

Christian Language

Soul-Care Overview

A. Description

1. What Soul Care is:

A. Intensive Discipleship. (Romans 8:29, Ephesians 4:11-5:2)

B. Based on a Biblical Worldview.

1. God.

2. Biblical Anthropology.

i. Made in the Image of God.

ii. Corrupted by Sin.

iii. Redeemed only through Christ.

3. God's Specific Grace.

i. Christ and His Work on the Cross.

ii. His Revelation through His Word.

C. Rooted in the Scriptures.

1. Synonymous with "Biblical Counseling."

2. Believes the Scriptures are inerrant and sufficient for change. (Psalm 19:7-14)

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

³ His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, ⁴ by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. 2 Peter 1:3-4.

College Park: "The heartbeat of the Soul Care Ministry is to help hurting people move towards Jesus in the midst of sin and suffering. We strive to counsel in a way that is anchored in Scripture, centered on Christ & the gospel, grounded in theology, founded in love, and takes into account the whole person."

Faith Church Lafayette: "Biblical Counseling is the process where the Bible, God's Word, is related individually to a person or persons who are struggling under the weight of personal sin and/or the difficulties with suffering, so that he or she might genuinely change in the inner person to be pleasing to God."

2. What Soul Care is Not

- A. Focused solely on sin.
- B. Simplistic—"Take your Bible verse and call me in the morning."
- C. Uneducated or "anti-science."
- D. Anti-Medicine.

3. Three Main Counseling Models.

- A. Secular
 - 1. Psychological approach of creation and anthropology.
 - 2. A "soft" science born out of the scientific method.
- B. Biblical. Described above.
- C. Integrationist. Blending the first two.
 - 1. Exists on a continuum.
 - i. Ideally begins with the Scriptures and incorporates findings from Psychology.
 - ii. Could start from psychology and insert Scripture when expedient.
 - 2. May employ an "all truth is God's truth" approach.

Some Definitions of Integrated:

"The integration model of Christian counseling combines psychology, theology, and spirituality in a way that is flexible and fluid to the current counseling situation and is thoughtful of the client's needs at that moment (McMinn, 2012)—M.R. McMinn, Counseling and Christianity: Five approaches."

"More and more Christians recognize that psychological observations illuminate our understanding of human cognition, emotionality and experience. Whereas the Bible gives some very specific instructions on how one might become more emotionally and spiritually healthy, psychology gives us insight into the emotional and mental dynamic of our experience and provides us with tools to enact the Bible's instructions" <https://www.enrichingrelationships.org/blog/2016/2/7/integration-of-christianity-and-psychology>.

4. Why the emphasis on Biblical Counseling?

- A. We believe it is an extremely effective way of helping people.
- B. Secular Counseling can encourage a person away from God and toward sin.
 - 1. Embraces “chronological snobbery.”
- C. Integrated Counseling might also encourage a person away from God and toward sin.
 - 1. Just because a person is a “Christian” who counsels, or is a “Christian Counselor,” does not mean they are safe.
- D. God has given us the church to help us grow in Christ. (Eph. 4, 1 Peter 2:1-5)
 - 1. Too often, the church has outsourced mental health care.
 - 2. Christians have also bypassed godly counsel to consult “experts.”
 - i. Many Christians are ignorant of what biblical counseling is.
- E. Everybody counsels.
 - 1. We are competent to counsel.

I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another. Romans 15:14.

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

- F. Ultimately, we believe this may be an invaluable way to see God’s kingdom advance on the Southside, primarily through a free-to-the-public soul care ministry.

B. Overview of Various Types of Counseling

A. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)

1. Father of psychoanalysis stated personality is composed of three elements: id, ego, and superego.
2. There is no place for the Bible or the biblical informed conscience in Freud's philosophy of counseling.
3. One of the things that Freud did contribute is the idea that your past affects you in the present.

B. B.F. Skinner (1904-1990)

1. He focused on behaviorism/behavior modification.
2. A personal example of behavior modification at work.
3. The Bible does affirm that negative consequences are appropriate for bad behavior (Hebrews 12:6).

C. Carl Rogers (1902-1987)

1. Humanistic Theory of Personality (client centered approach)
2. The Rogerian counselor tells the counselee the answer is inside of you but the Bible says our help comes from the Lord (Psalm 121:1).
3. Rogers focused on people realizing things. The counselor in a sense held up a mirror for the person to see him or herself. While he distorted this in unbiblical ways, the concept of helping a person see himself or herself by holding up the mirror of the Word of God is vital in biblical counseling.

D. Abraham Maslow (1908 – 1970) – hierarchy of needs.

1. His hierarchy of needs is as follows:
 - a. Physiological needs (food, water, warmth, rest)
 - b. Safety needs
 - c. Belonging and love needs (intimate relationships, friends)
 - d. Esteem needs (prestige, accomplishments)
 - e. Self-actualization (achieving one's potential, self-fulfillment)
2. 2 Peter 1:3 says God has already given every Christian everything he or she needs for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him.
3. Maslow rightly observes that relationships are important to life.

E. Observation about all secular counseling theories (from Dr. Garrett Higbee – founder of Twelve Stones). The basic goals are:

1. Relieve suffering (one of the reasons medicine is so prevalent)
2. Normalize behavior
3. Reduce symptoms (another reason medicine is so prevalent)
4. Increase self-esteem

C. Brief History of Biblical Counseling Movement

A. Jay Adams – he was the founder of the modern biblical counseling movement.

1. This movement started really with the publishing of *Competent to Counsel* in 1970.
2. Jay Adams was the person God used to bring counseling back to the church.
3. Many people have been building upon the work of Jay Adams since 1970 – and as you would expect – there has been great growth in the movement.

D. Seven Goals for this course

- A. Have a better understanding of what biblical soul care is.
- B. Come to appreciate this valuable ministry of the church.
- C. Seek help from the church prior to going outside the church.
- D. Grow in Christlikeness as we study counseling truths.
- E. Increase counseling competency for
 1. Yourself.
 2. The building up of the church.
 3. The people you influence.
- F. Equip us all in informal/impromptu counseling.
- G. Whet your appetite to go deeper in being trained for counseling.

E. Group questions:

1. What are some reasons Christians might seek mental health care outside of the church rather than inside? Does the Bible have answers for those concerns?
2. What do you think of the phrase: "everybody counsels?" What are some ways Ephesians 4:15-16 can/should look in the body of Christ?
3. What are some obstacles for you that prevent you from being confident giving advice to a friend?
4. What are some things you can do or biblical principles you can share with a friend who is discouraged?
5. What are some common characteristics of people who have given you sound biblical advice in the past?
6. Give an example of how a passage of Scripture has helped you to grow in Christ-like character.

The Confessional Statement of the Biblical Counseling Coalition

Preamble: Speaking the Truth in Love—A Vision for the Entire Church

We are a fellowship of Christians committed to promoting excellence and unity in biblical counseling. Our goal is to foster collaborative relationships and to provide robust, relevant biblical resources that equip the Body of Christ to change lives with Christ's changeless truth. We desire to advance the biblical counseling movement in Christ-centered cooperation by relating in ways that are loving and wise, pursuing the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3).

We pursue this purpose by organizing our thinking around one central question. "What does it mean to counsel in the grace and truth of Christ?" All that we do flows from our calling to equip people to love God and others in Christ-centered ways (Matthew 22:35-40).

More than counseling, our vision is for the entire church to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:11-16). We are dedicated to developing the theology and practice of the personal ministry of the Word, whether described as biblical counseling, pastoral counseling, personal discipleship, one-another ministry, small group ministry, cure of souls, soul care, spiritual friendship, or spiritual direction. We seek to promote the strengthening of these ministries in churches, para-church organizations, and educational institutions by ministering to people who offer care, people who are seeking care, and people who train care-givers.

Introduction: In Christ Alone

The goal of biblical counseling is spiritual, relational, and personal maturity as evidenced in desires, thoughts, motives, actions, and emotions that increasingly reflect Jesus (Ephesians 4:17-5:2). We believe that such personal change must be centered on the person of Christ. We are convinced that personal ministry centered on Christ and anchored in Scripture offers the only lasting hope and loving help to a fallen and broken world.

We confess that we have not arrived. We comfort and counsel others only as we continue to receive ongoing comfort and counsel from Christ and the Body of Christ (2 Corinthians 1:3-11). We admit that we struggle to apply consistently all that we believe. We who counsel live in process, just like those we counsel, so we want to learn and grow in the wisdom and mercies of Christ.

All Christian ministry arises from and is anchored in God's revelation—which is both the written Word (Scripture) and the living Word (Christ). This is true for the personal ministry of the Word (conversational and relational ministry which our culture calls "counseling") and for the various public ministries of the Word. In light of this core conviction about Christ-centered, Word-based ministry, we affirm the following central commitments as biblical counselors.

Biblical Counseling Must Be Anchored in Scripture

We believe that God's Word is authoritative, sufficient, and relevant (Isaiah 55:11; Matthew 4:4; Hebrews 4:12-13). The inspired and inerrant Scriptures, rightly interpreted and carefully applied, offer us God's comprehensive wisdom. We learn to understand who God is, who we are, the problems we face, how people change, and God's provision for that change in the Gospel (John 8:31-32; 10:10; 17:17). No other source of knowledge thoroughly equips us to counsel in ways that transform the human heart (Psalm 19:7-14; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3). Other systems of counseling aim for other goals and assume a different dynamic of change. The wisdom given by God in His Word is distinctive and robust. He comprehensively addresses the sin and suffering of all people in all situations.

Wise counseling is an insightful application of God's all-embracing truth to our complex lives (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:6; Philippians 1:9-11). It does not merely collect proof-texts from the Bible. Wise counseling requires ongoing practical theological labor in order to understand Scripture, people, and situations (2 Timothy 2:15). We must continually develop our personal character, case-wise understanding of people, and pastoral skills (Romans 15:14; Colossians 1:28-29).

When we say that Scripture is comprehensive in wisdom, we mean that the Bible makes sense of all things, not that it contains all the information people could ever know about all topics. God's common grace brings many good things to human life. However, common grace cannot save us from our struggles with sin or from the troubles that beset us. Common grace cannot sanctify or cure the soul of all that ails the human condition. We affirm that numerous sources (such as scientific research, organized observations about human behavior, those we counsel, reflection on our own life experience, literature, film, and history) can contribute to our knowledge of people, and many sources can contribute some relief for the troubles of life. However, none can constitute a comprehensive system of counseling principles and practices. When systems of thought and practice claim to prescribe a cure for the human condition, they compete with Christ (Colossians 2:1-15). Scripture alone teaches a perspective and way of looking at life by which we can think biblically about and critically evaluate information and actions from any source (Colossians 2:2-10; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Biblical Counseling Must Be Centered on Christ and the Gospel

We believe that wise counseling centers on Jesus Christ—His sinless life, death on the cross, burial, resurrection, present reign, and promised return. Through the Gospel, God reveals the depths of sin, the scope of suffering, and the breadth, length, height, and depth of grace. Wise counseling gets to the heart of personal and interpersonal problems by bringing to bear the truth, mercy, and power of Christ's grace (John 1:14). There is no true restoration of the soul and there are no truly God-honoring relationships without understanding the desperate condition we are in without Christ and apart from experiencing the joy of progressive deliverance from that condition through God's mercies.

We point people to a person, Jesus our Redeemer, and not to a program, theory, or experience. We place our trust in the transforming power of the Redeemer as the only hope to change people's hearts, not in any human system of change. People need a personal and dynamic relationship with Jesus, not a system of self-salvation, self-management, or self-actualization (John 14:6). Wise counselors seek to lead struggling, hurting, sinning, and confused people to the hope, resources, strength, and life that are available only in Christ.

Biblical Counseling Must Be Grounded in Sound Theology

We believe that biblical counseling is fundamentally a practical theological discipline because every aspect of life is related to God. God intends that we care for one another in ways that relate human struggles to His person, purposes, promises, and will. Wise counseling arises from a theological way of looking at life—a mindset, a worldview—that informs how we understand people, problems, and solutions. The best biblical counselors are wise, balanced, caring, experienced practical theologians (Philippians 1:9-11).

Biblical counselors relate the Scriptures relevantly to people's lives (Hebrews 3:12-19). All wise counseling understands particular passages and a person's unique life experience within the context of the Bible's larger storyline: God's creation, our fall into sin, His redemptive plan, and the consummation of all things. Thus we engage in person-specific conversations that flow naturally out of a comprehensive biblical theology of life.

Biblical Counseling Must Be Dependent upon the Holy Spirit and Prayer

We believe that both genuine change of heart and transformation of lifestyle depend upon the ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 14:15-16:16; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18). Biblical counselors know that it is impossible to speak wisely and lovingly to bring about true and lasting change apart from the decisive, compassionate, and convicting work of the Spirit in the counselor and the counselee. We acknowledge the Holy Spirit as the One who illuminates our understanding of the Word and empowers its application in everyday life.

Wise counselors serve in the truth that God reveals and by the strength that God supplies. By the Spirit's work, God receives glory in all the good that takes place in people's lives. Biblical counselors affirm the absolute necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit to guide and empower the counselor, the counselee, and the counseling relationship. Dependent prayer is essential to the work of biblical counseling (Ephesians 6:18-20). Wise counselors humbly request God's intervention and direction, praise God for His work in people's lives, and intercede for people that they would experience genuine life change to the glory of God (Philippians 4:6).

Biblical Counseling Must Be Directed toward Sanctification

We believe that wise counseling should be transformative, change-oriented, and grounded in the doctrine of sanctification (2 Corinthians 3:16-18; Philippians 2:12-13). The lifelong change process begins at salvation (justification, regeneration, redemption, reconciliation) and continues until we see Jesus face-to-face (1 John 3:1-3). The aim of wise

counseling is intentional and intensive discipleship. The fruit of wise counseling is spiritually mature people who increasingly reflect Christ (relationally, rationally, volitionally, and emotionally) by enjoying and exalting God and by loving others well and wisely (Galatians 5:22-6:10).

Wise counseling seeks to embrace the Bible's teaching regarding God's role and human responsibility in spiritual growth. God's strength and mercy call for our response of faith and obedience. A comprehensive theology of the spiritual life provides the basis for applying relevant biblical methods of spiritual growth. Biblical counseling helps believers to understand what it means to be in Christ (Romans 6:3-14). It equips them to apply the principles of progressive sanctification through renewing their minds and actions based on Scripture with a motive of love for God and others (Romans 12:1-2).

Biblical Counseling Must Be Rooted in the Life of the Church

We believe that we best reflect the Trinity as we live and grow in community (John 17; Ephesians 4). Sanctification is not a self-improvement project, but a process of learning to love and serve God and others. Wise counseling embeds personal change within God's community—the church—with all God's rich resources of corporate and interpersonal means of grace (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). We believe that the church should be both the center and the sender of Gospel-centered counseling (Romans 15:14).

By example and exhortation the New Testament commends the personal, face-to-face, one-another ministry of the Word—whether in one-to-one or small group relationships (Hebrews 3:12-19; 10:19-25). God calls the church to mutual wise counseling just as He calls the church to public ministries of the Word in preaching, teaching, worship, and observing the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. God desires His people to love and serve each other by speaking His truth in love to one another (Ephesians 4:15-16). The primary and fullest expression of counseling ministry is meant to occur in local church communities where pastors effectively shepherd souls while equipping and overseeing diverse forms of every-member ministry (Ephesians 4:11-14). Other likeminded counseling institutions and organizations are beneficial insofar as they serve alongside the church, encourage Christians to counsel biblically, and purpose to impact the world for Christ.

Biblical Counseling Must Be Founded in Love

We believe that Christ's incarnation is not just the basis for care, but also the model for how we care (Hebrews 4:14-16; John 13:34-35). We seek to enter into a person's story, listening well, expressing thoughtful love, and engaging the person with compassion (1 Thessalonians 2:8). The wise and loving personal ministry of the Word takes many appropriate forms, from caring comfort to loving rebuke, from careful listening to relevant scriptural exploration, all while building trusting, authentic relationships (1 Thessalonians 5:14-15; 1 John 4:7-21).

Wise counseling takes into account all that people experience (desires, thoughts, goals, actions, words, emotions, struggles, situational pressure, physical suffering, abuse, injustice, etc.) All of human experience is the context for understanding how God's Word relates to life. Such awareness not only shapes the content of counseling, but also shapes the way counselors interact so that everything said is constructive, according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to the hearer (Ephesians 4:29).

Biblical Counseling Must Be Attentive to Heart Issues

We believe that human behavior is tied to thoughts, intentions, and affections of the heart. All our actions arise from hearts that are worshipping either God or something else, therefore we emphasize the importance of the heart and address the inner person. God fully understands and rightly weighs who we are, what we do, and why we do it. While we cannot completely understand a person's heart (even our own), God's Word reveals and penetrates the heart's core beliefs and intentions (Hebrews 4:12-13).

Wise counseling seeks to address both the inward and outward aspects of human life to bring thorough and lasting change into the image of Christ. The Bible is clear that human behavior is not mechanical, but grows out of a heart that desires, longs, thinks, chooses, and feels in ways that are oriented either toward or against Christ. Wise counsel appropriately focuses on the vertical and the horizontal dimensions, on the inner and the outer person, on observable behavior and underlying issues of the heart (Matthew 23:23-28). Biblical counselors work to help struggling people to learn wisdom; to love God with heart, soul, mind, and strength; to love one's neighbor as oneself; and to endure suffering in hope.

Biblical Counseling Must Be Comprehensive in Understanding

We believe that biblical counseling should focus on the full range of human nature created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-28). A comprehensive biblical understanding sees human beings as relational (spiritual and social), rational, volitional, emotional, and physical. Wise counseling takes the whole person seriously in his or her whole life context. It helps people to embrace all of life face-to-face with Christ so they become more like Christ in their relationships, thoughts, motivations, behaviors, and emotions.

We recognize the complexity of the relationship between the body and soul (Genesis 2:7). Because of this, we seek to remain sensitive to physical factors and organic issues that affect people's lives. In our desire to help people comprehensively, we seek to apply God's Word to people's lives amid bodily strengths and weaknesses. We encourage a thorough assessment and sound treatment for any suspected physical problems.

We recognize the complexity of the connection between people and their social environment. Thus we seek to remain sensitive to the impact of suffering and of the great variety of significant social-cultural factors (1 Peter 3:8-22). In our desire to help people comprehensively, we seek to apply God's Word to people's lives amid both positive and negative social experiences. We encourage people to seek appropriate practical aid when

their problems have a component that involves education, work life, finances, legal matters, criminality (either as a victim or a perpetrator), and other social matters.

Biblical Counseling Must Be Thorough in Care

We believe that God's Word is profitable for dealing thoroughly with the evils we suffer as well as with the sins we commit. Since struggling people usually experience some combination of besetting sin and personal suffering, wise counselors seek to discern the differences and connections between sin and suffering, and to minister appropriately to both (1 Thessalonians 5:14).

Biblical counseling addresses suffering and engages sufferers in many compassionate ways. It offers God's encouragement, comfort, and hope for the hurting (Romans 8:17-18; 2 Corinthians 1:3-8). It encourages mercy ministry (Acts 6:1-7) and seeks to promote justice. Biblical counseling addresses sin and engages sinners in numerous caring ways. It offers God's confrontation of sins, encourages repentance of sins, presents God's gracious forgiveness in Christ, and shares God's powerful path for progressive victory over sin (1 John 1:8-2:2; 2 Corinthians 2:5-11; Colossians 3:1-17; 2 Timothy 2:24-26).

Biblical Counseling Must Be Practical and Relevant

We believe that a commitment to the sufficiency of God's Word results in counseling that demonstrates the relevancy of God's Word. Biblical counseling offers a practical approach to daily life that is uniquely effective in the real world where people live and relate (1 John 3:11-24). By instruction and example, the Bible teaches foundational methodological principles for wise interaction and intervention (Acts 20:26-37; Galatians 6:1-5; Colossians 1:24-2:1).

Within the Bible's overall guidelines for the personal ministry of the Word, there is room for a variety of practical methods of change, all anchored in applying scriptural truth to people's lives and relationships. The Bible calls us to use wise methods that minister in Christ-centered ways to the unique life situations of specific people (Proverbs 15:23; 25:11). We are to speak what is helpful for building others up according to the need of the moment, that it may benefit those who listen (Ephesians 4:29).

Biblical Counseling Must Be Oriented toward Outreach

We believe that Christianity is missionary-minded by its very nature. Biblical counseling should be a powerful evangelistic and apologetic force in our world. We want to bring the good news of Jesus and His Word to the world that only God can redeem. We seek to speak in relevant ways to Christians and non-Christians, to draw them to the Savior and the distinctive wisdom that comes only from His Word (Titus 2:10-15).

We want to present the claims, mercies, hope, and relevance of Christ in a positive, loving, Christ-like spirit (1 Peter 3:15). We seek to engage the broad spectrum of counseling models and approaches. We want to affirm what is biblical and wise. Where we

believe models and methods fall short of Christ's call, we want to critique clearly and charitably. When interacting with people with whom we differ, we want to communicate in ways that are respectful, firm, gracious, fair-minded, and clear. When we perceive error, we want to humbly point people forward toward the way of truth so that we all become truer, wiser, more loving counselors. We want to listen well to those who disagree with us, and learn from their critiques. Our mission to spread the truth and fame of Jesus Christ includes a desire that all counselors appreciate and embrace the beauty of a Christ-centered and Word-based approach to people, problems, and solutions.

Conclusion: Unity in Truth and Love

We are committed to generating a unified effort among God's people to glorify Christ and multiply disciples through the personal ministry of the Word (Matthew 28:18-20). We trust in Jesus Christ in whom grace and truth are perfectly joined (John 1:14). We cling to His Word, in which truth and love live in perfect union (Ephesians 4:15; Philippians 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 2:8). We love His Church—living and speaking the truth in love, growing up in Him who is the Head, and building itself up in love as each part does its work (Ephesians 4:15-16).

We desire to encourage this unity in truth and love through a fresh vision for biblical counseling. When people ask, "What makes biblical counseling truly biblical?" we unite to affirm:

Biblical counseling occurs whenever and wherever God's people engage in conversations that are anchored in Scripture, centered on Christ and the Gospel, grounded in sound theology, dependent upon the Holy Spirit and prayer, directed toward sanctification, rooted in the life of the church, founded in love, attentive to heart issues, comprehensive in understanding, thorough in care, practical and relevant, and oriented toward outreach.

We invite you to join us on this journey of promoting excellence and unity in biblical counseling. Join us as we seek to equip one another to promote personal change, centered on the person of Christ through the personal ministry of the Word.

