

Biblical Counseling I
Front Range Bible Institute, Winter Quarter 2015
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Course Outline and Description

I. Course Description and Requirements

A. Description: this course is designed to teach Christians how they can effectively disciple others by using the truths of God's Word to lead people into a proper and holy relationship with the Lord. This course is built upon the foundational pre-supposition that God's Word is the highest and sole authority on the human soul (i.e., mind, heart, the whole person). This course will also seek to examine and expose the basic errors of secular psychology and why it is that Christians should not attempt to "integrate" secular psychological views with the Bible. This approach to counseling which uses the Bible alone is called "Biblical Counseling" and often times is also called by the label "Nouthetic Counseling" (coming from the Greek verb noutheteo: to admonish, counsel).

B. Materials and Requirements

1. Attend lectures and be prepared for discussion and interaction in class
2. Complete a Personal Improvement Project: *This project is to help take the biblical doctrine that is taught and personally apply it to the student's life. This is part of the sanctification process as well as part of the Great Commission "teaching them to observe all that I commanded you...(Matt. 28:20)" Further instructions are included in the syllabus. Make sure to start now and work on growth in the area you choose throughout the quarter.*
3. Read the following materials & turn in book reports:
 - a) Paul David Tripp: *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*
 - b) Timothy S. Lane & Paul David Tripp: *How People Change*
 - c) * Eric L. Johnson & Stanton L. Jones (edited by): *Psychology & Christianity* (For Masters Students)
 - d) Recommended, but not required
 - Jay Adams: *Competent to Counsel*
 - Jay Adams: *The Christian Counselor's Manual*
 - John MacArthur: *Our Sufficiency in Christ*
 - John MacArthur and Wayne Mack: *Introduction to Biblical Counseling*
 - Ed Bulkley: *Why Christians Can't Trust Psychology*
4. Complete lecture summaries that identify the most impactful information received during the unit and discuss how it can be practically applied in ministry

C. Grading

1. 40%: Completion of Reading Assignments
2. 40%: Lecture Summaries
3. 20%: Personal Improvement Project

D. Assignments

1. Reading Assignments

Assigned Reading Report Instructions:

- Read the assigned books and turn in a 5 page report (for each book). Type out your answers to the following questions. Please give concise but relevant answers to the questions. It may be helpful to keep an index card handy while reading the material.
- Questions to be answered on each assignment
 1. Did you read all the assignments? Yes _____, No _____. If no, indicate the percentage read _____.
 2. What important principles did you see concerning the Christian life? (Please summarize them.)
 3. Was there anything you disagreed with or had questions about? If so, what?
 4. What were the most significant challenges or lessons you learned for your own life from the reading assignments?
 5. How can you use this book in your future ministry?
 6. Was there someone you encouraged with what you have learned? If so, please explain.

2. Lecture Summaries

- A 3-page summary of the class will be required 3 times during the semester. The summary will include information that was most impactful to you from the class lectures and how that information can be applied to your present and/or future ministry.

3. Personal Improvement Project (Up to **5 Page Paper**/Up to **10 Page Paper** – **Masters Level**)

- During this course, select an area in your own life to work on improving. Each week of the class (Do not wait until the night before!!!), personally apply the Scriptures and the biblical principles for change to the problem. Put into practice what you are learning! Choose an issue to work on after prayerful and careful thought, keeping John 15:1, Hebrews 12:5-14, and Psalm 139:23f in mind. Determine the issue you want to tackle. As the class continues, apply the biblical principles taught in the class to the various questions on the Self Confrontation Form. Type out your answers to the questions to turn in on the due date given in the course schedule. Also complete the Self Confrontation Testimony to share with others. Consider this your opportunity to give a report on what has happened in your life as you have worked on your selected problem.

II. Course Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Assignments Due</u>
January 6 th	Biblical Counseling Introduction – The Importance	
January 13 th	Biblical Counseling Introduction – The Definition	
January 20 th	Biblical Counseling Introduction – The Theological Basis	
January 27 th	Biblical Counseling Introduction – The Uniqueness	1st Lecture Summary Due
February 3 rd	Core Elements of Biblical Counseling – The Process of Change	1st Book Report Due
February 10 th	Core Elements of Biblical Counseling – The Process of Change	
February 17 th	Core Elements of Biblical Counseling – Foundational Elements	2nd Lecture Summary Due
February 24 th	Core Elements of Biblical Counseling – Foundational Elements	
March 3 rd	Core Elements of Biblical Counseling – Foundational Elements	
March 10 th	General Biblical Counseling Issues	2nd Book Report Due
March 17 th	General Biblical Counseling Issues	3rd Lecture Summary Due Personal Improvement Project

PERSONAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT¹

During this course, select a problem in your own life to work on improving. Each week of the class, personally apply the Scriptures and the biblical principles for change to the problem. Put into practice what you are learning!

Choose an issue to work on after prayerful and careful thought, keeping John 15:1, Hebrews 12:5-14, and Psalm 139:23f in mind. You may pick a relatively discrete and minor habit or you may choose a more major problem pattern.

On the one hand, small bad habits (e.g., biting your fingernails, or breaking the speed limit) are accessible bits of life that often can lead you into more substantial issues. For example, your fingernails can lead you to how you handle tension in general. This is like pulling a handkerchief out of a hat and finding twenty more tied onto it! Progress often leads to ripple effects in other areas of life.

On the other hand, more general problems (e.g., a tendency to be shy and evasive around other people, or a tendency to be aggressive and controlling, or a tendency to judge and categorize people) have the advantage of bringing more of your whole life into the light of God. The avalanche is made of a million snowflakes. Fundamental changes in attitude again have a ripple effect. If you choose a larger issue, you will need to break it down into the particular actions, attitudes, thoughts, and feelings that manifest the problem. You also may need to narrow your focus. For example, if you pick "strained relationships with many people," you might want to focus on one or two relationships in particular.

Please look over the following examples for suggestions. The assignments found in Wayne Mack's Homework Manual for Biblical Living, Vol. 1, pages 41-45, 48-50 may also be helpful in identifying an area to work on.

- **Driving habits.** In biblical times life was described as a "walk." Now we drive. Your driving provides a microcosm of your life style. Do you drive in an aggressive manner, speeding, tailgating, cutting people off, always pushing and hurrying? Do you obey traffic laws? Are you tense, easily hassled, irritable? Courteous? Fearful and tentative? So preoccupied that you space out?
- **The way you play golf or another competitive sport.** Sports can be wonderful windows into our pride, fears, competitiveness, slyness, tendencies to live on the basis of our own performance as "a success" or "a failure," anger, recourse to fantasy, comparison with others, concern to look good in others' eyes, etc.
- **Relationship to money and possessions.** Each of us tends to run off the rails in some way or other regarding material things: Obsessed? Fearful of poverty? Daydream of wealth and possessions? Worried? Generous? Using gifts to buy friends? Impulsively and compulsively spending money? Coveting? Feeling inferior or superior? Continually going into debt?
- **Escapes, comforts, and pleasures.** Do you at times misuse TV, food, drugs, alcohol, newspaper, fantasy novels, computer games, spectator or participant sports, hobbies, jogging...? Sorting through when and why can be tremendously re
- **Anxiety.** How do you handle pressure, stress, worries, cares, uncertainties, demands? Do you tend to be anxious and worried a lot of the time? Do you bite your fingernails? Snack compulsively?

- **Sex and romance.** Do you have a problem somewhere on the continuum from daydreams to lingering eyes to covert acting out to flagrant immorality? How do you handle the bombardment of romantic and erotic images in the mass media?
- **Fears of people.** Where and with whom does a desire to be approved and fear of rejection play a part in your life? Do you lie, flatter, cower, avoid, play the chameleon, wear a mask...? Do you tend to look to others' opinions to define you? Do you find it hard to speak up, or does humor belie fear? Are you self-confident because people like you?
- **Broken or strained relationships.** Where do you have a history of "war-making" rather than peacemaking? When and with whom have you experienced anger, conflict, manipulation, bullying, confusion, escapes, etc.
- **Are you self-absorbed?** Do you have difficulty entering another's world and loving people or listening? Are you absorbed in your own opinions, agenda, questions, desires, fears? Do you manipulate and push your way and your opinions? Talk too much?
- **How you relate to authority:** parents, teachers, bosses, police, and the like. Are you rebellious and self-willed? Timid and overly compliant? Do you flee accountability and build a private world in which you rule?
- **Response to being sinned against.** How have you reacted to being wronged, betrayed, or hurt by people? The range of typical responses includes the varieties of anger, fear, depression, denial, escape, compensatory drive to prove oneself, and the like.
- **Fantasies.** Do you have recourse to some private "garden" of fantasies, whether athletic, financial, sexual, romantic, self-pitying, violent, powerful, etc.? Do fantasies of success/failure in anything from career to ministry to love to recreation either delight or plague your mind? Does your mental world star YOU, either to your glory or despair?
- **Patterns of work and rest.** Do you oscillate between workaholism and self-indulgent comfort-loving? Are you driven and restless? Do you procrastinate and avoid tasks? Are the ways you seek rest and refreshment truly restful and glorifying to God?

Determine the issue you want to tackle. Describe the problem in some detail. What exactly are you focusing on? How does the problem show up – behaviors, words, thoughts, attitudes, emotions? In what situations – when, where, with whom – does it appear? How often is it a problem? How intense? How long-standing? What was the starting point? What are the particular points of exacerbation or breakthrough? What has helped in the past? Who are influential models pro and con? etc.

As the class continues, apply the biblical principles taught in the class to the various questions on the Personal Improvement Project Form. Type out your answers to the questions to turn in on the due date given in the course schedule

Personal Improvement Project FORM

Using this outline, address each question in paragraph format.

1. What is a main problem area in my life?
2. What specific failures on my part contribute to the main problem?
3. How does the problem show up – behaviors, words, thoughts, attitudes, emotions?
4. Which areas of my life are affected by my problem?
 - Spiritually
 - Spouse
 - Children
 - Parents
 - Physical Health
 - Social
 - Financial
 - Domestic
 - Professional
5. In what situations – when, where, with whom – does it appear?
6. How often is it a problem? How intense? How long-standing?
7. What is the starting point? What are the particular points of exacerbation?
8. What have I done about this problem?
9. Who else has been hurt by this problem?
10. In what ways have I been blaming my problem on circumstances or someone else?
11. How is my view of God skewed in this particular problem area of my life?
12. What does the Scripture say about my problem?
13. My diagnosis of this problem is:
 - What was I wanting that led me to act?
 - Where did I fall?
 - What were the circumstances?
 - What did I do that I should not have done?
 - What were the danger signals?
 - When danger signals appear, what should I do?
14. What has helped in the past?
15. What does the Scripture say is the solution? What should be my biblical alternative replacement?
16. What should I do specifically about my problem?
17. What requests should I make of God to help me?
18. What commitment am I willing to make to solve my problem? What biblical goals should I set?
Short term? Long term?
19. Who are influential models pro and con? etc
20. Should I contact someone to help me? Who? How much should I tell?
21. Who do I need to contact to ask for forgiveness?
22. How should I review my progress?
23. How should I prepare myself to help others?