

**Biblical Counseling Training 101**  
**Class 9 – Step Five: Providing Biblical Instruction**

*Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ. Romans 10:17*

First, please share your Bible verse (Romans: 28-29) from last week with those at your table.

- I. Biblical Instruction** “means instilling an understanding of God’s Word into another’s heart so as to stimulate faith and obedience in all areas of life.” (Rosemary Spence)
- A. *Understanding God’s word* is not always obvious to the counselee. It may be new to them. They may not be convinced that it’s true. The goal is that they will come to believe that it is God’s instruction for them and not man’s opinion.
- B. Belief in God’s Word is the doorway into the heart so that it makes a difference today. This is why we had the memory verse several weeks ago, Hebrews 11:6 (*Without faith it is impossible to please God...*) and why we have the one we assigned this week (see above). The Word stimulates faith (Romans 10:17). If we exercise it, will produce obedience (see James 1:21). For a great example, compare Luke 1:18-20 (Zechariah) vs. 1:34-38 (Mary).
- C. *To stimulate faith and obedience:*
1. So that God’s word makes a difference in the coming week, “*in all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him.*” (2 Peter 1:3)
  2. The Holy Spirit has a crucial role to play here.  
**John 16:13** *But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.*
- 1 Corinthians 2:10-14** ... *these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person’s thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us... The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them....*
3. The counselor’s role  
**2 Timothy 2:15** *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.*
- Galatians 6:1-2** *Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*
- 2 Timothy 2:24** *And the Lord’s bondservant must not be quarrelsome, but kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, correcting those in opposition...*

**James 5:19-20** *My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.*

## II. Proper Instructions

### A. Instructions Must be Biblical

1. Based on the Bible because it's been given us for that purpose
  - a. 2 Samuel 22:31
  - b. 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:9
  - d. Psalm 19:7-11
2. Not mixed with man's wisdom (But see B. 3. below)
  - a. 1 Corinthians 1:20, 25
  - b. 1 Corinthians 2:2, 4-5
  - c. Colossians 2:8

### B. Instructions Must be Accurate

1. Passages must be understood properly within their context.

"Proof texting" is using a verse as support for a point we are making in a way that was not intended for the text by the original author in its context. For example, it is good to encourage people that the Lord is always with us. It is also good to remember that when we gather with other believers to pray, He is with us. However, people commonly use Matthew 18:20 ("*whenever two or more are gathered in my name, there I am in their midst*") to teach the Lord's presence in collective prayer. But the context was church discipline and what was being taught was that the Lord is with the church as the source of authority by which they make such decisions. It is improper to use that verse to reinforce an otherwise sound biblical truth – e.g., that God is always with us when we pray – with this familiar passage. However, we can convey this truth through other illustrative verses (Matt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5, etc.).
2. Biblical words and concepts must be properly understood so that they can be taught (e.g., justify, sanctification, eternal life, lust, repentance, idolatry, grace, godly sorrow versus worldly sorrow, glory, adultery, pride, wisdom, propitiation, sin, etc.) They were given to us because God thinks we need to know them.
3. Must differentiate between God's commands and man's suggestions. For example, God's command to husbands includes "love your wife as you love yourself" or "love your wife as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her."

But a man's suggestion might be, "*One way you could begin to do this is to take one night each week to spend a couple hours away from home with your wife, planning to talk together. You could take a list of topics to talk about from one of the pastors, and use it as a discussion guide. Another is that you could take five minutes every night before bed to pray together.*" That would not be instruction, but it might be a perfectly acceptable piece of homework as an application.
4. Applications are often best if they have both elements of "put off" and put on" such as we see in Ephesians 4:25-32 and Colossians 3:11-15. This is true because God often arranges passages that way (*lay aside the sinful way and put on the righteous way*) and because it helps people learn what needs replacing and with what.

As we teach Christians the duty of actively laying aside things (Colossians 3:8, “*lay aside anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth*”) and Christians actively putting things on (Colossians 3:12-13, “*put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other*”), we also need to help them distinguish between acts the Bible shows us that God has commanded and enabled believers to do (like the ones mentioned above) and the things we already laid aside and already put on when we were saved.

For example, Colossians 3:9-10 says, *Do not lie to one another, **since you laid aside the old self** with its evil practices, and **have put on the new self who is being renewed** to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.*”

Our counselees need to grow in understanding both their position in Christ and their condition. Some things have already been accomplished by God when we believed the gospel (positional truth, such as Colossians 3:1, Romans 5:1). Other things we are commanded to do (Rom. 6:11), and God says we can because the Spirit lives in us. (See Elyse Fitzpatrick’s *Counsel From the Cross* for a discussion on this in chapters 1-2.)

### C. Instructions Must be Appropriate

1. Well-targeted to their problem areas  
This not only takes prayer and practice. It also takes exposure to some good books and to others who are doing biblical counseling who may have ideas.
2. Well-targeted to their maturity level
  - a. Christian or not? (1 Cor. 2:11-15)
  - b. Babe or mature? (Hebrews 5:12-14)
  - c. Rebellious, weak, fainthearted? (1 Thessalonians 5:14)
  - d. Well-targeted to their learning style  
(See web article by K. Budnie on pages 5-10)
    - ⇒ Read
    - ⇒ Underline five best statements per chapter
    - ⇒ Write 100 word essay or seven best statements
    - ⇒ Audio
    - ⇒ Memorize
    - ⇒ Video
    - ⇒ Role play

### III. Discussion

- A. Why do counselors give instruction, and why is it to be biblical?
- B. What more will you learn about your counselee as you instruct?
- C. How would you balance between caring, listening, being patient and still instructing?

- D. Consider a young woman who has been deserted by her husband. She has two young children, is financially stretched and is beginning to doubt that God is there for her. She has been in church most of her life, but she is not particularly biblically dependent. How could you use Psalm 23 and Matthew 6:25-33 to give her biblical instruction? What else would you give her?
- E. If you were to biblically counsel, what would you do to keep a fresh flow of ideas of helpful instruction (and homework) for your counselees?

**IV. Homework –**

- A. Review your memory verses thus far and memorize Romans 10:17
- B. Read pages 5-10

# KNOWING THE AUDIENCE AND TRAINING IMPLICATIONS

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## *What are Thinking and Learning Styles?*

Every person in the world is different, and everyone has different talents. Thinking and learning styles are simply people's different approaches and preferred ways of thinking and learning...Because people have different styles of thinking and of learning, a uniform style of instruction does not work as well for some learners as for others. In fact, methods and resources that are helpful and effective for some people could be ineffective or even detrimental for others.

A person's thinking and learning styles are the way that person prefers to think and learn. The styles have little or nothing to do with a person's intelligence or skills. Instead, they have to do with how a person's brain works most efficiently to learn and apply new information. No learning style is better or worse than another. To most effectively process new information, people should be aware of their particular learning styles.

When instructors discern their students' individual strengths, and then tailor their instruction to those strengths, students are apt to learn in the easiest and quickest way for them, and they are more likely to retain information. Instructors should consider what is most likely to attract each student's attention, maintain each student's concentration, and how to work with each student's learning style to produce long-term memory, retention, and application.

### *Thinking styles*

The mind can **grasp information** in two ways—concretely and abstractly. Therefore, **Concrete** and **Abstract** are the two extremes of the mind's method of perceiving new information. Likewise, the mind can **arrange information** in two ways— **sequentially and randomly** (holistically). Therefore, Sequential and Random (Holistic) are the two extremes of the mind's method of ordering new information.

All people have some concrete and some abstract perceptual abilities, but most people tend to use one more than the other. Likewise, all have some sequential and some random (holistic) ordering abilities, but most are prone to use one more than the other.

### *Characteristics of the mind's two perceptual qualities are Concrete and Abstract.*

**Concrete:** This quality enables an individual to:

- Register information directly through the five senses—sight, smell, touch, taste, and hearing.
- Understand and respond to the "here and now," the physical realities of one's surroundings.
- Communicate in a direct, literal, no-nonsense manner.
- Learn practical applications.
- Look for literal, factual meanings.
- Learn by doing, and from direct, hands-on experiences.
- Learn by discovery and problem-solving.
- Understand concrete teaching techniques.

**Abstract:** This quality enables an individual to:

- Visualize, conceive ideas, and understand or believe what cannot be actually seen.
- Look beyond physical reality by using intuition, imagination, and visualization.
- Grasp information by reasoning out a conclusion.
- Have subjective feelings, thoughts, ideas, concepts, and desires.
- Understand theories and ideas.
- Analyze and interpret through thinking and reflecting.
- Learn through examples and demonstrations.
- Understand and develop philosophies.

***Characteristics of the mind's two ordering qualities are Sequential and Random (Holistic):***

**Sequential:** This quality enables an individual to:

- Organize information in a linear, step-by-step, predetermined manner.
- Link new information with old information in a chain-like sequence.
- Follow a logical train of thought.
- Have a plan and follow it.
- Express oneself in a precise and logical way.
- Learn through a series of logical, well-defined steps.
- Think structurally.
- Learn individual parts and details before learning the major, large concepts that tie them together.

**Random (Holistic):** This quality enables an individual to:

- Organize information by chunks, holistically, in no particular order, and in nonlinear, diverse ways.
- Skip steps in a procedure and still produces the desired result. A random thinker might start in the middle or at the end, and then work backwards.
- Handle numerous and diverse pieces of information at the same time.
- Act on the spur of the moment, without having to think through steps.
- Communicate in a multifaceted way.
- Learn through making connections between concepts and ideas.
- Think from the general to the specific.
- Learn the major concepts first and then fit in the details.

### ***Learning styles***

People learn through their senses—primarily through their senses of sight, hearing, and touch. In the general population, more adults are visual learners than any other perceptual style. Visual information can be gained verbally through the use of written words. It also can be gained nonverbally through the use of images, pictures, and observations.

Most instructors know that information is best absorbed when learners experience it in multisensory ways. Those who teach should strive to create a variety of sensory experiences that address all learning preferences, so that all learners can become involved, regardless of their preferred learning styles.

The four preferred ways of processing information through the senses are Visual-Verbal, Visual-Nonverbal, Auditory, and Kinesthetic-Tactile.

### ***A Visual-Verbal Learner must "read it" to "know it."***

#### Preferences:

- Prefers to observe rather than to actively participate in group activities and discussions.
- Prefers quiet, calm surroundings, especially when reading and thinking.
- Takes numerous, detailed notes to absorb information.
- Highlights key ideas in notes and textbooks.
- Learns by copying notes.

#### Strengths:

- Can do accurate written work, proofreads well, and is a good speller.
- Remembers what has been written down, even if it was read only once.
- Easily expresses self in writing.
- Knows the meaning of many words, and finds out the meanings of new words.

#### Weaknesses:

- Has some difficulty following or remembering spoken directions.
- Has some difficulty learning from audio-only methods of teaching.
- Can be distracted by background noise and activities.
- Mind wanders during verbal activities.

#### Preferred Instructional Methods:

- Handout pages, overheads, PowerPoint, films with the words written below, flipcharts, chalkboard, exhibits and signs with words, brochures and leaflets
- Written directions
- Notebooks of printed information
- Reading and writing tasks
- Outline and fill-in-the-blank styles of lecture notes
- Acronyms
- A learning site with tables to facilitate note-taking

### ***A Visual-Nonverbal Learner must "see it" to "know it."***

#### Preferences:

- Prefers to observe rather than to actively participate in group activities and discussions.
- Takes numerous, detailed notes to absorb information.
- Highlights key ideas in notes and textbooks, often using color coding.
- Needs to see an instructor's body language and facial expression to fully understand the lesson.
- Uses images, pictures, colors, and maps to organize information and communicate.

#### Strengths:

- Can draw and use maps.
- Has a good sense of direction; seldom gets lost in new surroundings.
- Can easily visualize faces, places, objects, plans, and outcomes in the mind's eye.
- Notices visual details.

Weaknesses:

- Has some difficulty remembering spoken directions and audio-only methods of teaching.
- Can be distracted by background noise and activities.
- Mind wanders during verbal activities.
- Might have difficulty with written language.

Preferred Instructional Methods:

- Magazines, posters, graphics, props, charts, diagrams, illustrations, cartoons, videos, photographs, movies, TV, films, flipcharts, graphs, and hand-outs with pictures
- Colored markers, pens, and pencils to use and/or doodle with during lessons
- Demonstrations, role plays, and guided imagery
- Color coding and icons to clarify written directions
- Memorization using flashcards, pictures, and diagrams
- Drawing, arts and crafts activities
- A learning site with tables to facilitate drawing and note-taking

***An Auditory Learner must "hear it" to "know it."***

Preferences:

- Prefers spoken directions when possible.
- Absorbs information by reading text aloud (or moving lips) and repeating ideas orally.
- Recording lectures and then listening to the recordings.
- Working and studying with music in the background.
- Likes to be read to.

Strengths:

- Can interpret the underlying meanings of speech by listening to voice tone, pitch, and speed.
- Often has excellent musical and/or public speaking ability.
- Can lead singing and perform musically.
- Remembers past conversations in detail.

Weaknesses:

- Might have difficulty following written directions or activities that include reading.
- Might have difficulty with reading and writing tasks.
- Might be easily distracted.
- Quickly loses interest in visual demonstrations.

Preferred Instructional Methods:

- Discussions, recordings, debates, panels, interviews, lectures, speeches, and presentations
- Buzz groups, small group discussions, teach-backs, and presentations that allow participants to talk through the information
- Instructional opportunities in which participants verbally repeat the information presented
- Reading aloud
- Memorization by using rhythmic sounds, poems, rhymes, word association, music, and lyrics
- Listening activities such as radio, stories, oral histories, and books on tape
- Songs, music, poems, and rhymes

## ***A Kinesthetic Learner must "do it" to "know it."***

### Preferences:

- Prefers to jump right in and try things.
- When reading, tends to scan the material first to get the big picture, and then focus on the details.
- Uses color highlighters and fun-to-use writing instruments, and with them doodles and draws pictures and diagrams, in addition to writing a few notes.
- Likes to think out issues, ideas, and problems while moving or exercising.
- In a classroom, sits near the door or aisle, where he/she can easily get up and move around.

### Strengths:

- Usually has good spatial perception.
- Can make, construct, cook, and assemble things without reading the directions.
- Is good at reading body language.
- Is good at physical activities such as sports, dancing, and cooking.

### Weaknesses:

- Can be distracted from verbal and visual instruction by both nearby activities and the personal need for activity, exploration, and external stimulation.
- Might fidget and have difficulty sitting still for long periods of time—needs plenty of breaks.
- Usually does not read much.
- Might have trouble spelling words correctly and memorizing lists, numbers, and dates.

### Preferred Instructional Methods:

- Physically active instruction, hands-on learning opportunities
- Pass-around items, models, role playing, games, scavenger hunts, relay races, "get your hands dirty" activities, computer work, experiments, lab classes, problem-solving, field trips, skits, role-playing, construction, arts and crafts
- Use of instructional items that learners can play with or touch while listening and watching
- Frequent breaks and the allowance of informal movement that doesn't bother other learners
- Expression of knowledge and skills by demonstration, rather than by written means
- When learning a new skill or topic, the opportunity to "jump in and try it" with a minimum of preliminary explanations
- Movement, touching, and active exploration of physical surroundings

Instructors should be aware that thinking and learning styles of most trainers and administrators can be very different from the thinking and learning styles of most students. If a mismatch exists between the instructor's teaching style and a learner's learning style, lack of communication—and even misunderstanding—can result. A paradigm shift for trainers might be needed. "What's good for me is good for you," could be replaced by, "How can I best communicate with you, so that you can learn?"

Instructors might tend to teach using the same style with which they best learn. Instructors should bear this tendency in mind and be willing to be flexible and change their instructional tactics if students seem to be having trouble in a given area.

Psychological research seems to indicate that the mind tends to go wherever it finds the most gratifying information. Boring or excessively difficult information causes the brain to look for more gratifying information elsewhere. This tendency is so powerful that even when a student is consciously trying to pay attention to an instructor, the student is unable to maintain attention if the presentation isn't interesting. However, if the same information is presented in a way that accommodates the student's particular learning style, then the information could be perceived as interesting and gratifying.

Other psychology research seems to reveal that people's capacity for paying attention is limited. The capacity for attention is depleted by time and effort. The capacity is renewed slowly over time with mental rest periods. The capacity for attention can also be extended when an instructor changes to topics that are more interesting to the students.

If instructors remain aware of learners' body language and facial expressions during classes, they can adjust their instructional techniques to recapture interest when it lags. A glazed look in people's eyes, loss of eye contact, fidgeting, whispering, slouching, and sitting with chins propped up on hands are typical body language messages that people's attention capacity has been depleted.

#### **Kathy's additional notes** (January 2009)

1. In order to make this document as short as possible, I paraphrased quotations that I included in my original paper. Please feel free to ask me for clarification on the sources of information.
2. The idea that instructors/counselors should adjust their "natural" teaching/counseling methods to accommodate the thinking and learning styles of their students/couselees is, in my opinion, an application of Philippians 2:1-7, especially the words, "*Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus, who...[took] the very nature/form of a servant....*" Also in 1 Cor. 9:19-23, Paul is "all things to all people that he may by all means save some...."