

Distinctive on Biblical Counseling

Biblical counseling seeks to lovingly help each other increasingly honor Jesus Christ in everyday living. Biblical counseling operates on the presuppositions that:

- God is our Creator and therefore has the absolute and objective say on life;
- People's ultimate fulfillment is living lives that please Jesus Christ;
- God's Word is the totally sufficient source of authority in all matters of life and godliness;
- The problem with man is sin, and the solution is salvation through trusting in the person and work of Jesus Christ;
- The process is application of Scripture by the help of the Holy Spirit;
- The result is deeper love for and glory to Jesus Christ with the ability to also help others do the same.
- It must be understood that biblical counseling is not a special ministry reserved for the expert. It can be done and should be done by anyone who believes in the gospel of Jesus Christ (Romans 15:14; Colossians 3:16).

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, 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. In doing so, biblical counseling seeks to restore the ones seeking counsel to a place where they can most glorify God with their lives and effectively serve the body of Christ (Romans 12:4, 5). The goal of biblical counseling is to equip you to meet the challenges of life by the transforming power of Jesus Christ for the glory of God (Romans 15:14; Colossians 1:28; 2 Corinthians 5:9). This is accomplished by understanding that, 1) There is a fundamental problem of sin, that is either committed by you (because we are born sinners) and/or committed against you (because we all live in a sin cursed world), that affects heart desires, thinking and behavior, and needs to be changed God's way. The desire is not that people become more moral, but rather that they become people who are worshippers of what really matters and live a God glorifying life as image bearers (Gen 1:17-28; Heb 9:13-14). We are all worshippers of something. 2) We use God's Word, by the illumination of the Holy Spirit, to change heart desires, thinking and behavior, which are contrary to the Scriptures. We believe that God's Word is fully sufficient to handle all of the issues of life. 3) All this is done out of love for those seeking counsel, for their salvation, and sanctification. At times it may seem unloving to confront sin. However, since the goal of life is to glorify God and to become more like Christ, pointing out sin in another's life is the most loving thing that can be done at that moment (Gal 6:1-3). Paul says in Colossians 1:28

that our goal is to admonish and teach every man so that every man may be complete in Christ. The pursuit of Christlikeness takes much time and effort and it is at the very heart of biblical counseling.

While many forms of counseling seek to modify behavior only, Biblical counseling seeks to modify the desires and motivations of the heart that produce human behavior. Changed heart desires produce changed behavior. Often the illustration of a tree is used to explain biblical counseling. The root of the tree is like the heart of a person while the fruit is like the person's thoughts, words, and actions. Jesus said, "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills the heart" (Luke 6:45). Jesus taught that people sin not because they are forced, not because of their environment, nor because the devil made them do it, but because of wrong desires and motivations of each individual's heart (Mark 7:21-23).

The process by which we grow in sanctification is a willful act of repentance of sin and a turning toward God out of love for Him. We must recognize our sinful state in which we have no ability to do good and no power to change on our own. This lifelong process of change is two fold in which both God and man cooperate: 1) God changes us through the Holy Spirit by His grace and according to His Word (1 Corinthians 6:11; Philippians 1:6); 2) This change in the believers life is lived out by a continual putting off of sin and a putting on of God's desires for our life (Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:10). The ultimate goal of biblical counseling is to help those seeking counsel to become more conformed into the image of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Biblical counseling is part of the sanctification process. This growth and change into the image of Jesus Christ is to be of utmost priority of the believer (Col 1:28; 2 Cor 3:18; Eph 2:10; Titus 2:11-14).