

2025-2026

Week One: Introduction to Biblical Counseling

Romans 15:14

And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another.

1. What do we want to accomplish?

To understand our sanctification

To learn what the Bible teaches about the issues and challenges of life.

To learn how to use the Bible to address the issues and challenges of life.

To develop confidence in accurately handling the Word of Truth

To learn how to examine yourself through the lens of Scripture.

To help Christian men and women learn how to minister the Word to other brothers and sisters in Christ in discipleship and counseling.

Develop and enhance biblical skills in addressing and solving problems biblically, as a disciple-maker, a shepherd, mentor or as a trained lay counselor.

To understand the conflict between secular counseling reasoning and a biblical worldview and how to recognize the difference and address it through a biblical lens.

Complete ACBC Theology and Biblical Counseling exams toward biblical counseling certification.

- All people in every society and culture ask these questions:

WHO are we?

WHAT HAPPENED?

Why do we do the things we do?

What MOTIVATES people?

What are the CAUSES of our psychological ills?

How do we CHANGE?

How do we HEAL?

What is the goal of change?

We propose to answer these questions from a biblical worldview!

3. Presupposition: A thing assumed beforehand, or taken for granted, at the beginning of a line of argument or course of action. Beliefs that one presumes to be true without supporting independent evidence from other sources or systems.

Worldview: A worldview comprises one's collection of presuppositions, convictions, and values from which a person tries to understand and make sense out of the world and life. Every worldview starts with presuppositions.

Christian/Biblical worldview:

- We are God's creation, designed to govern the world and fellowship with Him (Genesis 1:27-28; 2:15).

- We sinned against God and subjected the whole world to a curse (Gen. 3).
- We are dead in our sins and cannot save ourselves or achieve self-salvation.
- God Himself has redeemed us through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ (Genesis 3:15; Luke 19:10), and will one day restore creation to its former perfect state (Isaiah 65:17-25).

- A Christian/Biblical worldview leads us to believe in moral absolutes as the Bible teaches, a Sovereign God who is active, involved, and in control currently in creation, why things are the way they are and what will happen eventually, why we need not fear or be anxious about current events and the future, human dignity, and the possibility of redemption.

A worldview is comprehensive. It affects every area of life, from money to morality, from politics to art. True Christianity is more than a set of ideas to use at church. The Bible never distinguishes between a “religious” and a “secular” life; the Christian life is the only life there is. Jesus proclaimed Himself “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6) and, in doing so, became our worldview.

4. Biblical Counseling Definition:

- Biblical counseling is the personal discipleship ministry of God’s people to others under the oversight of God’s church, dependent upon the authority and sufficiency of God’s Word through the work of the Holy Spirit.
- Biblical counseling seeks to reorient disordered desires, affections, thoughts, behaviors, and worship toward a God-designed anthropology, in an effort to restore people to a right fellowship with God and others.

- This is accomplished by speaking the truth in love and applying Scripture to the need of the moment by comforting the suffering and calling sinners to repentance, thus working to make them mature as they abide in Jesus Christ.

Dale Johnson and Samuel Stephens: The Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC)

5. Comprehensive and Collaborative Disciple-Making, Shepherding, and Biblical Counseling In the Local Church - Levels of the Ministry of the Word:

- Pulpit Ministry - Public ministry/Proclamation ministry – Preaching ministry of the Word.
- Small group exhortation ministry of the Word.
- Personal ministry of the Word = Biblical counseling and intensive discipleship

6. Biblical Foundations in Overcoming Sin and Suffering – Romans 15:14

God’s people are called to minister to one another, to care for one another, to confront and restore one another in sin, to comfort and to build one another up in suffering.

We are called to admonish, exhort, encourage, and instruct one another.

Why would we send a brother or sister out into the world for help when God’s people are competent to help?

7. Biblical Foundations in Overcoming Sin and Suffering - Our Sanctification: (Romans 8:28-29; Ephesians 5:1; Colossians 1:28)

Q: What is our goal in sanctification?

Q: What is our goal in ministering to one another in sanctification?

A: To become like Christ; to imitate God; to be complete/mature in Christ.

8. Biblical Foundations in Overcoming Sin and Suffering - Why should we minister to one another? 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

9. Biblical Foundations in Overcoming Sin and Suffering - 2 Peter 1: 3-11 - God's people have everything necessary in Scripture, the indwelling Holy Spirit, and the Church to minister to us and one another in overcoming ALL forms of sin and suffering.

10. Authority and sufficiency of Scripture. The Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is the inerrant and complete Word of God, the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. (2 Pet 1:19-21; 2 Tim 3:16-17; Psalm 19:7-14)

Psalm 19:7-14 is the most comprehensive statement regarding the sufficiency of Scripture. It is an inspired statement about Scripture as a qualified guide for every situation (MacArthur).

11. God's Word is sufficient to meet every need of the human soul.

Scripture is comprehensive, containing everything necessary for one's spiritual life.

Scripture is surer than a human experience that one may look to in proving God's power and presence.

Scripture contains divine principles that are the best guide for character and conduct.

Scripture is lucid rather than mystifying so that it enlightens the eyes.

Scripture is void of any flaws and therefore lasts forever.

Scripture is true regarding all things that matter, making it capable of producing comprehensive righteousness. Because it meets every need in life, Scripture is infinitely more precious than anything this world has to offer.

12. Therefore:

Scripture is the Word of God.

God is the Ultimate Authority

The words of God are authoritative.

Conclusion: Scripture is authoritative.

13. Four Purposes of Scripture When Counseling Others – 2 Timothy 3:16-17 -

- Teach

- Reproof

- Correction

- Training in Righteousness

Every time God's Word is used it is profitable for:

a. Teaching: The Bible teaches comprehensive truths about God, people, sin and its effects, and the hope that is found in Christ. Scripture equips people with an accurate and complete framework for rightly understanding all of human life before God. In a culture filled with competing truth claims and alternative narratives for understanding our lives, biblical counselors instruct counselees with God's Word so that they can know and believe what is true.

b. Reproof: God's Word is useful for exposing wrongly held beliefs in one's life. In response to the snare of wrongly-held beliefs in one's life, biblical counselors use Scripture to help their counselees through loving and gentle rebuke, so that they might repent of believing what is false and embrace what is true about God and His gospel.

c. Correction: Whereas the preceding purpose relates to wrongly held beliefs in our inner person, "to correct" refers to confronting and correcting sinful behavior expressed externally in one's life. Biblical counselors use Scripture in this way as well, not only to help rescue their counselees from wrong belief but also to demonstrate how our actions reflect the true motivations of our hearts.

d. Training in Righteousness: Scripture's usefulness refers not only to growth in the knowledge of God but to the pursuit of godliness and a transformed life. God uses His Word to train us, teaching us what it is like to follow Jesus in daily life so that we will learn to observe all that He has commanded (Matt. 28:20). biblical counselors help their counselees move toward the goal of Christlikeness so that they will not only know what is true but that their lives would reflect this truth as well.

e. These four purposes of Scripture combine to produce one intended result that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:17

The usefulness of God's Word is meant to produce maturity and godliness in the lives of those we counsel, but also a growing capacity for ministry in the lives of other people.

God speaks in His Word to instruct, to reprove, to confront, and to train so that those we counsel would bear fruit that leads to further disciple-making, for God's glory (2 Timothy 2:2).

14. Sanctification.

"Sanctify" is to set apart to God, for His use. God works in those whom He claims as His own to conform them "to the image of his Son" (Rom. 8:29).

We are increasingly being changed from what we once were through the agency of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Sanctification is spiritual growth/maturity/being complete (Colossians 1:28).

The Holy Spirit "works in you, both to will and to work" according to God's purpose (Rom. 8:28).

Working out our salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12, 13). Christians become increasingly Christlike, as the moral profile of Jesus (the "fruit of the Spirit") is progressively formed in them (Gal. 5:22-25; 2 Cor. 3:18).

15. Counseling God's Way - A commitment to take the Scriptures seriously and to help God's people apply His truth to their PERSONAL lives in PRACTICAL ways.

Genuine biblical counseling doesn't merely sprinkle a few Bible verses here and there to make the counseling appear Bible-centered. Biblical counseling seeks to carefully discover those areas in which a Christian may be disobedient to or unaware of the PRINCIPLES and COMMANDS of Scripture and to help him learn how to lovingly submit to God's will.

Effective biblical counselors do not automatically diagnose a counselee's problems as flagrant and willful rebellion and prescribe a couple of verses with the promise of instant healing.

However, a genuine Biblical counselor does not assume that every problem is biologically caused, requiring years of intensive psychotherapy and psychotropic drugs.

While recognizing that many problems of thinking and behavior are physically caused, biblical counselors recognize that many PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS are generated by wrong patterns of THINKING and ACTION.

Biblical counselors take Colossians 1:28 seriously, presenting Christ without shame, lovingly confronting sin, and teaching biblical principles to produce MATURITY in the person's life.

16. Goals of Biblical Counseling -

- TRUE biblical counseling has the clearly defined and communicated goal of helping a counselee glorify God, beginning at the HEART LEVEL and reaching

towards a life that gives a watching world a biblically accurate view of who God is (Col. 1:28).

- The problems of the counselee's life are used as a springboard to teach and train him/her at the heart level to **THINK** and **ACT** in a way that pleases the Lord Jesus Christ. Problems are viewed in light of how God is using them to sanctify us (2 Corinthians 5:9, Galatians 1:10).
- As people realize that **SOLVING** problems is secondary to the goal of pleasing Christ in every circumstance, **HOPE** is breathed into hearts. Difficult circumstances become opportunities rather than insurmountable problems.

d. This is **SANCTIFICATION**! The process of sanctification involves the progression of putting off wrong thinking, behavior, and emotions; renewing the mind by God's Word; and putting on biblical thinking and acting (Ephesians 4:17-32, Colossians 3).

17. Hopeful Counseling: Goal, method, focus, target, and tools of intensive discipleship and biblical counseling:

- **GOAL** is heart **TRANSFORMATION** and relational restoration (2 Cor. 5:12-21).
- The **METHOD** is truth in the context of grace (John 1:14).
- The **FOCUS** is mind, will, emotions, and right behavior—renewed **MIND**, submitted **WILL**, informed **EMOTIONS**, and godly **BEHAVIOR**.
- The **TARGET** is beyond behavior to the desire and motivations of the inner man.
- The **TOOLS** are the Word of God, Spirit of God, community of God (2 Peter 1:3).

18. Four Levels of Problems:

- Perception/Perceptual Level: Mind-set, established attitude, values. Often a conscious choice to adopt a certain manner of thinking. Interpretation of reality. Idols of the heart

- Preconditioning Level: Learned patterns: unconscious, absorbed patterns from various influences in our lives, including sinful choices which have become regularized behavior.

- Performance Level: How one acts - "Doing level" Ask what, when, how and who questions to discover why this behavior is characteristic of this counselee. Performance includes a variety of behaviors such as brooding, being critical, slamming doors, overeating, lying, clamming up.

- Presence/Presentation Level – Observable - What is felt: this includes what a person projects – constant frown, rigid muscle tone – and what he feels and talks about feeling. Depression, listlessness, confusion, fearfulness, relational problems, suicidal ideations, inability to control anger.

19. SMCC Biblical Counseling Statement of Practice. As a biblical expository preaching and teaching church, and as an ACBC certified biblical counseling training center, we adhere to and practice this position regarding counseling, discipleship and ministering the Word:

a. Scripture is sufficient, through the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit, to address all of man's needs (2 Pe. 1:3-4; 2 Tim. 3:16). Therefore, counseling methods, practices, and techniques will be based upon the clear biblical principles and not upon theories of personality, model of man, psychotherapies, or philosophies derived from secular sources (1 Corinthians 3:19).

b. All mankind is in need of personal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. For counselees

who do not possess this salvation, a primary objective of counseling must be clear, Spirit-led communication of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (Ps 139:13-14; Rom. 3:23, 6:23; Matt. 28:19-20).

c. Counsel and teach the lordship of Jesus Christ in order to lead counselees away from a humanistic focus on self to a proper focus on Him (Luke 9:23; Romans 12:1-2).

d. Honor the scriptural sanctity of life, marriage, and family and to do the utmost in counseling to reinforce these beliefs (Gen 2:24; Mal. 2:16; Prov 23:25; Col 3:20).

e. As God empowers us, we live our life and conduct our relationships in godliness and holiness before Him, with the goal of living out the truths we are teaching (Phil. 2:12-13).

f. The spiritual authority of the Church is paramount. Counseling in a local church must be evidenced by involvement in a local church and by instructing those whom we counsel to involve themselves in a church also, thus working in concert with it rather than in competition against it (Hebrews 10:25).

20. Resources:

- Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC) <https://biblicalcounseling.com/>
- Institute of Biblical Counseling and Discipleship (IBCD) <https://ibcd.org/>
- Biblical Counseling Coalition (BCC) <https://www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/>

21. Class Calendar, ACBC Fundamentals Course, ACBC Certification Exam (see attached).

We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.

Colossians 1:28

And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another.

Romans 15:14