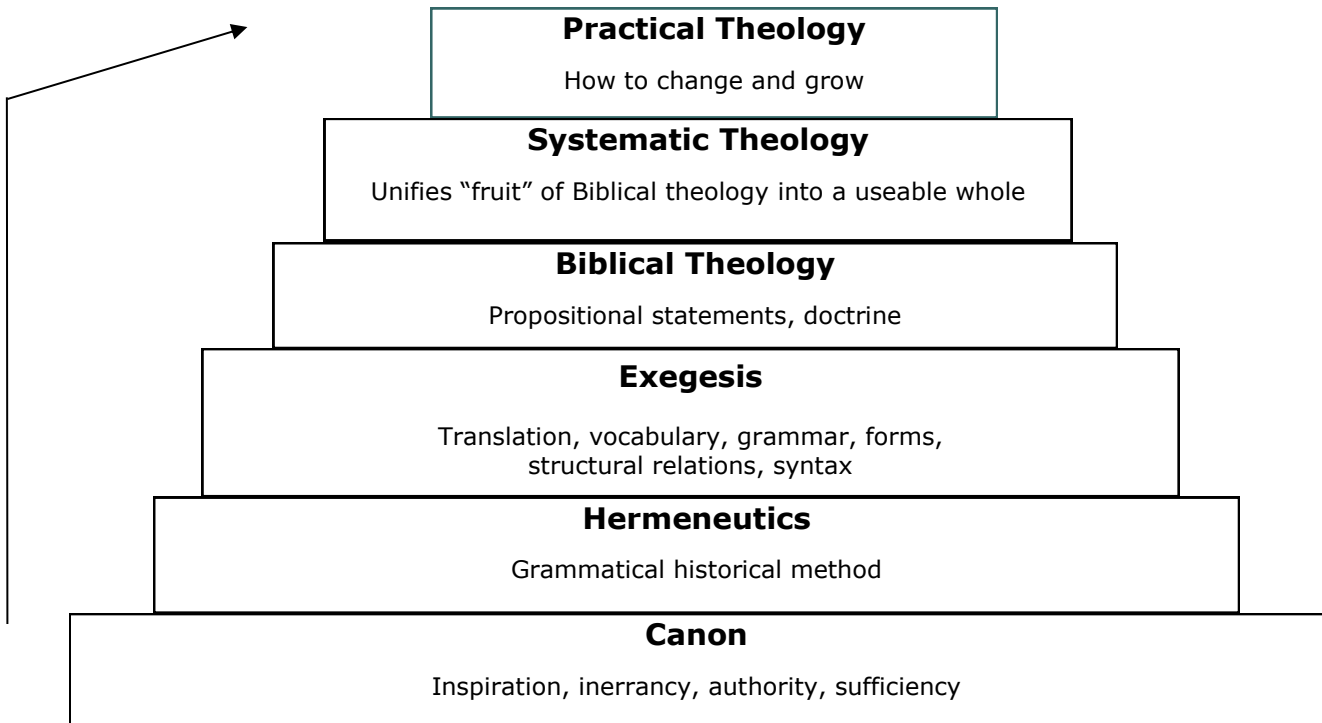
Foundations, Part 1

- People are designed by God to reflect His image (Genesis 1:26-28; 9:6)
- The church is called to glorify God (Romans 15:4-6) by making disciples (Matthew 28:18-20, 2 Timothy 2:2)
- Every person in Christ is called by God to be changed by Him to become like him – something we refer to as progressive sanctification (Rom. 8:29; Eph. 4:11-13; Col. 1:28).
- One thing the Bible tells us is needed is for Christians to become like Christ is for Christians to minister personally to other Christians, to help them see where change is needed. (1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Hebrews 3:12-13; James 5:19-21)

Goal of Biblical Counseling is Progressive Sanctification

- Progressive Sanctification is the ongoing process of becoming in practice what we are in position. As we apply biblical truth to our lives by faith (Rom. 10:17), we become more like Christ in our attitudes, thoughts and behaviors (1 Cor. 11:1; Eph. 5:1). This “progressive sanctification” happens as we learn to walk by/according to the Spirit (Rom. 8:4; Gal. 5:16). God commands it (Gal. 5:16; Eph. 5:18b; Colossians 1:28; 2 Peter 1:5-9; 3:18).
- Becoming like Christ is our destiny (Romans 8:28-29; Phil. 1:6).
- The Body of Christ will not fulfill its purpose without it (Eph. 4:16).
- The Bible is God’s progressive revelation of himself to man (Ex. 6:3; Acts 1:8).

Theological Pyramid on Which Biblical Counseling Rests



Biblical Counseling Definition

Biblical Counseling is a **unique relationship** characterized by five components.

- **First**, it is a discipling relationship offered by a mature believer to another person who faces personal struggle. The struggle provides an opportunity for the person facing financial stress, drunkenness, depression, chronic anger, anxiety, overcoming the pain of abuse, marriage tension or problems raising children to find the Lord's sufficiency for difficulties.
- **Second**, it is offered with the conviction that the Bible is authoritative and sufficient to supply the answers God wants us to know to either solve or live confidently with the problems we face (see 2 Peter 1:2-3, Psalm 19:7-12). Accordingly, the recipient of the counseling not only is instructed during sessions, but they invest in their growth through prescribed effort. Between sessions, they spend time with the Lord, in the scriptures and with good materials. The homework with accountability are essential parts of the change we seek.

- **Third**, biblical counseling is characterized by the counselor's caring, humble, gracious acceptance of the person in need as well as teaching, correction and exhortation (see John 1:14, 2 Timothy 2:24-26 and 3:16-17). Even so, our goal is to avoid dependency on man and to increase dependency on Christ.
- **Fourth**, biblical counseling is offered as part of life in community with God's people. Rather than looking at counseling as a private doctor/patient sort of relationship, we require all recipients of biblical counseling to also get involved in some form of Christian community and growth such as a small group, so that what is learned through counseling is reinforced in community.
- **Finally**, biblical counseling is offered with the goal of the individual's maturity in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:9, Romans 8:29, Colossians 1:28-29) and the long-term strengthening of the church (Ephesians 4:12-16). There is *no situation* for which God has not made victory certain (2 Cor. 3:14) and there is *no situation* that is so great that God's love and sustaining grace does not cover us (Romans 8:31-39).

Biblical Counseling is:

Rooted in the authority of God

Matt 28:18

Matt 9:6

Rooted in the sufficiency of Christ

Acts 4:12

Col 2:9-10

John 16:14; 14:26

Rooted in the sufficiency of scriptures

Psalms 19

2 Peter 1:2-3

2 Tim 3:16-17

Colossians 2:1-3, 8-10

Superior to the wisdom of men

Isaiah 55:8-9

Prov. 12:3

Prov. 3:5-7

1 Cor. 1:18-25; 2:12-13

Col 2:8

The Bible is inerrant so it has the authority

Prov. 30:5-6

2 Tim. 3:16-17

2 Pet. 1:19-21, 3:1-2

Rom. 15:4-6

"The ministry of the Word in counseling, as a result, is totally unlike counseling in any other system because of its authoritative base. This authoritative character stems, of course, from the doctrine of inerrancy. If the Bible were shot through with human error, and were no more dependable than any other composition—if it were not a God-breathed revelation—this note of authority would give way to opinion. But, because the Bible is inerrant, there is authority." Adams, Jay E.; "A Theology of Christian Counseling" (p. 18).

"If the Bible is not inerrant, those verses that will challenge you to change and you find uncomfortable, you will find the Bible to be in error." "Standing on the Rock", J. M. Boice

Classroom Discussion Questions

Progressive sanctification

Read aloud as a group Matthew 5:48

One friend in Community Group says: "*Whoever obeys God's Word is blessed. If you are not being blessed, there is only one conclusion.*" Another friend says, "*I no longer worry about pleasing God since Christ pleased God completely and I am in Christ.*" Still another says, "*Well, Jesus was God. We can't be perfect.*" Who is right?

Biblical Counseling

What do you suspect is the difference between Biblical counseling and other counseling?

Authority of Scripture

You are talking with someone you are trying to help and they say: "The Bible is full of errors. The Bible is not relevant today." What would you say to them?

Homework

Scripture Memory Verse

Ephesians 4:15

Practical Training Exercise

Draw two vertical lines down a sheet of paper. Take a few quiet minutes each day to reflect on the previous 24 hours. In the left column, list decisions you had to make or that you helped someone make. In the right-hand column, give the decision a number rating from 1-5, where 1 = Not well thought out; 2 = Came from ideas in my head; 3 = Ideas were Godly; 4 = Ideas were "biblically" based; 5 = I can tell you the specific verse(s) that led me to my decision.

Read attached Essay

What is Biblical Authority and What Does it Mean?

John Morrison

Biblical authority refers to the Bible's claims over people. Wikipedia is quite right when it says, *Biblical Authority refers to the extent to which the commands and doctrines within the Old and New Testament scriptures are authoritative over human belief and conduct.*

The idea of Biblical Authority flows as a natural result of the theological claims that (a) God is our authority, that the Bible is His revealed Word and will, that the Bible in its original autographs is inerrant and infallible, and that we have a completely reliable version of those texts.

If God does not or cannot justly claim to be our authority, if the Bible is not His expressed Word, or if the Bible we have is unreliable, then any authority the Bible claims is suspect at best. But if God claims to be our authority, if the Bible is His revealed Word, without error and reliable (as our earlier classes on inerrancy and canonicity sought to explain), and if it claims authority over the lives of its readers, then its authority is a direct result of its inerrancy.

As discussed in another class, *Biblical inerrancy* is the idea that the Bible "in its original autographs is without error." Because it is completely God-breathed and God-preserved, it is without error. (*To remind you of a fact from the classes on inerrancy and canonicity, the Bibles we have are faithful translations of extremely well-preserved texts, which themselves are 99.9% pure copies of the original autographs. For our purposes, the variant readings in the 1000's of extant manuscripts are insignificant. As a result, we can have complete confidence in the Bible we have.*)

Authority is the right to rule. It is the reason a subservient should obey a superior in rank, and the reason a child obeys her parent or a student obeys his teacher. God expresses His authority in Isaiah 45:9: "*Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker, to him who is but a potsherd among the potsherds on the ground. Does the clay say to the potter, 'What are you making?' Does your work say, 'He has no hands'?*" (cf., Jeremiah 18:1-6) God reminds us that He made us and has the right to command us.

The Bible asserts that *God cannot lie* (Num. 23:19; Tit. 1:2), that no one *informs Him of anything* (Isaiah 40:12-14), and that *He declares the end from the beginning* (Isaiah 46:10). Since there's nothing He does not know, He cannot be corrected and cannot lie, if the Bible in its original autographs is His word and we have a well-preserved copy of that canon, then the Bible does not contain error. If God's word is inerrant, then it is fully trustworthy, and that is its basis for authority.

The utter reliability of the Bible is indicated in many ways, not the least of which is its foretelling of the future. Micah 5:2 says the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. *He was* (Matthew 2:1). He was to be a son of David from the root of Jesse (2 Samuel 7:12-13, Isaiah 11:10), and *He was* (Matthew 1:6, Luke 2:1-7, Romans 15:12). Psalm 22:14-18 describes the Messiah's "*bones out of joint*", "*feet and hands pierced*" and "*garments divided and lots cast for his clothing*" and *they were* (Matthew 27:35). All the more remarkable that Psalm 22 was written around 950 BC but crucifixion was not invented until 600 hundred years later (Wikipedia, *Crucifixion*).

Another way the Bible reveals its reliability is its internal consistency. God uses forty authors over 2000 years, yet each of 66 books points to the redemption of sinful man through the sacrifice of His only Son, Jesus. From Genesis 3:15 (*bruise him on the head*) to Isaiah 53 (*pierced for our transgressions*) to Jesus revealing Himself to Saul in Acts 9, to the glory of the Lamb in Revelation 22 (cf., Isa. 6), this book points to the glory of the Son of God who redeems men and who in turn points to the glory of the Father (John 17:4).

That mark of infallibility brings us back to the issue of authority. If what you say is without error (infallible), then you have authority. God's authority stems from His perfections. Deut. 32:4 says, "*He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.*" If God is authority personified, and the Bible is *His* word (2 Tim. 3:16-17), then the Bible has authority.

Jesus displays His recognition of the Word as authoritative when He uses the Word as *His* authority when combatting temptation (Matthew 4:1-11). We see the same reliance on the Word as normative for us in Ephesians 6:14 ("*girding your loins with truth*") where we learn that truth, which is the Word of God (John 17:17) is the first part of our spiritual armor and Ephesians 6:17 ("*taking up the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God*") where it is the final piece of armor as well as the only offensive weapon.

Though at times the Bible directly asserts its authority (e.g., 2 Tim. 3:16-17 and 2 Peter 1:20-21), other times its authority is inferred. Matthew 7:28-29 tells us that when Jesus taught, the people marveled because He taught as "one having authority." Since the Bible records His words (cf., Matthew 7:24-27, *everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them may be compared to a wise man...*) and is written to tell His story (cf., John 20:30-31 *these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ*), we can infer that the Bible speaks authoritatively about the One who taught authoritatively.

When the Pharisees asked Him *by what authority* He cleansed the temple, He appealed to the baptism of John (Matthew 21:23-27), at which time God affirmed Him from heaven, "*This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased.*" That He is 'God's Son' automatically conveys authority. If that wasn't enough, He adds to those words at the Mount of Transfiguration where He said, "*Hear Him!*" As a result, authority is clearly vested in the Son (Matt. 28:18 *All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth*; John 17:2 *You gave Him authority over all flesh*). If He has the authority, then His Word carries that authority.